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## **Regional Plan Committee**

**October 15, 2024 at 4:00 pm**

29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

To join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87815276521?pwd=Mmw5U080SGpCTUFNVHZFSEERQUll0dz09>

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](mailto:chartrand@cvregion.com) at least 3 business days prior to the meeting for which services are requested.

### **AGENDA**

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>4:00 pm<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>Adjustments to the Agenda</b>                              |
|                            | <b>Public Comment</b>   |
| <b>4:05 pm</b>             | <b>Approval of Minutes<sup>3</sup></b>                        |
| <b>4:10 pm</b>             | <b>Land Use Chapter: presentation on Act 181 (discussion)</b> |
| <b>5:00 pm</b>             | <b>Housing Chapter review</b>                                 |
| <b>5:30 pm</b>             | <b>Adjourn</b>  |

**Next meeting: November 5, 2024**

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<sup>1</sup> Dial-in telephone numbers are "Toll" numbers. Fees may be charged to the person calling in dependent on their phone service.

<sup>2</sup> All times are approximate unless otherwise advertised

<sup>3</sup> Anticipated action item.

# CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## Regional Plan Committee

### Draft Minutes

September 4, 2024 4:00 – 5:30 pm

Via Zoom and In Person

29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

#### Committee Members:

X	Alice Peal, Waitsfield Alternate Rep
X	Alice Farrell, Barre Town Rep
X	Doug Greason, Waterbury Rep
X	Mike Miller, Montpelier Alternate Rep
X	John Brabant, Calais Rep

1  
1 Staff: Christian Meyer, Reuben MacMartin, Will Pitkin, Niki Sabado (in person), Eli Toohey (Zoom)

2  
3 Guests: Peter Gregory, Executive Director of Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission; Andrew  
4 McNealus, CVRPC Fayston Rep

5  
6 **Adjustment to the Agenda**  
7 No adjustments.

8  
9 **Public Comment**  
10 No comments.

11  
12 A. Farrell moved to accept August 2024 draft meeting minutes, D. Greason seconded. Accepted  
13 unanimously.

14  
15 **Discussion – Mandatory Language (Shall, Must) vs. Advisory Language (Should) in Regional Plan**

16  
17 P. Gregory discussed when Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) uses mandatory  
18 language, how they've used it, and instances where there has been conflict related to that use.

19  
20 P. Gregory stated that the TRORC board of directors sets policies and staff implement those policies as  
21 aggressively as possible. Clear mandatory language is most important in regulatory proceedings related  
22 to Act 250 and Section 248 permit applications. The chapters of the TRORC regional plan that are most  
23 often cited in those proceedings are the Land Use and Utilities chapters. TRORC uses mandatory  
24 language when it is not just mimicking existing state law and, instead, has discretion to take a policy  
25 position that can influence regulatory proceedings.

26  
27 Over the years, TRORC has modified its regional plan language to be clearer and more mandatory as  
28 previous wording has at times proven ineffective in regulatory proceedings. He also spoke about how  
29 municipalities in their region have varying degrees of mandatory vs. advisory language in their municipal  
30 plans; over time, the trend is municipalities also shifting toward more mandatory language.

31  
32 P. Gregory stated that TRORC also sometimes uses mandatory language in attempting to protect a

1 natural resource that the board felt should be protected to a higher degree than is mandated in existing  
2 state law. In these situations, the mandatory language may not be directly applied in a regulatory  
3 proceeding, so it may not have a significant impact.  
4

5 P. Gregory also emphasized the importance of clarity in regional plan language and spoke about a case  
6 in the TRORC region that was appealed to the Supreme Court in which the regional plan and the  
7 municipal plan of the municipality where the planned development was located were in conflict.  
8

9 J. Brabant asked about the use of mandatory language, the relationship between the regional and  
10 municipal plans, and whether the regional plan is an aspirational or regulatory document. He cited an  
11 example of a planned telecommunication tower where the host municipality's town plan did not limit  
12 development and CVRPC amended the regional plan to reinsert mandatory language that would prohibit  
13 that development because a former CVRPC staffer viewed the regional plan as a strictly aspirational  
14 document and removed the previously-existing mandatory language from the regional plan. P. Gregory  
15 stated that normally a regional plan is an aspirational document, but in the specific instances of Act 250  
16 and Section 248 review, it is a regulatory document and needs to be written accordingly. P. Gregory was  
17 not aware of any municipalities or RPCs that had regretted using mandatory language.  
18

19 M. Miller asked if the TRORC regional plan had a standalone list of Act 250/Section 248 policies; P.  
20 Gregory stated that TRORC's policies are scattered throughout the regional plan. C. Meyer asked about  
21 TRORC's definition of substantial regional impact and how TRORC judges when to invoke that during  
22 project review. P. Gregory stated that substantial regional impact is less frequently relevant now than it  
23 was several decades ago because municipal plans and regional plans are typically not in conflict  
24 nowadays because TRORC reviews municipal plans for conformance with the regional plan when  
25 deciding whether to approve municipal plans. Typically, the only situation in which a regional planning  
26 commission would decide that a proposed development would have substantial regional impact and  
27 therefore the RPC should participate in the permitting proceeding is when there is a conflict between  
28 the regional plan and the municipal plan and the RPC feels that the municipal plan is not providing  
29 sufficient protection against development that would negatively impact the region. Because municipal  
30 plans are now better aligned with the regional plan, this is not a common issue anymore.  
31

32 P. Gregory spoke about how TRORC decides whether to participate in Act 250/Section 248 proceedings  
33 in which RPC participation is optional.  
34

35 A. Peal asked if there are any ways that the regional plan can direct municipalities. P. Gregory stated  
36 that municipalities have the option to seek RPC approval of their municipal plans; in these instances,  
37 RPCs can withhold approval if the municipal plan does not meet certain criteria or is not compatible with  
38 the regional plan. Municipal plans must receive RPC approval for the municipal plan to receive  
39 "substantial deference" in Public Utility Commission review of Section 248 applications. A. Peal asked  
40 what role the regional plan can play in providing guidance to municipal officials on issues including  
41 flooding and emergency response.  
42

43 E. Toohey asked where TRORC uses mandatory language in its regional plan outside of Act 250 and  
44 Section 248 standards. P. Gregory stated that TRORC uses mandatory language in water quality  
45 standards (which TRORC uses as a basis for comments on basin plans), transportation, land use, and  
46 aesthetics. P. Gregory noted that many sections of TRORC's regional plan use a mixture of mandatory  
47 and advisory language.  
48

1 C. Meyer asked if a regional plan could require a process from the region’s municipalities, for example,  
2 requiring that all towns develop design standards for downtown districts. P. Gregory stated that RPCs do  
3 not have that authority and are only able to influence such processes through education and advocacy.  
4 RPCs have a limited ability to require anything from external entities.

5  
6 P. Gregory stated that Act 250 Criterion 10 and Section 248 (which includes the review criteria of Act  
7 250 by reference) are the only places where development is required to conform to a regional plan.  
8 However, RPCs can still set policies – which are strengthened by using mandatory language – that may  
9 have impact by influencing state agencies or emphasizing the importance of certain issues to state  
10 legislators, although there is no requirement that any of these entities abide by the policies set forth in  
11 the regional plan. P. Gregory also noted that the regional plan is the basis of all the testimony that he  
12 provides to state government.

13  
14 M. Miller agreed that RPCs have leverage to institute policies by not approving any municipal plans that  
15 do not include the policy in question.

16  
17 P. Gregory noted that regional plans now have a state-level review process through the Land Use Review  
18 Board, whereas before 2024, municipal plans went through rigorous review and regional plans did not.

19  
20 J. Brabant added that RPCs have the ability to impact Act 250 and Section 248 proceedings if RPCs  
21 disagree with the findings of other entities, such as the Agency of Natural Resources. P. Gregory  
22 suggested articulating what is important to the region, even if existing laws do not regulate that issue or  
23 specifically grant the RPC authority to regulate that issue.

24  
25 D. Greason asked how TRORC decides whether to use mandatory language in its regional plan. P.  
26 Gregory stated that TRORC staff begin the discussion with their board and bring proposals to the board  
27 to review when they arise. P. Gregory elaborated on the roles that the TRORC board and staff play in  
28 drafting and updating the regional plan.

29  
30 **Discussion – Transportation Draft Chapter of Regional Plan**

31  
32 Committee discussed the Transportation draft chapter.

33  
34 Committee generally found the chapter clear and well-written. Committee requested more narrative to  
35 introduce the issues that the chapter would discuss, more visionary policies looking forward, more  
36 discussion of safety and specific dangerous areas.

37  
38 R. MacMartin and committee discussed issues including railway development, the role of land use  
39 planning for denser village centers in making public transit economically viable, how to shift the culture  
40 of single-user car usership to toward public transit, and in which areas CVRPC was most able to influence  
41 outcomes (given federal, state, and local ownership of most transportation infrastructure).

42  
43 R. MacMartin requested that the committee assist in consolidating and paring down goals and  
44 strategies.

45  
46 D. Greason suggested that the Transportation chapter mention the increased road maintenance costs  
47 that municipalities are facing due to climate change. Discussion followed about how to gather that data.

- 1 J. Brabant asked if CVRPC can impact road safety by changing speed limits on dangerous stretches of
- 2 road. Staff and committee discussed ways the CVRPC can make transportation infrastructure safer.
- 3
- 4 *D. Greason moved to adjourn, M. Miller seconded, all in favor, motion carried.*



## MEMO

Date: October 11, 2024  
To: Regional Plan Committee  
From: Will Pitkin, Planner  
Re: October 2024 Meeting

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Reminder that the October 2024 **meeting will be on Tuesday, October 15**, not the usual first Tuesday of the month. Still 4pm, still CVRPC HQ and Zoom.

### Land Use Chapter + Act 181 Presentation

The main question for this part of the meeting is what do you want the Land Use chapter to be? The attached draft Land Use chapter is the least developed of all the draft chapters. We expect the final version will be pretty different from the current draft but wanted to get the committee's input before starting an overhaul. The current draft includes definitions of the statutorily required new land use categories on the Future Land Use Map ("FLU Map"), which I'd suggest reviewing prior to Tuesday's meeting. Otherwise, I'd encourage you not to get too caught up on what's currently there and, instead, think about what you want the Land Use chapter to include.

Previously, we've discussed using the Land Use chapter to introduce the "threads" or themes that we'll refer back to throughout the rest of the Regional Plan. (Reminder: current threads are Climate/Flooding, Aging Population/Changing Demographics, and Affordability, though this list is not set in stone.) Do we still want to do this? I think so.

We'll start the discussion with a presentation on Act 181 (formerly H.687), which reformed Act 250 and the State Designation Program, among many other topics. Described by VT Digger as a "sprawling land use reform bill" – a sidesplitting pun – there is too much in Act 181 to cover in one presentation. On Tuesday, we will focus on how it relates to the Regional Plan, specifically the FLU Map. An outline of the presentation is attached.

Per Act 181, the FLU Map will now take on greater importance than in previous Regional Plans. Its main impact is in defining areas eligible for long-term Act 250 exemptions and the financial and regulatory incentives available through the State Community Investment Program, FKA the State Designation Program. We're hoping the presentation will get everyone up to speed on this complicated yet important new legislation that you've been hearing so much about but may not have found time to read all 171 pages of. This should help inform the committee's

discussion of what you want the Land Use chapter to be.

### Housing Chapter

Please find attached the Housing draft chapter of the Regional Plan. This draft is much farther along than the Land Use chapter, so it is also attached separately as a Word doc if committee members want to make edits directly in the text. Also attached are lists of the goals and strategies from the current draft chapter and from the Housing chapter of the 2016 Regional Plan as amended, with an analysis of proposed changes to the previous goals and strategies.

We expect the discussion on the Housing chapter might take multiple meetings, so this can at least be a starting point. Staff will speak on topics including the statutory requirement for the Regional Plan to include housing targets for each municipality, the recently-released statewide and countywide housing targets from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency's Vermont Housing Needs Assessment 2025-2029, and how CVRPC is working to estimate each municipality's capacity for additional housing plus other factors that will inform the municipal housing targets.

Critical to the discussion on municipal housing targets is a discussion of whether municipalities actually need to meet the targets and what will happen if they do not. The oversimplified answer is that municipalities do not need the targets, but they do need to include some language in their municipal plans about how they're trying to meet these targets. Staff are drafting template language to that effect and will discuss further at the meeting.

If you have text edits to the Housing draft chapter, please make them in the attached Word doc with Track Changes on and send them to [meyer@cvregion.com](mailto:meyer@cvregion.com); [toohey@cvregion.com](mailto:toohey@cvregion.com); [sabado@cvregion.com](mailto:sabado@cvregion.com); [pitkin@cvregion.com](mailto:pitkin@cvregion.com).



Elements to make sure are in the chapter;

- Housing resilience and sustainability (from a discussion I had with Ben Rose, Vermont Emergency Management)
- Consider where we build, rebuild housing (Land Use Chapter and potential survey)
- Floodplain and Land Conservation
- Flood mitigation
- Equity
- Rural town challenges
  - Rural infrastructure
  - Rural economy
  - Rural housing as a component of regional housing
- Growth Area and Town Center limitations
  
- Cost of housing
- Right-sized housing
  - Aging in place
  - ADUs
  - Multi-family housing and rentals
  - Short-term rentals
  - Seasonal homes
  - Mobile Homes
  - Modular/manufactured homes
- Homelessness
- How to support people paying more than 30% income on housing and more than 15% on transportation (AS PER STATUTE RPCs obligation)

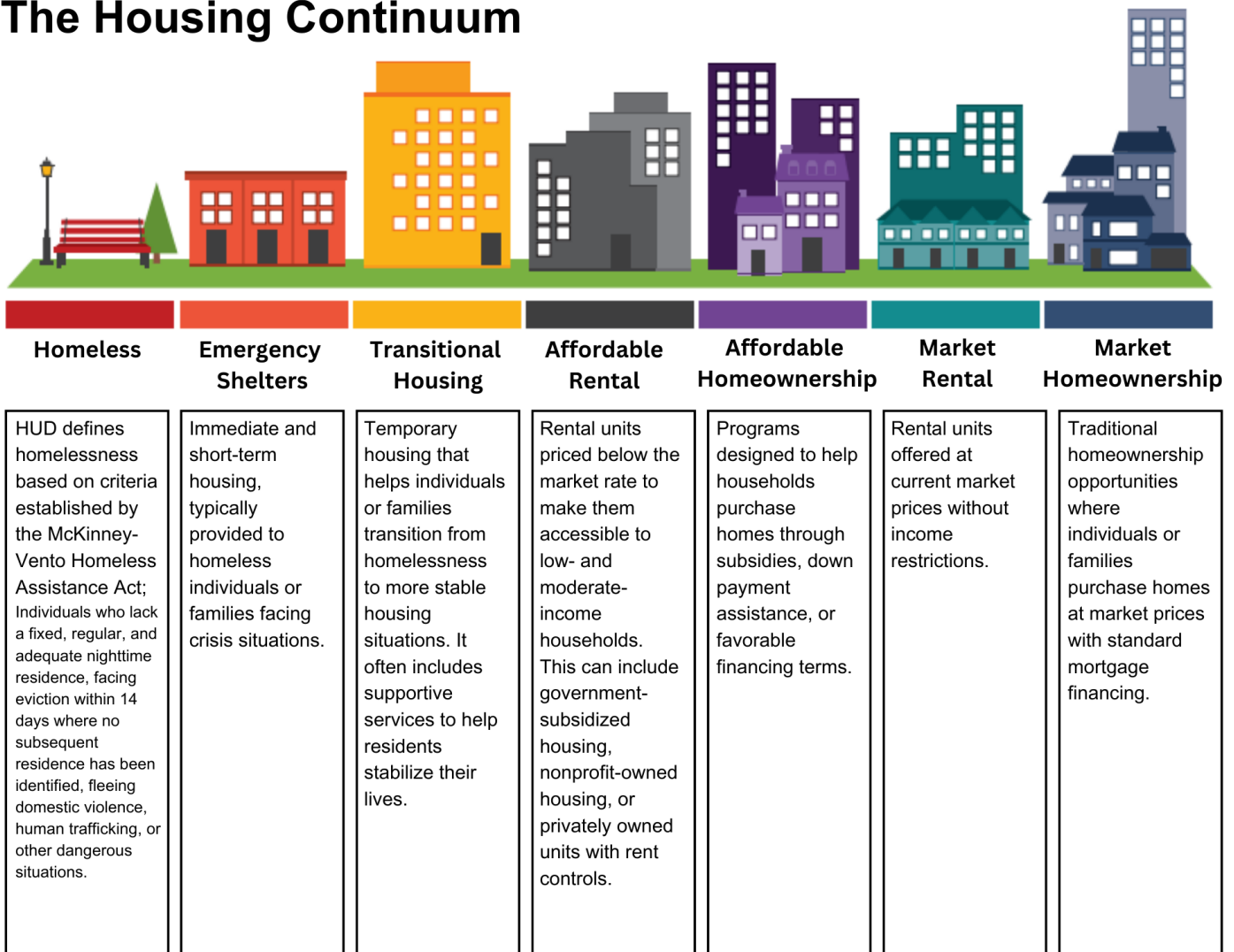
## Housing

*Aspiration: Ensure a range of safe and affordable housing choices are available for all residents.*

### Introduction

CVRPC imagines a healthy housing market to be one where home prices are stable, housing is affordable and safe, there is a diversity of housing options, and the opportunity exists for Central Vermonters to find the housing they need across the housing continuum. Housing continuum refers to a model where the housing ecosystem serves the diverse housing needs of a community, from those experiencing homelessness to those seeking homeownership and everything in between.

# The Housing Continuum



What is being observed in Central Vermont and across the state is that home prices have increased steeply, median income has not kept pace with the rising costs of housing, there is not the variety of housing needed to allow residents to age into smaller units, and there are many holes in the housing continuum. These weaknesses in the market are manifested in several ways: many central Vermont municipalities have very low vacancy rates, Central Vermont residents are housing cost-burdened, and homelessness rates in the Region have increased each year. Further complicating the story, much of the Region’s existing housing stock is vulnerable to flooding and other natural disasters.

Access to housing impacts local economic development, school enrollment, land use, traffic patterns and the region’s ability to attract new people. Providing housing options for various income levels, lifestyles, and household compositions positively impacts our region's economy and social vitality.

This chapter will describe the current housing stock in Central Vermont and its weaknesses, identify regional and community-level need for new housing, and describe how the CVRPC will work to encourage the supply of a diverse and affordable housing supply conveniently located to access existing and planned town and village centers.

### Goals:

Goal 1: Maximize the preservation and creation of housing where local utilities and services are available.

Goal 2: Eliminate housing in high hazard areas or mitigate risk.

Goal 3: Plan for housing across the housing continuum.

Goal 4: Minimize the contribution of greenhouse gases by the housing sector.

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Call out: Definitions

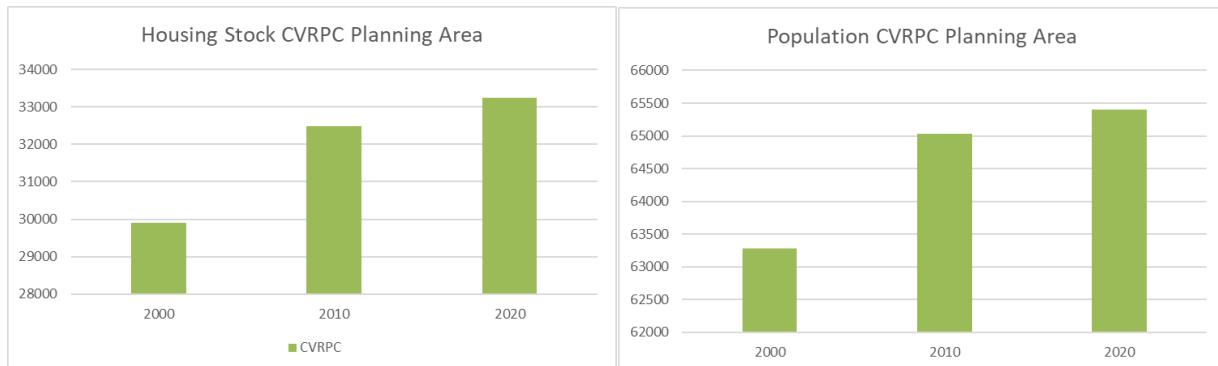
Housing Units: A house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, a single room occupied as a separate living quarter or vacant units intended for occupancy.

## Households: Central Vermonters sharing a Housing Unit

### 1: Housing Stock and Characteristics

#### 1.1: Housing Stock CVRPC Planning Area

In 2020, there were 33,234 housing units and 65,402 residents in the CVRPC planning area (2020 U.S. Census). Since 2000, the number of units has grown but at a slower rate than previous decades. The slowed creation of new units between 2010 and 2020 was likely impacted by the 2008 Great Recession, the accompanying housing crash and following economic stagnation of the 2010s.



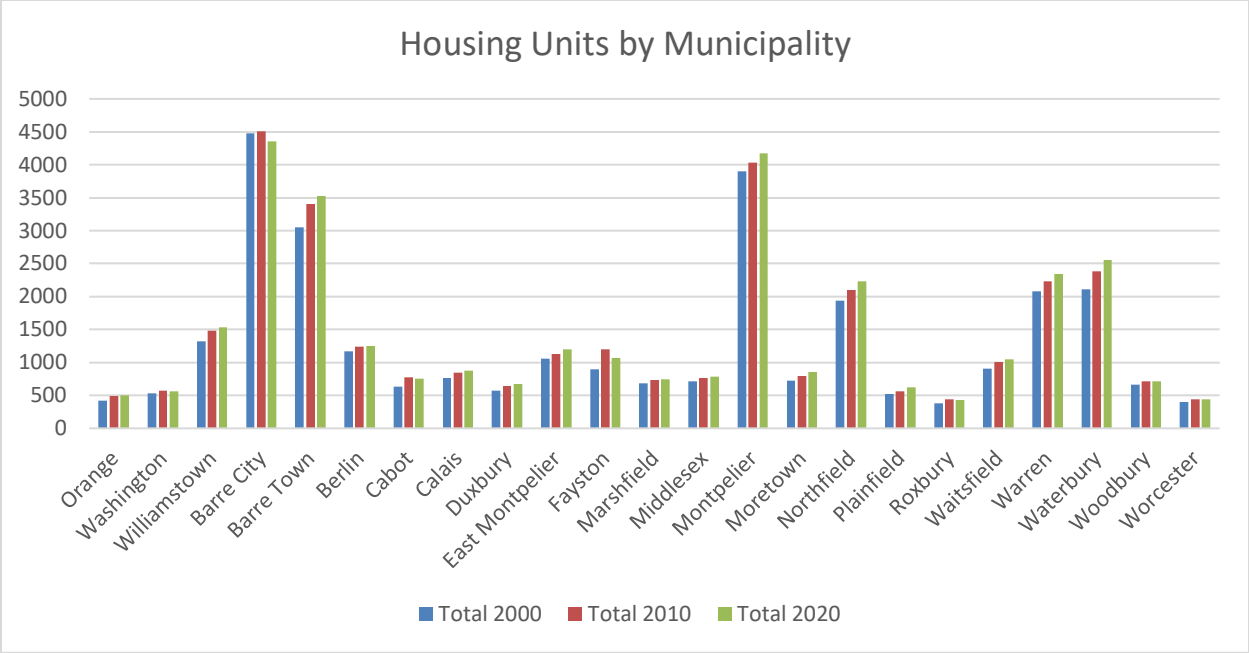
Census Table H001 – Decennial Census

Although the Region’s housing has increased, even if at a slowing pace, this trend is not reflected across all municipalities. Many communities have recorded a decrease or stagnant growth in their housing stock.

#### 1.2: Population CVRPC Planning Area

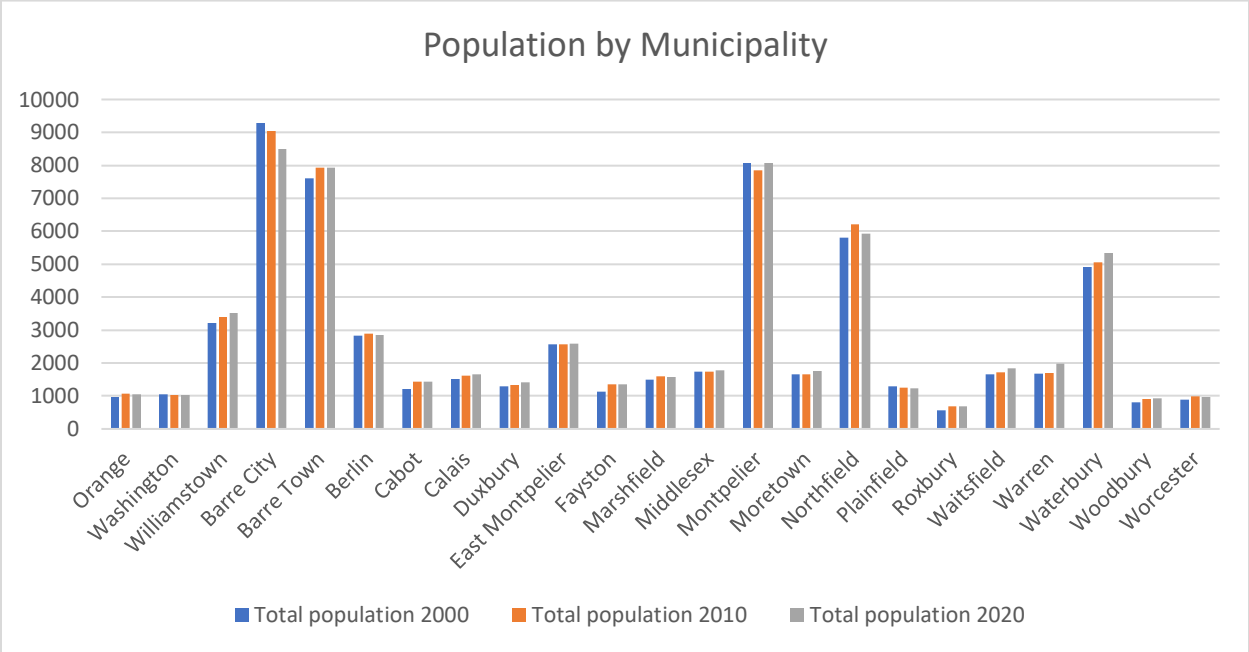
While housing growth has been modest, the population of the Central Vermont planning area has continued to grow, though at a similarly slow rate. Between 2010 and 2020, the Region gained only 368 new residents. That number would likely be even lower without the COVID-19 Pandemic, which is speculated to have increased migration from denser urban areas to rural communities, like Vermont (VT Department of Taxes). Pandemic-related migration to Vermont has since slowed down and CVRPC will continue to measure its lasting impacts.

#### 1.3: Housing Stock by Municipality



Decennial Census – Table H001

1.4: Population by Municipality

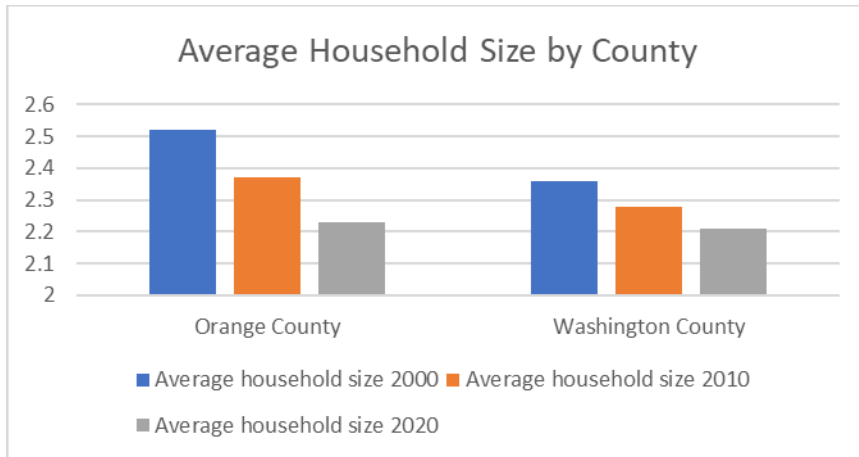


Decennial Census – Table P001

1.5: Household Composition

Changes in population and housing stock do not tell the whole story. During these same two decades, the number of occupants per household decreased. Household size has decreased by over 6% in Washington County and 11% in Orange County (the CVRPC planning region is all of

Washington County and three towns in Orange County: Orange, Washington, and Williamstown). 20 of the 23 member towns in the Region experienced decreased average household size between 2000 and 2020. This implies that even without population growth, new housing units would be needed to house the population of Central Vermont.



ACS – Table S1101

While the average household size has decreased, the average floor area of new housing units in the United States has grown substantially over the last half-century, which has contributed to a mismatch between housing supply and demand. First-time homebuyers who may not yet have children and older residents who may no longer have children living at home are often looking for smaller housing options. In Central Vermont, programs to encourage a diversity of housing options will help buyers to purchase or rent a housing unit appropriate to their housing needs and budget.

A major obstacle Central Vermont is facing in achieving a healthy housing market is the natural changes in our demographics. Most critically, the share of Vermonters between 40-54 has dropped significantly while the share of Vermonters aged 65-79 has grown rapidly. The housing stock is incapable of evolving fast enough to meet these needs.

### Housing Types and Uses;

### Single Family Homes



These are stand alone houses typically with their own land, yard and parking.

### Multi-Family Homes



These can include duplexes, triplexes, or larger buildings divided into multiple units, offering rental income or separate living spaces.

### Apartments



Found in both small buildings and larger complexes, apartments range from studio units to multiple-bedroom setups.

### Condominiums



Often found in more urban or suburban settings, condos offer ownership of individual units within a larger complex, with shared amenities.

### Farmhouses and Rural Homes



Especially in more rural parts of Central Vermont, farmhouses and other rural-style homes on larger plots of land can be found.

### Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)



Separate, private living unit in a larger single-family home, attached or in a separate building on the same lot. ADUs have separate living and sleeping quarters. State law mandates that ADUs have sufficient wastewater capacity and is no larger than 30% of the floor area or 900 square feet, whichever is larger

### Townhouses



Similar to condos in ownership structure, townhouses are typically multi-story units that share walls with adjacent units.

### Mobile Homes



In some areas, mobile homes or manufactured homes on private land or in parks are available as affordable housing options.



## 2: Homelessness, Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing

Homelessness rates have increased in the Region, driven in part by the affordable housing shortage. For many in the Region, homeownership and renting are not feasible; for others, the housing stock may not accommodate their needs. Homelessness rates in the Region have increased in the last six consecutive years and, statewide, by 19% between 2022 and 2023.

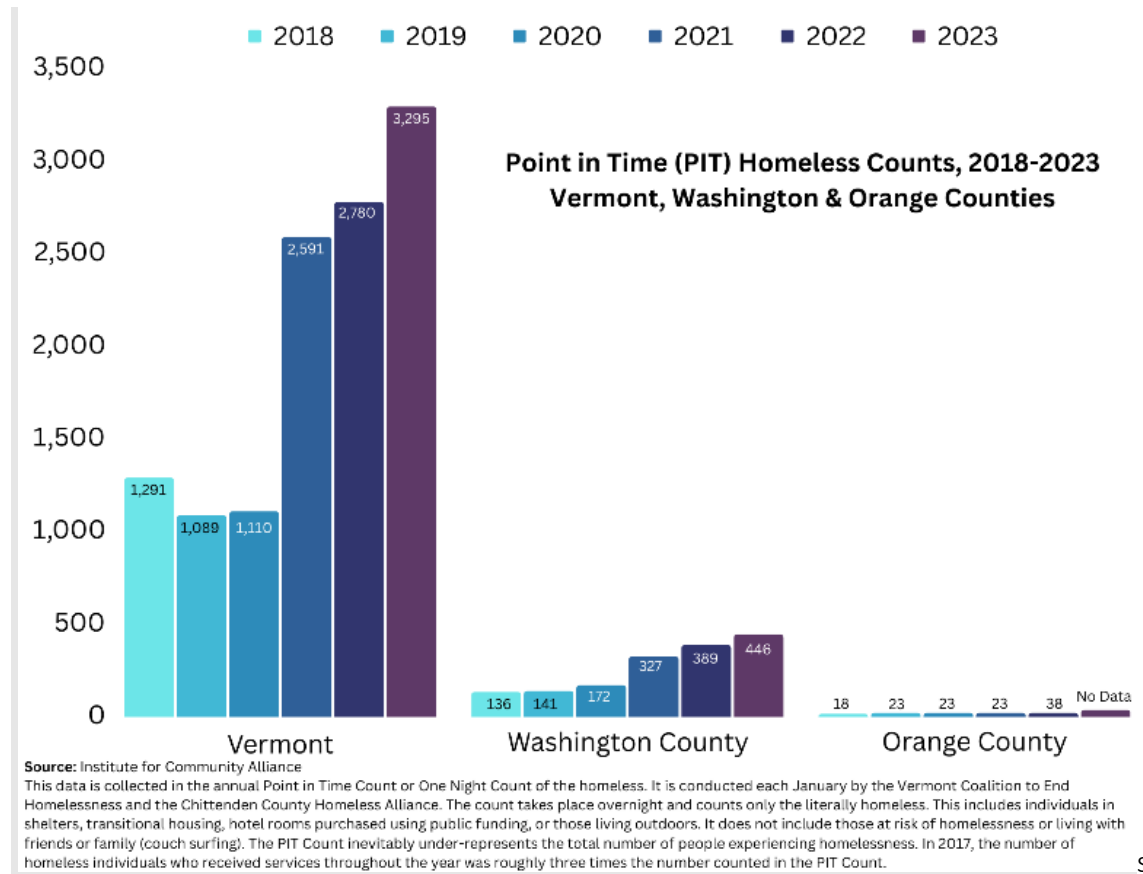
Children and older residents represent vulnerable subgroups and the number of children and older individuals experiencing homelessness has risen sharply. Between 2007 and 2022, Vermont was one of five states with the highest increase in families with children experiencing homelessness: an increase of 421 families (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). The Vermont PIT Counts (detailed below) further illustrate a grim picture for children experiencing homelessness. In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, children made up 251 of the individuals experiencing homelessness in Vermont and in 2023, this ballooned to 654 children. In Central Vermont, there was a similar trend with 22 children experiencing homelessness during 2019's PIT Count and 87 in 2022. As Vermont's population ages, so does its population of older people experiencing homelessness and many resources, including homeless shelters, do not have the resources to care for the specialized needs of the older persons, which often including medical issues related to long-term substance use, chronic health conditions, and/or effects of co-occurring mental health conditions. The growing severity of the homelessness crisis underscores the Region's need for more affordable and specialized housing.

Vermont's needs differ from many other areas with an uptick in individuals experiencing homelessness. The state has the second-highest rate of homelessness in the country but one of the highest rates of sheltered individuals, which speaks to the need to move from emergency shelters and transitional housing to permanent housing. As detailed below, effective solutions to homelessness must go beyond simply building more affordable housing to provide holistic assistance to people experiencing homelessness. However, a critical first step in any comprehensive solution is to ensure an adequate supply of affordable permanent housing.

There are currently resources in the Region for those experiencing homelessness, but they are not sufficient to meet the current or projected need. In Washington County, there are 1,311 units of subsidized apartments with specific affordability restrictions or reserved for residents with housing vouchers. The majority of these are restricted to housing for older and/or disabled tenants while others are designated as accessible units. Twenty-seven units are designated as supportive housing for those experiencing homelessness. Good Samaritan Haven operates the only homeless shelters in the CVRPC planning area for adults. With facilities in Berlin, Barre, Barre Town and Montpelier, they had 76 beds available in 2023. While this is an incredible resource for the Region, there is still much unmet need for housing those experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is a complex issue and increasing housing stock is one part of the solution, but not the only answer to the issue. Those experiencing homelessness may be also experiencing the effects of trauma, substance use disorder, mental health conditions, aging or any combination of these. It is important to have our region's solutions meet the complexity of

needs. Point in Time Counts, a Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and Chittenden County Homeless Alliance survey of all individuals experiencing homelessness, conducted on one night each January since 2016 showed that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness has increased in the Region and statewide, with a spike during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

### Shelter PIT Counts by Type for Washington and Orange Counties



### 2.1: Affordable Housing Shortage

Despite vacancy rates exceeding the target of 5% in most towns and across the Region as a whole (implying sufficient total housing), affordability indicators show a need for increased affordable housing. Additionally, factoring transportation costs into affordability assessments highlights the need for more housing close to employment and commerce centers.

#### What are Missing Middle Homes?

Missing Middle Homes are rooted in Vermont’s pre-1945 development pattern and are increasingly viewed by Vermont housing leaders as a way to deliver diverse and affordable housing choices in convenient, existing walkable neighborhoods and places.

Missing Middle Homes (MMH) include home types like accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes, small-scale multi-household buildings, and neighborhood-scale mixed-use/live-work buildings – common before local zoning codes began to separate different kinds of uses and building types. Traditionally, American neighborhoods provided a diverse mix of housing options for homeowners and renters that worked for people of different ages, abilities, and walks of life. Over the 20th century, we made many of those options illegal or limited where they could be built which, more than anything else, undermined the walkability and vitality of our would-be 15-minute neighborhoods. How do we reverse this? We must allow every neighborhood to incrementally fill in with housing options that meet people’s real needs.

What are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and how do they ameliorate the housing crisis?

An accessory dwelling unit or ADU is a separate, private living unit with a larger owner-occupied home, attached to an owner-occupied home or a separate building on the same lot of an owner-occupied dwelling. ADUs have separate living and sleeping quarters, must include food preparation and sanitation facilities, including sufficient wastewater capacity. The area of an ADU can be no larger than 30% the square footage of the main dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is greater. ADUs can help address the acute need for smaller and more affordable homes. Potential uses of ADUs to address changing housing and financial needs of Central Vermonters include;

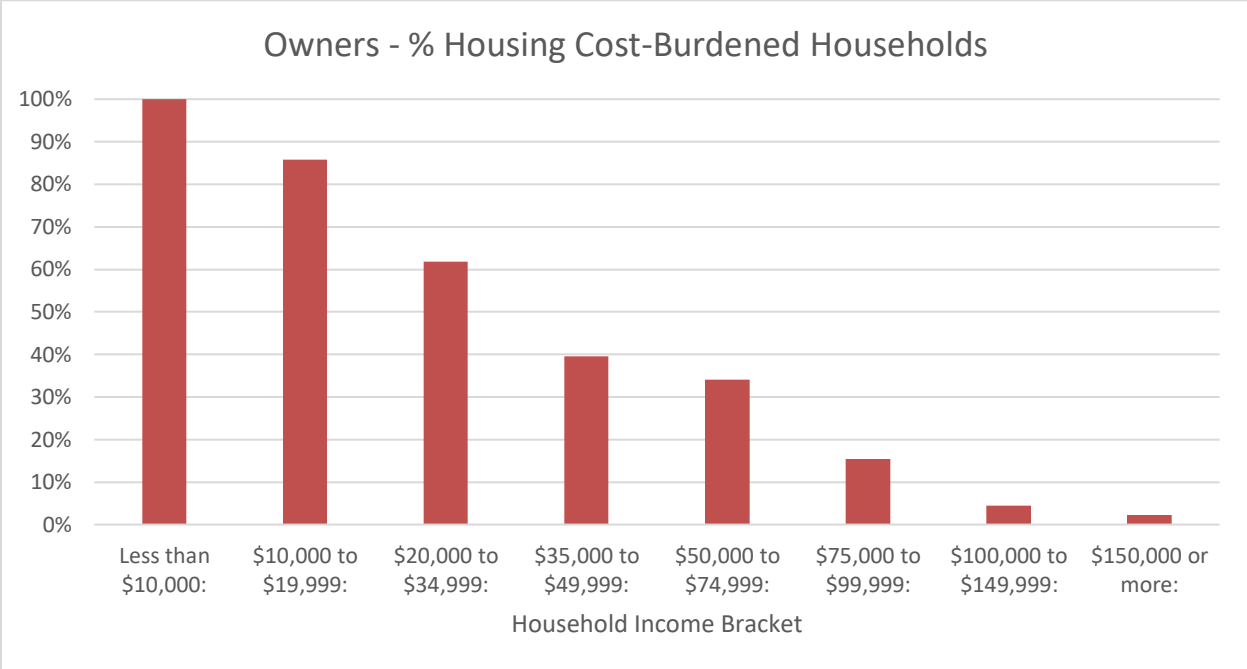
- Downsizing into an ADU for older Vermonters freeing up their residence for another household (aging in place)
- Increased income
- Homes for individuals exiting homelessness to move into
- Workforce housing
- Getting a foothold in Vermont communities
- Affordable option for small families, relatives, workers and refugee families

CVRPC and recent State legislation encourage developing diverse, affordable housing through several ways. These include constructing multi-unit housing developments and accessory dwelling units, reducing zoning density restrictions in appropriate areas for growth, and converting single-family homes into duplexes. In 2022, the average new single-family home was 2,300 square feet, while the average unit in a new multi-unit construction was 1,300 square feet. Although housing units in multi-unit constructions are not necessarily smaller than single-family developments, developing both single- and multi-unit housing will increase housing variety and help residents find the housing that best suits their needs. This would help reduce both the housing shortage and housing cost burden. Programs through Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA), Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB), Downstreet Housing and Community Development and Habitat for Humanity create affordable housing and offer assistance for low-moderate residents through subsidies, tax credits, low-interest loans, and revolving loan funds.

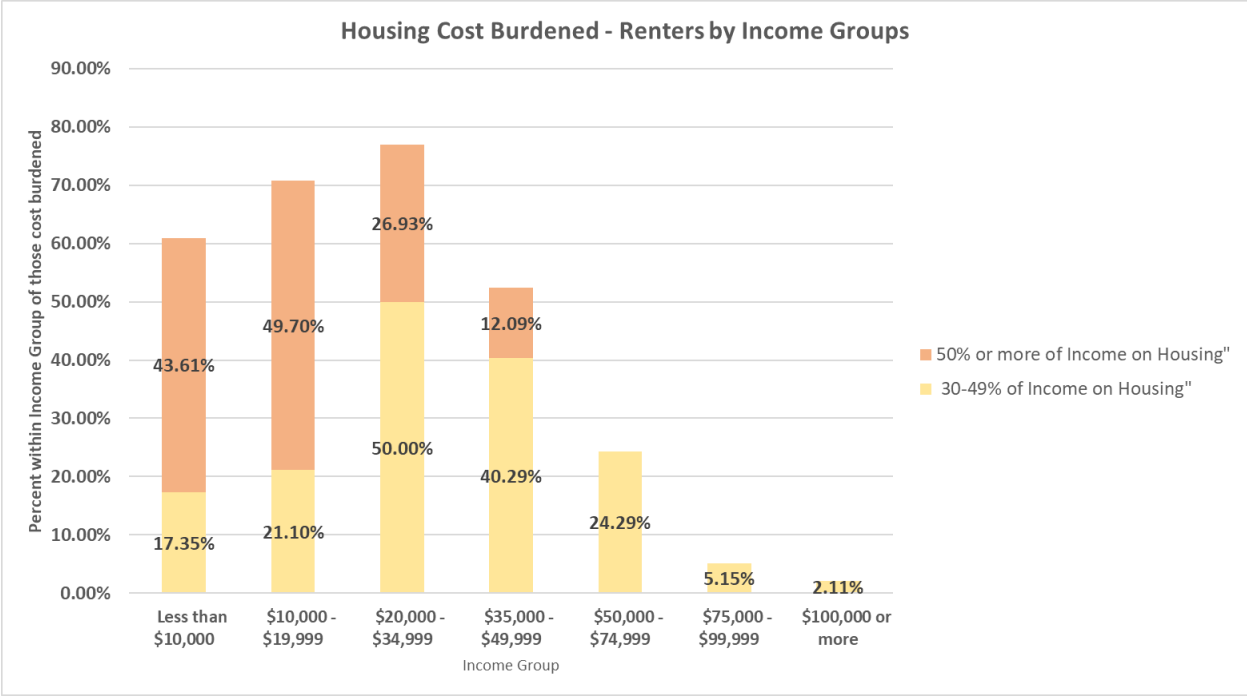
During the flood events of 2011 and 2023, many units of housing were lost and many more showed evidence that they were susceptible to the effects of future flood events, even if they had been spared damage during one, or both, of these significant floods. Flooding disproportionately affected the availability of affordable housing, as much of the Region’s stock of housing that is both affordable and located near employment and services is in floodplains (for example, in Barre City’s Ward 2).

**2.2: Housing Cost Burden**

The number of Central Vermonters who are housing cost-burdened indicates that affordable housing supply is not keeping up with demand. Housing cost-burdened households refer to those spending 30% or more of their income on housing; in Central Vermont, that includes 23% of owner-occupied households and 46% of renters. Those who are considered severely cost-burdened are spending 50% or more on their housing. In Washington County, 9% of homeowners and 19% of renters are severely cost burdened. Both cost burdened and severely cost burdened makes these households at higher risks of housing instability, including frequent moves, eviction, foreclosure and homelessness. As detailed in the chart below, housing cost burden is especially high among low-income owners. While the data is not available for renters to illustrate housing burden by household income, the trend, as shown for household owners, indicates demand for additional financial support and programs for owners and renters of all incomes. The high percentage of renters who are severely cost burdened shows the disparity of housing cost burden between owners and renters in our region.



ACS 2022 – Table B25095



2.3: Housing and Transportation Index

Vermont statute states that Regional Planning Commissions create a policy for households to avoid spending greater than 30% of their income on housing and not more than 15% of their income on transportation costs. Housing and transportation constitute a relatively smaller proportion of household budgets in the downtown areas of Central Vermont compared to households in lower density census tracts. According to the data presented, only certain parts of Montpelier and Barre City have a combined cost burden of less than 45% of household income for these two expenses. These findings support the goals of encouraging housing affordability by placing new housing in and around dense mixed-use core areas. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight that across Central Vermont, median spending on transportation never falls below the state identified threshold of 15% of household income, indicating that density and access to services and transit alone is not enough to bring transportation costs below 15%.

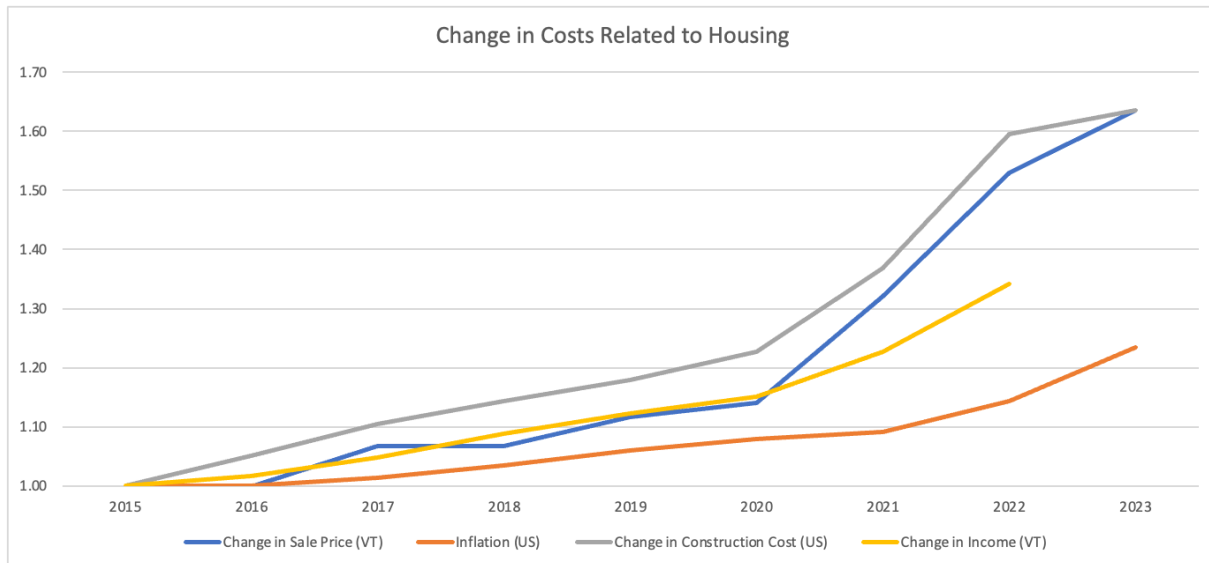
Municipality(ies)	Tract #	Percent of Area Median Income Spent on:		
		Housing and Transportation	Housing	Transportation
Orange/Washington	9591	54%	26%	28%
Orange/Washington	9591	53%	25%	28%
Williamstown	9592	54%	27%	27%
Marshfield/Cabot/ Plainfield	9540	53%	26%	27%
Woodbury/Calais	9541	57%	30%	27%
Worcester/Middlesex	9542	58%	30%	28%

Waterbury	9543	60%	35%	25%
Duxbury/Moretown	9544	58%	31%	27%
Berlin	9545	51%	28%	23%
Montpelier	9546	56%	34%	22%
Montpelier	9547	49%	27%	22%
Montpelier	9548	40%	23%	18%
Montpelier	9549	47%	26%	21%
East Montpelier	9550	60%	34%	26%
Barre City	9551	38%	19%	19%
Barre City	9552	40%	21%	19%
Barre Town	9553	53%	27%	27%
Barre Town	9554	46%	21%	25%
Roxbury/Northfield	9555	50%	25%	25%
Warren	9556	57%	31%	26%
Waitsfield	9557	54%	30%	25%
Fayston	9558	63%	35%	27%

*Source: 2019 Housing and Transportation Index – Center for Neighborhood Technology*

#### 2.4: Housing Cost Factors

The Region’s prolonged affordability issues are due to factors including indexed median home sale prices, new construction costs, VT median income, and inflation. Homes sale prices have grown rapidly since 2016 (over 6% per year) and there is no indication that Vermont will be able to build housing for any cheaper, as single-family home construction costs have also increased at a similar rate. Both measures have far exceeded national inflation. A silver lining is that statewide median income is also increasing, though its growth has trailed behind the construction and sales indices.



### 3: Vacancy Rates

Despite the demand for additional affordable housing across all demographic groups, vacancy rates in the region have been on the rise over the last two decades. This calls for deeper investigation into the causes of these housing units being left unused and opportunities to reactivate these housing units should be encouraged. During this same period, the vacancy rate for occasional-use housing units has decreased. CVRPC should investigate the relationship between these two housing categories and attempt to identify any negative impacts on housing availability or affordability.

Percent of Vacant Housing Units		
	For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	All Other Vacancies
2000	11%	3%
2010	11%	5%
2020	10%	6%

2000, 2010, 2020 Decennial Census

### 4: Housing Targets

Per 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(9), CVRPC has completed a comprehensive housing targets assessment. For this analysis, we have used a planning horizon of 2030. This housing assessment is meant to be a stand-in for the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment to be completed by the Department of Housing and Community Development. This is an interim measure until the State assessment

is complete. The analysis is based exclusively on data from the 2020 census. This assessment is based on four primary data points: the growth rate of households in Central Vermont, the natural rate of housing unit destruction, a healthy vacancy rate of 5%, and the estimated number homeless households in Central Vermont. By focusing on these factors, CVRPC has developed a rough understanding of the evolving housing landscape, set regional and local housing targets, and hopes to facilitate informed decision-making to address the diverse housing needs of the community over the next decade. Based on this assessment, the region has a target of 1,267 new or replacement housing units for Central Vermonsters of all backgrounds.

For much of the Central Vermont planning area, housing costs exceed the affordability threshold of 30% of household income. To establish housing needs, 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(9) requires regional planning commissions to estimate total needed housing and disaggregate targets by municipality. CVRPC developed the following targets based on the theory that if new housing is built to accommodate the rate at which the number of households grew between 2010 and 2020, replace housing units that are being removed from the housing stock through natural destruction, and elevate the regional vacancy rate to 5%, this supply-side action would help depress housing costs and increase housing affordability. For this assessment, a healthy vacancy rate for non-seasonal housing was set at 5%.

	# housing units needed to accommodate new households
+	# of housing units needed to replace deteriorated housing units
+	# of housing units needed to elevate the vacancy rate to 5%
	<hr/>
	<b>Total # of new housing units to meet demand by 2030</b>

Based on this analysis, CVRPC estimates that by 2030 an additional 521 housing units are needed to accommodate the growth in the number of households and elevate the vacancy rate to 5%. While 450 housing units are needed to replace the destruction of existing housing units. Therefore, a total of 971 new housing units need to be built by 2030 to relieve current pressure on the housing market and provide housing for immigration into Central Vermont. However, it relies on a number of assumptions, most notably that the creation of new housing will improve affordability, and second, this analysis assumes that past population growth is equivalent to new housing demand. CVRPC will continue to work to integrate this analysis into the other goals of this Regional Plan.

As part of this analysis and in support of developing new housing in compact town and village centers, CVRPC reviewed municipal water and wastewater capacity to accommodate additional housing units. Based on this review and in consultation with municipal planning goals, **supplemental** planning targets have been applied to municipalities served by utilities. While CVRPC believes there are advantages for municipalities that focus new growth in their centers, there is nothing in these targets to prevent the majority of new housing to be in low-density suburban or exurban districts. Further, in recognition that many folks moving to Central Vermont mostly prefer to live in rural or very rural locations, these augmented numbers were not used to



displace housing in other municipalities or rural areas.(UVM, *Live in Vermont Survey*, 2020) While CVRPC recognizes that growth in clustered villages centers has its advantages, it would be folly not to plan for continued growth in our rural municipalities. Therefore, this plan will continue to use the statutory language of *targets*, while in practice these numbers describe both targeted growth but also predicted growth.

The municipal housing targets are presented by census tract below.

<b>Census Tract</b>	<b>Town(s)</b>	<b>Target Housing Units for 2030</b>
Census Tract 9591.01	Orange/Washington	27
Census Tract 9592	Williamstown	48
Census Tract 9540	Cabot/Marshfield/ Plainfield	64
Census Tract 9541	Calais/Woodbury	41
Census Tract 9542	Middlesex/ Worcester	42
Census Tract 9543	Waterbury	82
Census Tract 9544	Duxbury/Moretown	45
Census Tract 9545	Berlin	43
Census Tract 9546	Montpelier	38
Census Tract 9547	Montpelier	23
Census Tract 9548	Montpelier	37
Census Tract 9549	Montpelier	25
Census Tract 9550	East Montpelier	41
Census Tract 9551	Barre City	64
Census Tract 9552	Barre City	64
Census Tract 9553	Barre Town	63
Census Tract 9554	Barre Town	60
Census Tract 9555.01	Northfield	26
Census Tract 9555.02	Northfield/Roxbury	56
Census Tract 9556	Warren	36
Census Tract 9557	Waitsfield	25
Census Tract 9558	Fayston	21
	<b>CVRPC TOTAL</b>	<b>971</b>

The above calculation of housing need does not include new housing for Central Vermonters experiencing homelessness. Housing aimed at addressing homelessness is considered at the regional level in this analysis. This approach acknowledges the complexity of homelessness and the need for additional services. New construction is often not enough. Therefore, CVRPC recognizes that housing designed to alleviate homelessness should likely be situated where supportive services are already available, rather than evenly distributed across the region.

According to the 2022 Point in Time (PIT) counts conducted by the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, there are 296 households experiencing homelessness in the Central Vermont

planning area. Of these, approximately 51 are households with children. This count includes figures for Washington County and a proportional estimate for the three CVRPC municipalities in Orange County. Consequently, there is a need to create an additional mix of 296 housing units to support this population.

When considering the combined factors of low vacancy rates, the increasing number of households, natural destruction of housing units, and the results of the PIT homelessness survey, the projected target for total new housing units in Central Vermont by the year 2030 is 1,267. This figure accounts for a blend of affordable and market-rate housing to accommodate all demographics.

## Conclusion

CVRPC encourages member municipalities and residents to address the Region's shortage of affordable housing through various methods. These include diversifying the types of new housing units constructed, increasing density in new and existing housing units, and zoning for growth close to existing population centers and infrastructure and out of natural disaster hazard areas. The following are goals and strategies to ensure that all Central Vermont residents have housing that meets their needs.

## Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Maximize the preservation and creation of housing where local utilities and services are available and have capacity.

Strategy 1.1 Provide technical assistance to municipalities updating their regulatory documents to diversify and grow their housing stock where there is capacity and services.

Strategy 1.2 Provide technical assistance to municipalities updating their regulatory documents to ensure transparent and predictable local permitting.

Strategy 1.3 Identify where housing can be built to limit associated costs such as transportation.

Strategy 1.4 Actively participate in the Act 250 process to support appropriate housing development.

Strategy 1.5 Provide technical assistance to municipalities pursuing the state designation program to accommodate and facilitate new housing.

Goal 2: Eliminate housing in high hazard areas or mitigate risk.

Strategy 2.1 Provide technical assistance to municipalities to ensure residents have access to the National Flood Insurance program.

**Strategy 2.2** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan for and encourage new development in areas that are less vulnerable to future floods.

**Strategy 2.3** Coordinate with and provide technical assistance to municipalities in their Hazard Mitigation Planning to ensure that the comprehensive plan identifies future growth areas in safer locations.

**Strategy 2.4** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to conserve land and discourage development in particularly vulnerable areas along river corridors such as flood plains and wetlands.

**Strategy 2.5** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to protect people, buildings, and facilities where development already exists in vulnerable areas, to reduce future flooding risk.

**Strategy 2.6** Coordinate with and provide technical assistance to municipalities in buyouts of properties that are repeatedly flooded.

Goal 3: Plan for housing across the housing continuum.

Strategy 3.1 Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan for and regulate for a variety of housing typologies.

Strategy 3.2 Provide training to residents on cost effective opportunities to take advantage of state initiatives to add accessory dwelling units within their existing lots.

Strategy 3.3 Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan for housing across the demographics.

Strategy 3.4 Provide technical assistance and assist towns to identify potential partners for affordable housing development.

Strategy 3.5 Advocate for state policies and funding initiatives that increase housing opportunities across the housing continuum.

Strategy 3.6 Provide technical assistance to local housing groups.

Goal 4: Minimize the contribution of greenhouse gases by the housing sector

Strategy 4.1 Provide technical assistance to municipalities, transportation, and housing partners to identify where housing can be built to limit associated vehicle miles traveled.

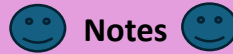
## Statutory Requirements

State Requirements	CVRPC Goals & Strategies	Other Chapters
<b>24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1):</b> To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.	<b>Goal 1; 1.1-1.5</b>	<b>Land Use</b>

<p><b>24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(A)</b> Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.</p>	<p><b>Goal 1: 1.1-1.5, Goal 2; 2.1</b></p>	<p><b>Transportation, Land Use</b></p>
<p><b>24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(C)</b> Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.</p>	<p><b>Goal 1; 1.1-1.5, Goal 2; 2.1, Goal 3; 3.1-3.6, Goal 4; 4.1</b></p>	<p><b>Utilities, Facilities and Services, Land Use</b></p>
<p><b>24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(D)</b> Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.</p>	<p><b>Goal 1; 1.1-1.5, Goal 2; 2.1, Goal 3; 3.1-3.6, Goal 4; 4.1</b></p>	<p><b>Utilities, Facilities and Services, Transportation, Land Use</b></p>
<p><b>24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(11):</b> To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters...</p> <p>...(A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.</p> <p>...(B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.</p> <p>...(C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.</p> <p>...(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.</p>	<p><b>Goal 1; 1.1-1.5, Goal 2; 2.1, Goal 3; 3.1-3.6</b></p>	<p><b>Utilities, Facilities and Services, Economy</b></p>
<p><b>24 V.S.A. § 4348a (9)</b> A housing element that identifies the regional and community-level need for housing that will result in an adequate supply of building code and energy code compliant homes where most households spend not more than 30 percent of their income on housing and not more than 15 percent on transportation. To establish housing needs, the Department of Housing and Community Development shall publish statewide and regional housing targets or ranges as part of the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment. The regional planning commission shall consult the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment; current and expected demographic data; the current location, quality, types, and cost of housing; other local studies related to housing needs; and data gathered pursuant to subsection 4382(c) of this title. If no such data has been gathered, the regional planning commission shall gather it. The regional planning commission’s assessment shall</p>	<p><b>Goal 1; 1.1-1.5, Goal 2; 2.1, Goal 3; 3.1-3.6</b></p>	<p><b>Utilities, Facilities and Services, Economy, Climate, Land Use</b></p>

<p>estimate the total needed housing investments in terms of price, quality, unit size or type, and zoning district as applicable and shall disaggregate regional housing targets or ranges by municipality. The housing element shall include a set of recommended actions to satisfy the established needs.</p>		
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## 2016 Plan Goals & Policies/Strategies



**Goal 1: To promote the development of housing opportunities for all residents of the region, including and especially, affordable, elderly, and special needs housing.**

**Goal 2: To encourage innovative planning, design, and development of housing which minimizes its costs, energy consumption, and environmental impacts.**

**Goal 3: To promote preservation of the existing housing stock and the development of future housing in the village/town and employment centers of the Region, or those areas designated as Growth Centers.**

**Goal 4: To support the coordination between public, private, and non-profit agencies involved with planning, financing, and developing affordable housing.**

**Goal 5: Encourage large employers to explore and implement employer assisted housing.**

**Policy 1.** The Region's towns, non-profits, and state agencies should work collaboratively to address the Region's housing needs

**Policy 2.** Municipal plans should assess the community's ability to meet the goals set out in the Regional Housing Distribution Plan.

**Policy 3** Municipalities should encourage housing at the maximum densities allowed by local plans and regulations and at densities at or above those of their traditional/existing neighborhoods.

**Policy 4** Municipalities should seek to ensure at least 20 percent of the housing stock is affordable, as defined by 24 VSA, Chapter 117, Section 4303.

**Policy 5** The majority of new housing should be constructed in town centers and designated growth centers

**Policy 6** The Region's existing housing stock should be preserved and renovated. Adaptive re-use of older and historic buildings should be encouraged especially in town centers

**Policy 7** Housing units that are affordable to households below the area median income and housing near employment centers should be encouraged.

**Action 1.** Assist towns in finding the resources needed to carry out housing needs analyses to identify the specific types of housing most needed by the community.

Goal 3

Goal 4

Goal 1

Goal 1, Goal 3

Removed due to no effective way to encourage or implement by CVRPC.

Goal 3, Strategy 3.4

Strategy 1.5

Strategy 1.4, Strategy 3.2

Strategy 3.4

Strategy 1.4

Strategy 3.1

Strategy 3.3

Strategy 3.3, Strategy 3.4

## 2025 Plan Goals & Policies/Strategies

**GOAL 1: To maximize the preservation and creation of housing where local utilities and services are available and have capacity**

**Strategy 1.1** Provide technical assistance to municipalities updating their regulatory documents to diversify and grow their housing stock where there is capacity and services.

**Strategy 1.2** Provide technical assistance to municipalities updating their regulatory documents to ensure transparent and predictable local permitting.

**Strategy 1.3** identify where housing can be built to limit associated costs such as transportation.

**Strategy 1.4** Actively participate in the Act 250 process to support appropriate housing development.

**Strategy 1.5** Provide technical assistance to municipalities pursuing the state designation program to accommodate and facilitate new housing.

**GOAL 2: To eliminate housing in high hazard areas or mitigate risk.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to ensure residents have access to the National Flood Insurance program

**Strategy 2.2:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan for and encourage new development in areas that are less vulnerable to future floods.

**Strategy 2.2 a :** Coordinate with and provide technical assistance to municipalities in their Hazard Mitigation Planning to ensure that the comprehensive plan identifies future growth areas in safer locations

**Strategy 2.3:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to conserve land and discourage development in particularly vulnerable areas along river corridors such as flood plains and wetlands.

**Strategy 2.4:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to protect people, buildings, and facilities where development already exists in vulnerable areas, to reduce future flooding risk.

**Strategy 2.5:** Coordinate with and provide technical assistance to municipalities in buyouts of properties that are repeatedly flooded.

**Action 2.** Encourage the adoption of local land use regulations and bylaws that allow concentrated development where appropriate infrastructure can be made or is available.

**Action 3.** Review town plans to assure that all towns in the Region have a housing element that identifies housing issues and outlines steps through which housing needs will be addressed

**Action 4.** Assist towns with the process of designating growth centers.

**Action 5.** Help towns to identify potential partners for affordable housing development

**Action 6.** Continue advocating for state policies and funding initiatives that increase housing opportunities for the Region's residents

**Action 7.** Make Geographic Information System technology and other tools available to communities so they may analyze the impact of existing and/or proposed zoning policy on the potential for housing development.

**Action 8.** Continue support of local housing groups.

**Action 9.** Promote the density building land use strategies discussed in this Chapter and in the Land Use Element as a matter of course through our technical assistance programs.

**Action 10.** Actively participate in the Act 250 process to support appropriate housing development.

**Action 11.** Encourage towns to develop a streamlined permitting process for housing along with density bonuses and lowering of impact fees in growth centers, village centers and downtowns, and other areas where housing growth is desired

Strategy 1.1, Strategy 2.2A

Strategy 3.3, Strategy, 2.4, Strategy 1.3

Strategy 1.1

Strategy 3.4

Strategy 3.5

Strategy 3.6

See Land Use Chapter

Strategy 1.4

Strategy 1.2

Added Goal 2 and Strategies 2.1-2.5 to address flooding and other hazard prevention and mitigation (not in 2016 plan)

### **GOAL 3: To plan for housing across the housing continuum**

**Strategy 3.1** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan for and regulate for a variety of housing typologies.

**Strategy 3.2** Provide training to residents on cost effective opportunities to take advantage of state initiatives to add accessory dwelling units within their existing lots.

**Strategy 3.3** Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan for housing across the demographics.

**Strategy 3.4** Provide technical assistance and assist towns to identify potential partners for affordable housing development.

**Strategy 3.5** Advocate for state policies and funding initiatives that increase housing opportunities across the housing continuum.

**Strategy 3.6** Provide technical assistance to local housing groups.

### **GOAL 4: To minimize the contribution of green-house gases by the housing sector**

**Strategy 4.1:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities, transportation, and housing partners to identify where housing can be built to limit associated vehicle miles traveled.

## Act 181 and the Regional Plan Future Land Use Map – Outline

### Intro

- Act 181 makes the Regional Plan more important
  - Specifically, the **Future Land Use Map**
- Act 181 reforms Act 250 and the State Designation Program to
  - Facilitate development where we want development
  - Facilitate conservation where we don't want development
  - Ease administrative burden for towns in the long term
- Key points
  - Interim Act 250 exemptions: now until January 1, 2027
  - Long-term Act 250 exemptions: starting January 1, 2027
  - Designation program reform: intended to be simpler for towns, expect some growing pains,
  - Regional Plan Future Land Use Map is now critical to:
    - Development – long-term Act 250 exemptions
    - Conservation? – areas with stricter Act 250 review defined by LURB, not RPCs. TBD if RPCs have any influence on this definition outside of FLU Map
    - Designation program reform

### Outline

(Might be helpful to include in presentation?)

### Background

- Act 250
  - Brief summary of reforms
  - Interim exemptions based on designations
- Designation Program
  - Brief summary of reforms
  - Based on FLU Map
- FLU Map
  - Brief summary of reforms
  - Towns: work with RPC to prioritize areas for development (and conservation?)

### Interim Act 250 Exemptions:

- Now until January 1, 2027
- What are they?
- Does my town already have them?
- Should my town try to get more?
  - How?
    - Same application as current designations
  - Apply now or wait till reformed designation process?
    - Designated areas prior to 2027 will continue to receive benefits under reformed designation program. Current application process is somewhat



burdensome but a known quantity. Reformed process intended to be easier but not yet fully defined.

### Long-Term Act 250 Exemptions

- Starting January 1, 2027
- What are they?
  - Tier-based jurisdiction
- My current designated areas will roll over; how do I add more designated areas?
  - Through FLU Map: areas in three highest-density land use categories will be eligible for Tier 1A or Tier 1B status
  - Towns will need to opt in for Tier 1A or Tier 1B status

### Regional Plan Future Land Use Map

- Increased importance, becomes key to
  - Development: long-term Act 250 exemptions
  - Conservation?
    - LURB defines Tier 3 areas through TBD rule, will be included on future editions of Regional Plan Future Land Use Maps, but RPC do not define these. For follow up: do RPCs have any influence on this?
  - Designation program reform
- Standardized across all RPCs
  - 10 land use categories
  - Grey area: can RPCs choose to add their own categories beyond the standard 10?
- Relation between current designations, FLU Map, Act 250 exemptions, reformed designations
  - Current designated areas + new areas defined in top 3 land use categories on FLU Map become new designated areas (automatically receive financial benefits)
  - For areas in top 3 land use categories to receive long-term Act 250 exemptions, towns need to opt in
    - Tier 1B: town provides letter of support when RPC submits FLU Map to LURB for approval. Town states it wants Tier 1B status for eligible areas
    - Tier 1A: town applies directly to LURB for Tier 1A status for eligible areas
- FLU Map needs approval from LURB
- Definition process: what areas go in which land use category on FLU Map?
  - VAPDA still defining exact methods
  - Consultations with towns + review town plans (especially town plans' FLU Maps) + review zoning + review constraints + include existing state designations
  - How much discretion does CVRPC have?
    - Reminder: LURB has to approve FLU Map and Regional Plan
      - Criteria TBD
    - Potential conflicts: are there times towns and RPC will disagree on land use categories? How would this be resolved?

Comments: none

GOAL/Strategy from Economy/Working Lands Chapter - Develop relationships with Abenaki leaders and center their voice in municipal land use planning.

**Strategy 1:** Partner with the Abenaki Arts & Education Center and municipal leaders to promote indigenous trainings and workshops.

**Strategy 2:** Partner with Abenaki leaders to develop a Land Acknowledgment applicable to CVRPC.

**Strategy 3:** Support education and outreach efforts aimed at furthering the mission of the Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

RPC comments:

Mention VAPDA study in coming up with land uses.

We explain why we do this? Both at this chapter and at the beginning of the document.

Will, did you understand Mike comments around planning goals, toolbox?

Regional review

250 review

Educations

Consultations.

Watershed Planning

[Map here]

Aspiration: Preserve the **rural character and unique historic settlements** with thriving downtown and village centers serving as cultural and economic hubs.

## A Land Use Element

Planning land use provides the basis for all future land development decisions. These decisions will impact every other aspect of the Regional Plan, including energy, transportation, natural resources, economic development, and public utilities and facilities. As such, a clear and concise land use plan is critical to the successful implementation of the goals of a regional plan.

Vermont Statute clearly outlines the criteria that a regional plan is required to address. To that end, the following information is provided to address these statutory requirements. In addition to the text in this section, specific maps are included to provide visual representation of the goals and implementation actions identified herein. **The maps are intended to complement the text, not act as a substitute.**

### Land Use Policy Statement:

This plan proposes a central land use policy that will guide future land use and development based on traditional land use patterns: concentrated nodes of residential and commercial development surrounded by open working lands and conservation lands. To achieve this, CVRPC will prioritize clustered settlement patterns and encourage higher-density residential, commercial, and industrial development in downtown and village centers. Further, CVRPC will work with municipalities to align local regulations, capital planning and public investment strategies with state and regional infill and redevelopment goals.

CVRPC recognizes that transportation has both enabled the development of affordable housing in rural bedroom communities as well as contributed to sprawling linear development along existing state routes and town highways that competes with agricultural uses and contributes to the fragmentation of forestland. Where transportation shortcomings exist, such as lack of mode choice or dependency on vehicles, CVRPC views these as land use shortcomings, manifestations of forces that limited new development in urban cores and adjacent lands where services and alternative mode choice exist. Therefore, CVRPC advocates for regulations that facilitate growth in existing settlements, direct public funding toward village and downtown centers and place new housing in or adjacent to existing walkable neighborhoods.

CVRPC recognizes that human settlement in river corridors and floodplains is at risk of increasingly frequent and intense fluvial erosion and inundation. At the same time, CVRPC recognizes that much of the Region's existing development is in river hazard areas and that it is easier to restrict new development than to remove existing development. CVRPC prioritizes conserving and, where feasible, restoring flood storage capacity and keeping new development out of harm's way. Land use regulation is

the most effective method of preventing future development in floodplains and river corridors – or at least ensuring that development is safe from hazards and does not worsen the hazard downstream.

Mixed-use land use should be determined by measurable impacts on neighborhood characteristics instead of simplistic typologies like Commercial or Industrial. Where compatible, CVRPC supports the transformation of existing commercial areas into areas serving a mix of uses in areas not at risk of flooding.

Development should adhere to State “smart growth principles” (24 V.S.A. § 2791) to minimize its impact on the viability of agricultural operations and its contribution to the fragmentation of large contiguous tracts of woodland. Identified critical wildlife corridors should be protected from fragmentation and uses that reduce their viability for movement of wildlife, particularly where they connect large contiguous tracts of land. Development on wetlands, steep slopes of 25% or more, and ridge lines should be avoided.

Based on these policy statements and using the recommendations from the VAPDA Regional Planning Report, required by Section 15 of Act 47 of 2023, CVRPC has developed future land use Planning Areas and a Future Land Use Map. The Planning Areas are not meant to be detailed representations of current conditions, nor are they intended to be distinct areas of segregated future land uses. The Planning Areas focus on the overall pattern and form of development across the rural to urban spectrum rather than on specific densities or uses, which are more properly defined at the local level.

## Planning Areas

### Downtown/Village Centers:

These areas are vibrant, mixed-use centers bringing together community economic activity and civic assets. They include hamlets, villages, new town centers, and larger downtowns seeking benefits under the State Designation Program. The Downtown/Village Centers are the central business and civic centers within Planned Growth Areas or Village Areas, or they may stand alone.

Factors used in determining the presence and boundaries of a Downtown/Village Centers include a historical urban core, state-designated village center, local road network, availability of public water and wastewater infrastructure, dense development and smaller lot sizes (five units per acre or higher), a mix of residential, commercial and civic land uses, and a distinct separation from surrounding rural areas.

### Planned Growth Areas:

Includes areas identified for the densest future growth and highest concentrations of population, housing, and employment in each region and town, as appropriate. They include a mix of commercial, residential, and civic or cultural sites with active streetscapes, supported by land development regulations, public water and wastewater and multi-modal transportation systems, and follow State smart growth principles (24 V.S.A. § 2791). These areas could include historic or New Town Centers, Designated Downtowns, Growth Centers, Village Centers, and Neighborhood Development Areas.

The primary factor used in determining the boundaries of Planned Growth Areas is municipal input on future planned development. In including these areas as Planned Growth Areas, the RPC will consider

urban context and surrounding land uses to ensure the Planned Growth Area is complementary to existing Downtown/Village Centers.

#### Village Areas:

Includes the traditional settlement area or a proposed new settlement area; they typically comprise a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed-use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core. Village Areas may have one or more of the following: water, sewer, or land development regulations. They provide some opportunity for infill development or new development where the village can grow outside of flood hazard areas. These areas include existing Village Center designations and similar areas statewide, but this area is larger than the Village Center designation.

Factors in determining the presence and boundaries of a Village Area include: a state-designated Village Center, local road network and availability of public utility infrastructure. Where water and wastewater infrastructure is present, density will be at least five units per acre; where utilities are not available, Village Areas will have relatively dense development and smaller lot sizes (greater than one unit per acre), a mix of land uses, and a distinct separation from surrounding rural areas.

#### Neighborhood Residential:

Includes already established dense residential areas served by water and sewer. These areas abut Downtown and Village Centers and are walkable but are single-use residential neighborhoods. Per state statute they have a minimum zoned density of five dwelling units per acre and provide some opportunity for infill development or new development. Neighborhood residential is not rural, nor is it planned for extensive future growth.

Factors that determine Neighborhood Residential areas include their proximity to Downtown/Village Centers and their dense, established, single use development pattern.

#### Transition/Infill Areas:

Includes areas of existing or planned commercial, office, mixed-use development, or residential uses either adjacent to a Planned Growth or Village Area or a new stand-alone Transition Area and served by, or planned for, water and/or wastewater. The intent of this land use category is to transform these areas into higher-density, mixed-use settlements, or residential neighborhoods through infill and redevelopment or new development. This area could also include adjacent greenfields outside flood hazard areas and planned for future growth.

Transitional/Infill Areas are determined by municipal planning goals intended to transform an existing, low-density commercial area into a mixed-use center.

#### Resource-Based Recreation Areas:

Includes large-scale resource-based, recreational facilities, often concentrated around ski resorts, lakeshores, or concentrated trail networks, which provide infrastructure, jobs, and housing to support recreational activities. These areas may have local water and wastewater and should be considered for new housing and services.

In Central Vermont Resource based Recreation Areas are determined by their proximity to a large-scale recreation area such as the ski resorts in the Mad River Valley. They may also be determined by the provision of water and wastewater.

#### Enterprise:

Includes locations of high economic activity and employment that are not adjacent to Planned Growth Areas. These include industrial parks, areas of natural resource extraction, or other commercial uses which involve larger land areas. Enterprise areas typically have ready access to water supply, sewage disposal, electricity, and freight transportation networks.

Enterprise areas are principally determined by local zoning bylaws that support concentrated commercial and industrial uses.

#### Hamlet:

Small historical clusters of homes and perhaps a school, church, store, or other public buildings not planned for significant growth; no public water supply or wastewater systems, and mostly focused along 1-2 roads.

Though small in area, a Hamlet is distinguished by a relatively dense development and a distinct separation from surrounding rural areas.

#### Rural - General:

Include areas that promote the preservation of Vermont's traditional working landscape and natural area features. Rural – General accommodates the bulk of Central Vermont's rural economy, including small enterprises and home-based occupations and professional services. They allow for low-density residential, home-based professions and limited commercial development that is compatible with productive lands and natural areas.

#### Rural - Agricultural and Forestry:

Include blocks of forest or farmland that sustain resource industries, provide critical wildlife habitat and movement, outdoor recreation, flood storage, aquifer recharge, and scenic beauty, and contribute to economic well-being and quality of life. Development in these areas should be carefully managed to promote the working landscape and rural economy, and address regional goals, while protecting the agricultural and forest resource value. Included in this category are forest blocks and habitat connectors that are significant on a state, regional or local level.

#### Rural - Conservation:

Include areas intended to be conserved often with regulations or State or non-profit purchase of property rights limiting development, fragmentation, and conversion in order to maintain ecological health and scenic beauty. These lands have significant ecological value, and require special protection due to their uniqueness, fragility, or ecological importance. They may include protected lands, areas with specific features like steep slopes or endangered species, wetlands, flood hazard areas, and shoreline protection areas, and are intended to remain largely undeveloped for the benefit of future generations. Some portion of managed forest land will likely fall into this category. Included in this category are forest blocks and habitat connectors that are significant on a state, regional or local level.

Examples of Rural - Conservation area include the following:

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

### Implementation:

The Regional Plan is CVRPC's primary policy document. It outlines the areas that are designated as regional priorities for an eight-year planning horizon. As such this plan prescribes how CVRPC directs its planning work, focusing on strategies that will help the region work toward its planning goals. CVRPC implements the planning work identified in this plan in the follow ways:

- CVRPC develops an annual work plan to identify specific tasks staff will take on with each member municipality to advance regional planning goals.
- CVRPC staff provide technical assistance to member municipalities in developing or implementing municipal plans. When staff engage with a municipality it is an opportunity to review local planning for conformity with regional and state planning goals.
- CVRPC participates on State and local committees to help advocate or integrate a regional perspective in these planning initiatives.
- CVRPC actively works to engage Central Vermonters in its work, meetings, and trainings. These are opportunities to hear from local residents about what their priorities are and identify how our work can support these needs.
- CVRPC will work to develop indicators to annually assess the actions the organization has taken to meet its planning goals. Where indicators show a performance shortcoming, CVRPC can adjust its work program to better assign resources to the unmet needs.

While statute requires this plan to be updated every eight years, it is revisited frequently throughout that period as need arises or as new data needs to be incorporated into individual chapters.

### Smart Growth Principles - <https://vnrc.org/sustainable-communities/smart-growth-principles/>

These ten principles, identified by Smart Growth Vermont, relate to how communities should plan for their future, and reinforce those plans through public policy and community engagement. Integrating these principles into community planning and development requires careful consideration. Key considerations include:

1. Plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

Sustaining our traditional settlement patterns allows for the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and resources. By targeting new growth into our existing centers, we invest in old

neighborhoods first and reduce the fragmentation of our open space. Some ways to accomplish this include:

- Develop clear boundaries outlining areas appropriate for growth and new development;
- Increase allowable densities within area designated for growth;
- Maximize *infill potential* on vacant land and re-development opportunities on brownfield sites; and
- Ensure that new development is well designed to create an attractive, pedestrian friendly environment that enhances community character.

In this diagram, the light areas represent new commercial, industrial and residential growth that has been incorporated into existing growth patterns.

2. Promote the health and vitality of communities through economic and residential growth that is targeted to compact, mixed use centers, including resort centers, at a scale convenient and accessible for pedestrians and appropriate for the community.

After the second world-war, especially in the 1960's and 1970's in Vermont, our communities moved from mixed-use areas to single-use zones. The result was the isolation of housing from commercial services, civic facilities and schools, and employment centers. Allowing businesses, services and commercial space to mix with housing allows for people to walk to work, stores and services, promotes healthier lifestyles, improves air quality and builds social capital and civic engagement in the community.

Targeting our economic and residential growth to compact, mixed-use centers also promotes economic vitality and lessens our reliance on automobiles, thereby reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. And, by using land efficiently, compact development reduces the pressure for development in rural parts of the state.

#### Spotlight on Vermont's traditional centers

"We know it when we see it" is a phrase often used when talking about smart growth. But there are elements of our historic villages and towns that distinguish them and make them places where we want to live and work. These include:

- Higher density than surrounding areas
- A mix of uses
- Pedestrian orientation
- Access to public facilities, services and spaces
- A diversity in the type and scale of housing, businesses and industry
- Areas for community engagement and activities
- A contrast with the surrounding countryside, characterized by open spaces, including productive farm and forest land



- A unique cultural heritage

3. Enable choice in the mode of transportation available and ensure that transportation options are integrated and consistent with land use objectives.
4. Protect and preserve environmental quality and important natural and historic features of Vermont, including natural areas, water resources, air quality, scenic resources, and historic sites and districts.
5. Provide the public with access to formal and informal open spaces, including parks, playgrounds, public greens, water bodies, forests and mountains.
6. Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest enterprises and minimize conflicts of development with these businesses.
7. Provide for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, but especially in communities that are most rapidly growing.

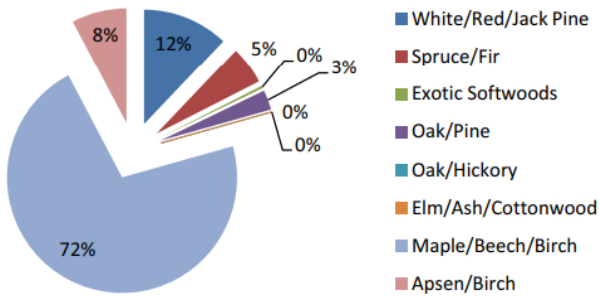
**\*\*PLACEHOLDER FOR WORKING LANDS FORESTRY AND LAND USE INVENTORY\*\***

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 which is approximately 86% of the Region's forested acreage. Another 59,549 acres of the Region's forestland is designated as National and State Forests, State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas and Town Forests.

For the first time in a century Vermont is experiencing an overall loss of forest cover. The U.S. Forest Service reports Vermont may have lost up to 69,000 acres of forestland between 2010 to 2015. A main driver of forest loss is forest fragmentation. Fragmentation is caused by scattered residential development and the conversion of forests to agriculture and commercial uses. Over time non-forested pockets tend to multiply and expand. When left unchecked, fragmentation can reduce a healthy forest 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**

**Forest Types, Orange County**

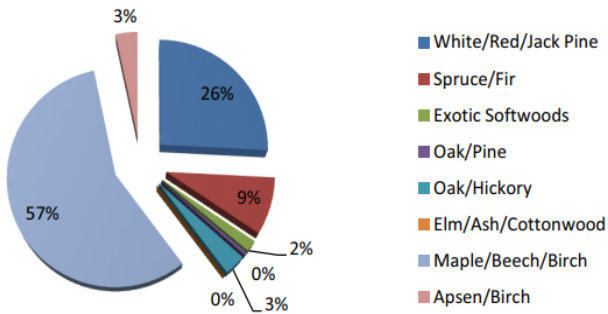


Figure 10: Orange County Forests by Type10

2014 CVRPC Forest Stewardship

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

Statutory Requirements	CVRPC Goals & Strategies	Other Chapters
<p><b>24VSA § 4348a(a)(1):</b> A statement of basic policies of the region to guide the future growth and development of land and of public services and facilities, and to protect the environment.</p>	<p><i>See Land Use Policy Statement</i></p>	
<p><b>24VSA § 4348a(a)(2)</b> A land use element, which shall consist of a <b>map</b> and statement of <b>present and prospective land uses</b>, that:...</p>	<p><i>See Map and Planning Areas</i></p>	
<p>...(A) Indicates those areas <b>proposed for</b> forests, recreation, agriculture (using the agricultural lands identification process established in 6 V.S.A. § 8), residence, commerce, industry, public, and semi-public uses, open spaces, areas reserved for flood plain, and areas identified by the State, regional planning commissions, or municipalities that require special consideration for aquifer protection; for wetland protection; for the maintenance of forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors; or for other conservation purposes.</p>	<p><i>See Map and Planning Areas: Downtown/Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Neighborhood Residential, Transition/Infill Areas, Resource-Based Recreation Areas, Enterprise, Hamlet, Rural-General, Rural Agricultural and Forestry, Rural - Conservation</i></p>	
<p>...(B) Indicates those areas within the region that are likely candidates for designation under sections 2793 (downtown development districts), 2793a (village centers), 2793b (new town centers), and 2793c (growth centers) of this title.</p>	<p><i>See Map and Planning Areas: Downtown/Village Center, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas</i></p>	
<p>...(C) Indicates locations proposed for developments with a potential for regional impact, as determined by the regional planning commission, including flood</p>	<p><i>See Map and Planning Areas: Resource-Based</i></p>	

<p>control projects, surface water supply projects, industrial parks, office parks, shopping centers and shopping malls, airports, tourist attractions, recreational facilities, private schools, public or private colleges, and residential developments or subdivisions.</p>	<p><i>Recreation Areas, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Transition/Infill Areas, Enterprise</i></p>	
<p>...(D) Sets forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity, and character of such land uses and the appropriate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and services.</p>	<p><i>See Land Use Policy Statement and Implementation</i></p>	
<p>...(E) Indicates those areas that have the potential to sustain agriculture and recommendations for maintaining them which may include transfer of development rights, acquisition of development rights, or farmer assistance programs.</p>	<p><i>See Planning Areas: Rural - Agricultural and Forestry</i></p>	<p><i>Working Landscape Element (?)</i></p>
<p>...(F) Indicates those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. A plan may include specific policies to encourage the active management of those areas for wildlife habitat, water quality, timber production, recreation, or other values or functions identified by the regional planning commission.</p>	<p><i>See Planning Areas: Rural - Agricultural and Forestry and Rural - Conservation</i></p>	<p><i>Working Landscape Element (?)</i></p>
<p><b>24VSA § 4348a(a)(7)</b> A program for the implementation of the regional plan's objectives, including a recommended investment strategy for regional facilities and services based on a capacity study of the elements in this section.</p>	<p><i>See Implementation</i></p>	
<p><b>24 VSA § 4302(C)(1)(D)</b> Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.</p>	<p><i>See Land Use Policy Statement, Planning Areas, and Implementation</i></p>	