

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Regional Plan Committee

Draft Minutes

June 4, 2025 4:00 – 5:30 pm

29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

Remote Access Via Zoom

Committee Members:

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

Staff: Christian Meyer, Eli Toohey, Will Pitkin, Lorraine Banbury (in person), Brian Voigt (online)

Rich Turner, Williamstown Rep

Public: Stephen Whitaker, Montpelier; Billy Vigdor, Waterbury; Renee Carpenter, E. Montpelier

A. Peal Called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments to the agenda.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of Minutes

M. Miller moved to approve the draft minutes as amended, D. Greason seconded, all in favor, motion passed.

Regional Plan Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies

Committee members discussed where to use directive language, such as shall or must, in the Regional Plan. M. Miller suggested adding policies to the aspirations, goals, and strategies. Aspirations would remain broad ideals; goals would remain specific outcomes that support the aspirations; strategies would remain methods or approaches to achieve the goals (essentially, work plans for CVRPC staff and committees); and policies would be characteristics of development that CVRPC does and does not support. In this suggestion, policies would contain the directive language that CVRPC could cite in grant applications, Act 250/Section 248/Section 248a permit application review, and other important areas where CVRPC uses the Regional Plan as a reference document.

D. Greason asked whether VT statute requires that Act 250, Section 248, and Section 248a applications conform with specifically the “policies” of the Regional Plan or with the Regional Plan as a whole, since he had a recollection that the relevant section of statute specifically referenced the policies of the

1 Regional Plan. If statute required that permit applications conform with the policies of the Regional,
2 would adding statements that are labelled as policies in the Regional Plan inadvertently make the
3 aspirations, goals, and strategies (i.e. statements that are not specifically labeled as policies) hold less
4 weight? W. Pitkin reviewed the Act 250 criteria in VT statute (10 V.S.A. Chapter 151 § 6086 (a)(10)
5 <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/fullchapter/10/151>) and found that statute requires that
6 development be in conformance with the Regional Plan but does not specifically require that
7 development be in conformance with the “policies” of the Regional Plan, so it does not appear that
8 adding policies would reduce the legal standing of the aspirations, goals, and strategies. D. Greason
9 stated that this put his concern to rest, and the committee agreed that CVRPC can add policies to the
10 Regional Plan alongside its aspirations, goals, and strategies.

11
12 M. Miller suggested that the Regional Plan’s policies focus on where CVRPC wants to go above and
13 beyond existing state regulations, on development that may have impacts on other municipalities
14 (especially in municipalities that do not have zoning and are reliant solely on Act 250 for land use
15 regulation), and on specific areas such as specific regionally important ridgelines that CVRPC does not
16 want cell towers built on. M. Miller further suggested focusing on higher-elevation areas, since Act 250
17 may not sufficiently regulate those. J. Brabant provided examples of when CVRPC and other regional
18 planning commissions had either impacted permit application reviews or been unable to do so because
19 of language that had or had not been included in the regional plans.

20
21 W. Pitkin asked whether policies should be specific to land use categories in the Regional Plan Future
22 Land Use Map. B. Voigt opined that not all policies should be tied to land use categories, but this could
23 be appropriate for some policies, especially in chapters like housing and land use.

24 25 **Goals and Strategies Review: Housing Chapter**

26 D. Greason noted the goals and strategies do not specifically refer to “affordable housing,” though they
27 do refer to the issue through synonymous or similar terms. M. Miller opined that the housing chapter
28 might have policies that are directed more at member municipalities (e.g. municipal plans must include
29 certain goals related to housing to receive CVRPC approval) than at housing developers.

30 31 **Land Use Review Board Tier 3 Public Meeting and Future Land Use Map Updates**

32 Committee members who attended the 5/22/2025 Land Use Review Board (LURB) Tier 3 public meeting
33 summarized the discussion at the meeting. A. Peal noted that the written summary in the Regional Plan
34 Committee meeting packet accurately summarized the issues that were discussed at the LURB meeting
35 but did not capture the contentious tone of some of the discussion. D. Greason noted that at least one
36 attendee advocated for more relaxed Act 250 review in Tier 3 areas than the status quo. Committee
37 members felt that the LURB as currently constituted prioritizes housing development over
38 environmental protection. B. Voigt noted that there are other existing regulations beyond Act 250 and
39 that CVRPC should focus on areas where the organization can have the greatest impact, which may not
40 include Tier 3 areas since the LURB maps Tier 3 areas without direct input from regional planning
41 commissions.

42
43 M. Miller opined that where state regulations are insufficient, the burden typically falls on municipalities
44 to fill the gaps in regulation and CVRPC has limited ability to make an impact when development does

1 not trigger Act 250 jurisdiction. J. Brabant noted that the State of Vermont has the legal and financial
2 resources to enforce its permit decisions in appeals, whereas municipalities usually do not have those
3 resources and are often forced to settle and allow development that does not conform with its
4 municipal regulations when rejected permit applications are appealed.

5
6 **Meeting Topics for June 17, 2025**

7 Review a revised internal staff memo on aspirations, goals, strategies, and policies.

8 Review the revised aspirations, goals, strategies, and policies of the draft housing chapter.

9
10 D. Greason moved to adjourn, M. Miller seconded, all in favor.

11
12 A. Peal adjourned meeting at 5:36 PM

13
14 *Respectfully submitted by W. Pitkin*