

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Regional Plan Committee

Special Meeting

Draft Minutes

July 15, 2025, 4:00 – 5:30 pm

29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

Hybrid meeting with remote access via Zoom

Committee Members:

✓	Alice Peal, Waitsfield Representative (via Zoom)
✓	Doug Greason, Waterbury Representative (via Zoom)
✓	John Brabant, Calais Representative (via Zoom)
✓	Mike Miller, Montpelier Representative (via Zoom)
✓	Rich Turner, Williamstown Representative

Staff: Brian Voigt, Eli Toohey, Lorraine Banbury

Public: None

A. Peal Called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM

Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments to the agenda.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of Minutes

The following correction to the draft minutes of the July 1, 2025 meetings were made: correct the typo of Waitsfield to Waitsfield, Alice Peal is now a representative and no longer an alternate, and Mike Miller is now a representative and no longer an alternate.

R. Turner moved to approve the July 1 minutes with the proposed corrections. J. Brabant seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Housing Chapter in Regional Plan

The committee agreed that the work of staff in this chapter was well done. A. Peal said she would like to see tougher language go beyond “encouraging” towns to not build in the flood area.

Affordability in Housing Chapter

D. Greason said he would like to see the affordable housing “thread” be featured more prominently and that the other goals should nod to affordability, and that it should be featured in other goals. There was discussion about whether to reorder the goals in the chapter to put Goal 4: affordable housing first. B. Voigt was concerned this would lead to ranking all the goals in all the chapters. E. Toohey stated that

affordability features prominently in the chapter itself, and that the aspiration of the housing chapter speaks to affordability. She also shared that there is a plan to use call out boxes to highlight threads throughout the document. There were no clear ideas of other ways to include the threads at this time. While not a formal request, several commissioners also suggested moving the affordable housing goal to the first spot in the chapter.

Policies and Strategies

The committee revisited the idea of what differentiated strategies and policies, reiterating that strategies are actions the RPC will take: study, identify, prioritize, maintain, improve, coordinate – while policies use more directive language like require, limit, shall, should, and must that can be cited in letters of support or comments on projects. Strategies have specific actions or concrete deliverables. M. Miller said he would send the guidance implementation guide Montpelier used in their Municipal Plan to B. Voigt to share out to the group.

Goal 1: Encourage new housing in areas with existing infrastructure and services.

- Strategy 1.4 “Limit the extension of infrastructure into undeveloped, outlying areas to reduce sprawl and protect rural landscapes (see also Goal 2)” should move to policies. There were also discussions about ways to limit sprawl using the example of Pownal where the Vermont Land Trust owned a conservation easement a few feet wide along the extended utilities to prevent additional hookups along the new corridor.
- Policy 1.3 “Provide technical assistance and model bylaws to facilitate infill housing, adaptive reuse, and upper story conversations” should move to strategies and be revised to: “Provide support to municipalities to...”
- Policy 1.4: “Encourage flexible lot sizes, reduced setback requirements, and relaxed parking standards in municipal bylaws to enable infill and small-scale housing development (see also Goal 6)” should move to strategies and be revised to “Provide technical assistance to municipalities to...”
- Policy 1.5: “Support public infrastructure upgrades in areas targeted for growth.” There was discussion about whether to include language in the housing chapter to ensure existing infrastructure is sufficient to increased demands. There was discussion about a Stowe Mountain expansion which was successfully challenged under Act 250 because it did not plan for adequate increase in infrastructure despite ANR approval using the existing infrastructure, and about Burlington being in the news each summer with cyanobacteria blooms closing beaches due in part to stormwater runoff. B Voigt said that including this in the plan would change the Future Land Use Map, which is based on existing infrastructure, and that the RPC does not have the capacity to assess the current conditions in each municipality when creating the map. Towns that attest they have the capacity to administer Tier 1B development will have their own regulatory processes to assess these criteria. These topics are also covered in the infrastructure and natural resources chapters, so the topic might be better addressed there.

Goal 2: Coordinate housing development with transportation, jobs and essential services.”

- Strategy 2.2: “Support mixed-use development near employment and service centers” currently reads as a policy and the language should be revised. “Service centers” should be revised to “service providers.”
- Strategy 2.4: “Improve transportation options that connect homes with jobs, schools and services”

might be better as a policy. It could also move to the transportation chapter.

- Strategy 2.5: “Site affordable and workforce housing near essential services” currently reads as a policy and should be revised.
- Policy 2.6: “Provide pre-development support for housing near job centers, healthcare, schools and childcare” reads as a strategy and should be revised.
- Policy 2.7: “Foster partnerships between housing developers and providers of essential services” reads as a strategy and should be revised.

Goal 3: “Advance housing equity and reduce barriers to fair and inclusive housing.”

In general strategies needs wordsmithing to be written as strategies, but the committee agreed with how the ideas were categorized.

- Strategy 3.2: “Promote inclusive zoning and land use practices that expand housing choice and prevent exclusion” should be revised to “Provide assistance to municipalities to support...”
- Strategy 3.4: “Advance fair housing education, outreach and enforcement” might work better as a strategy.

Goal 4:” Expand the supply of affordable housing across the cost continuum.”

- Strategy 4.4: “Provide financial literacy and homebuyer education programs, including awareness of public housing programs and tax incentives.” The committee discussed whether these actions were ones the RPC should including, given that they fall under the umbrella of services Capstone and the VHFA provide. A revision could clarify the Regional Plan supports the RPC ‘s role supplying information on tax incentives.
- Policy 4.1: “Encourage inclusionary zoning that reserved a portion of units in new developments as affordable” could be moved to strategies, or rewritten to make it a part of reviewing municipal plans as a policy.
- Policy 4.5: “Seek funding for weatherization, energy efficiency, and accessibility improvements for aging or substandard housing” should be moved to strategies.
- Policy 4.6: “Advocate for federal and state housing funds: a. for projects aligned with regional and municipal plans, and b. that increase housing opportunities across the cost continuum” should be moved to strategies.

Future Land Use Map

The committee decided to carry this agenda item over to the next meeting to continue working on the housing chapter goals, strategies and policies at this meeting.

D. Greason moved to adjourn and M. Miller seconded. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting adjourned at 5:29.

Topics for August 5, 2025 meeting

- Identify verbs for Strategies and Policies
- Continue review of Housing Chapter
- Discuss Future Land Use Map updates

Respectfully submitted by L. Banbury