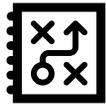




# PLANNING 101: ESSENTIALS OF LAND USE PLANNING AND REGULATION

2026

# What does CVRPC provide?



Technical Assistance



GIS Service Center



Regional Planning



Transportation Planning



Intergovernmental Planning and  
Coordination

**Mission:** to assist member municipalities in providing effective local government and to work cooperatively with them to address regional issues.



1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
2. THE MUNICIPAL PLANNING PROCESS
3. ACT 181 (ACT 250 REFORM)
4. RESOURCES



# Roles and Responsibilities

SECTION 1

# Planning Starts with the State

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Vermont is a Dillon's Rule state (a municipality's abilities to govern are strictly authorized by the Vermont Legislature).

Title 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 governs Municipal and Regional Planning and Development

Chapter 117 provides a framework for:

- the development of municipal plans,
- zoning bylaws,
- the formation of planning commissions and
- other topics relating to land use.



# State Plans include



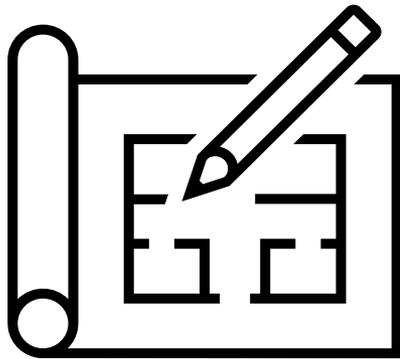
Comprehensive  
Energy Plan

Tactical Basin Plans

Statewide Housing  
Needs Assessments

# State Regulations

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## **State Land use:**

- Future Land Use Map
- Act 250: large-scale development
- Section 248: energy generation + transmission

## **Permitting and development:**

- Stormwater
- Shoreline development on lakes over 10 acres
- Wastewater and water systems
- Wetlands

# State Incentives

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## Land Use Incentive Programs:

- Current Use

## Incentives for Towns:

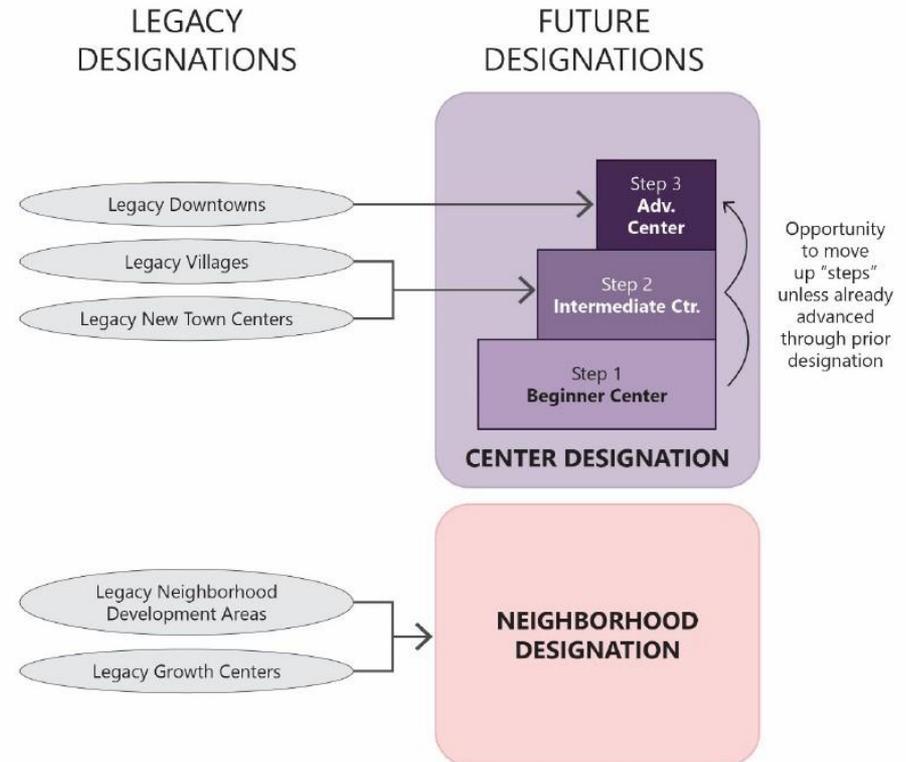
- Tied to Designations – aka centers and neighborhoods
  - (village centers, downtowns, future growth areas, etc.)
- VCDP Development Tax Credits
- Municipal Planning Grants (MPGs)

\*Contact **CVRPC** to learn more

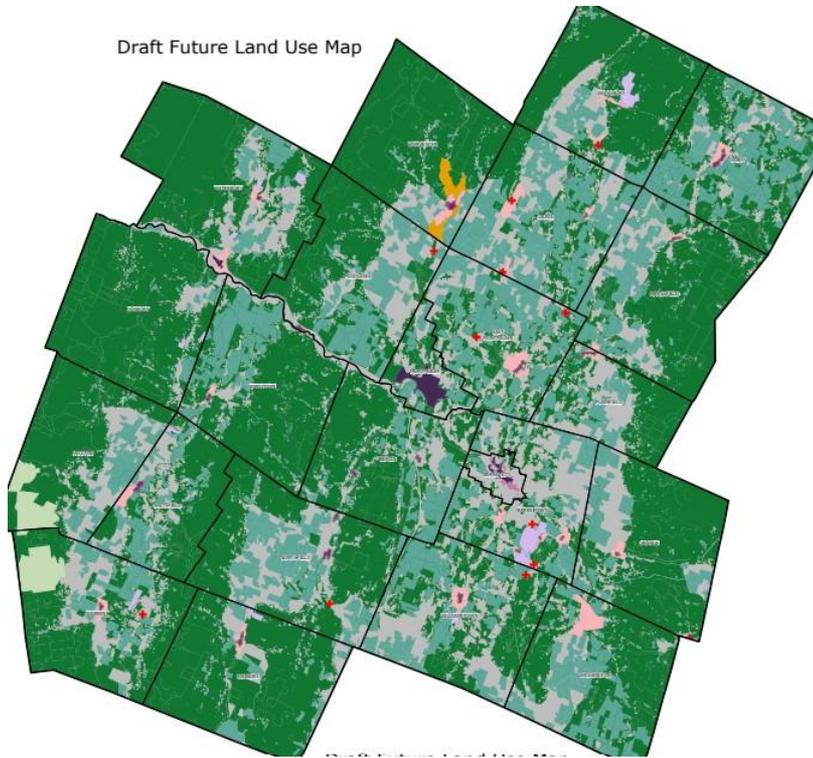
# State Designations

## State Designation Program (Act 181)-

- Center Steps for Community Investment
- Neighborhood Steps for Community Investment



## FUTURE LAND USE AREAS:



### Legend

-  CVRPC Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Hamlets
-  Downtown Center
-  Village Center
-  Planned Growth Area
-  Village Area
-  Enterprise Area
-  Transition / Infill
-  Resource-based Recreation
-  Rural Agriculture & Forestry
-  Rural Conservation

# Future Land Use Mapping: Act 181

# FLU Map: What happens next

---



## **How to participate**

- CVRCP will make parcel by parcel FLU Area assignments
- Interactive web map will be posted online for comment
- Public input session at CVRPC
- Towns interested in Tier 1B – CVRPC will come to you

## **Timeline**

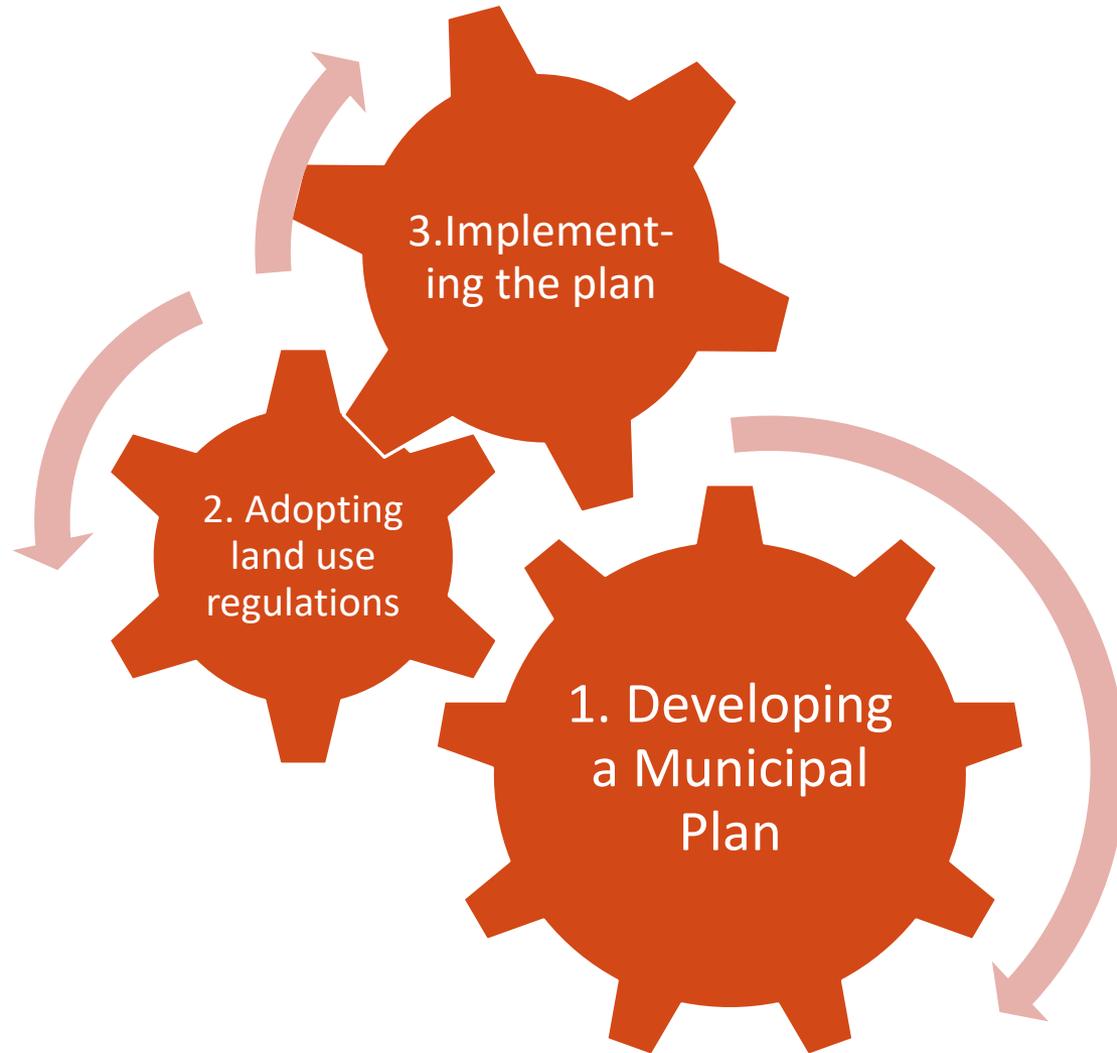
- Available spring/summer 2026 for comment
- Submitted to the state in late summer
- Approved by state by end of year

# Planning at the Regional Level

- 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) statewide
- Primarily advisory
- Provide a link between state and local
- Required to have an adopted Regional Plan
- Noticed on Act 250 and Section 248 permits
- Review and approve municipal plans
- Representatives (Commissioners) from each municipality



# Planning at the Municipal Level



# Land Use Regulations

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River Corridor Regulations

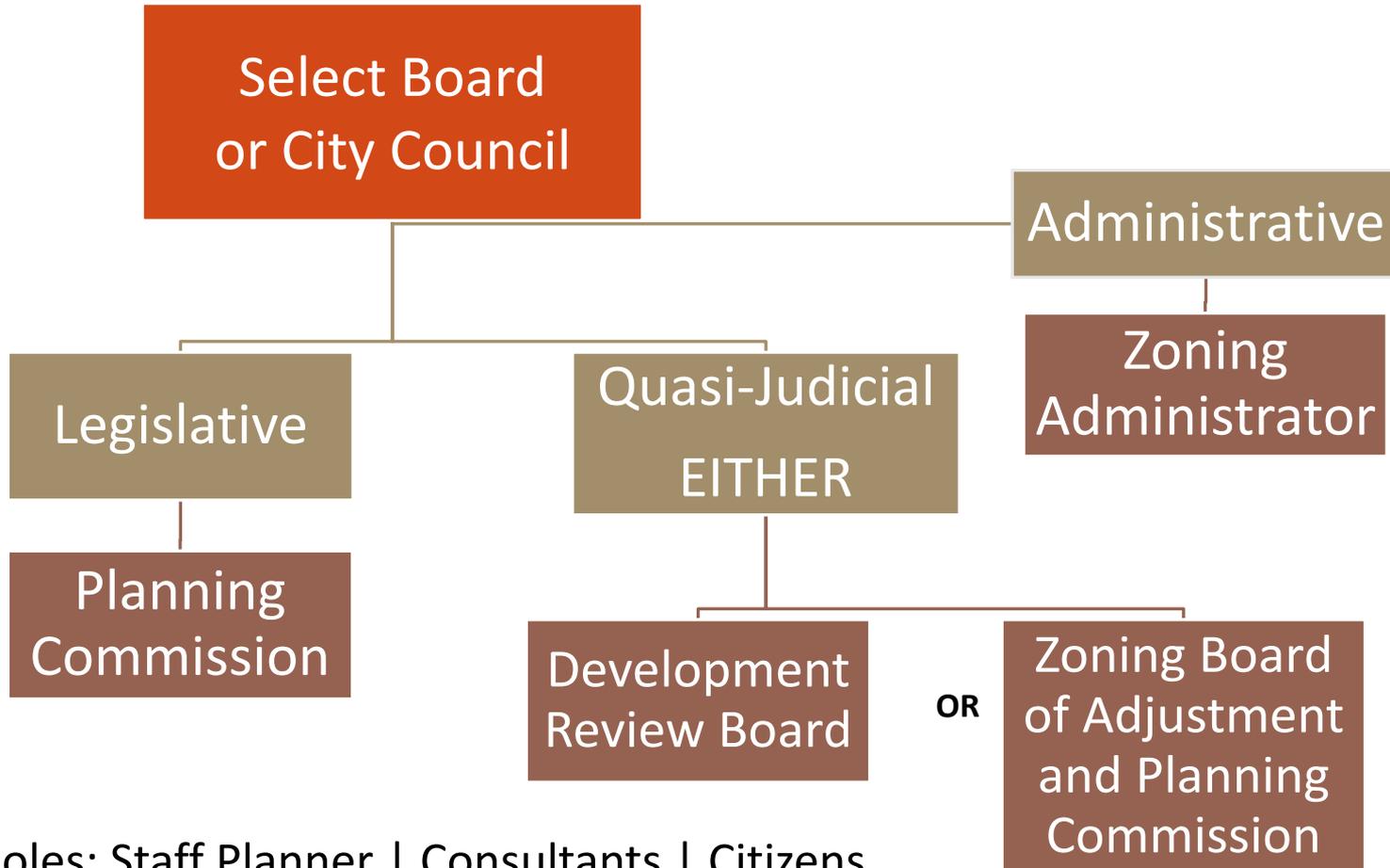
Town Bylaws

Subdivision Regulations

Flood Hazard Program

Curb Cuts

# Municipal Land Use Roles and Responsibilities



Other Roles: Staff Planner | Consultants | Citizens

# The Municipal Planning Process

SECTION 2

“When it comes to planning, if you’re not doing it with people – they think you are doing it to them.”

Roger Millar, AICP  
National Complete Streets Coalition

# Citizen Participation

Talk to people

Meet people where they are

Food, fun and celebration

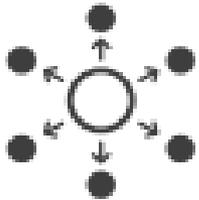
A culture of communication



# How do you engage your community?

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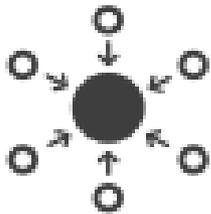
# Types of Citizen Participation



## INFORM

Commit to keeping citizens informed about planning. Help the public understand problems and solutions.

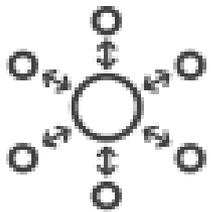
- ★ Fact Sheets
- ★ Newsletters
- ★ Websites



## CONSULT

Provide opportunities for input on existing ideas – listen, acknowledge concerns and answer questions.

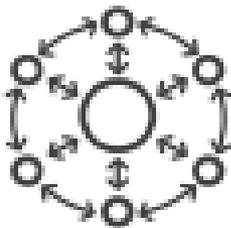
- ★ Surveys
- ★ Public Meetings



## INVOLVE

Provide opportunities for dialogue and interaction. Obtain advice from the public and generate new ideas.

- ★ Workshops
- ★ Focus Groups



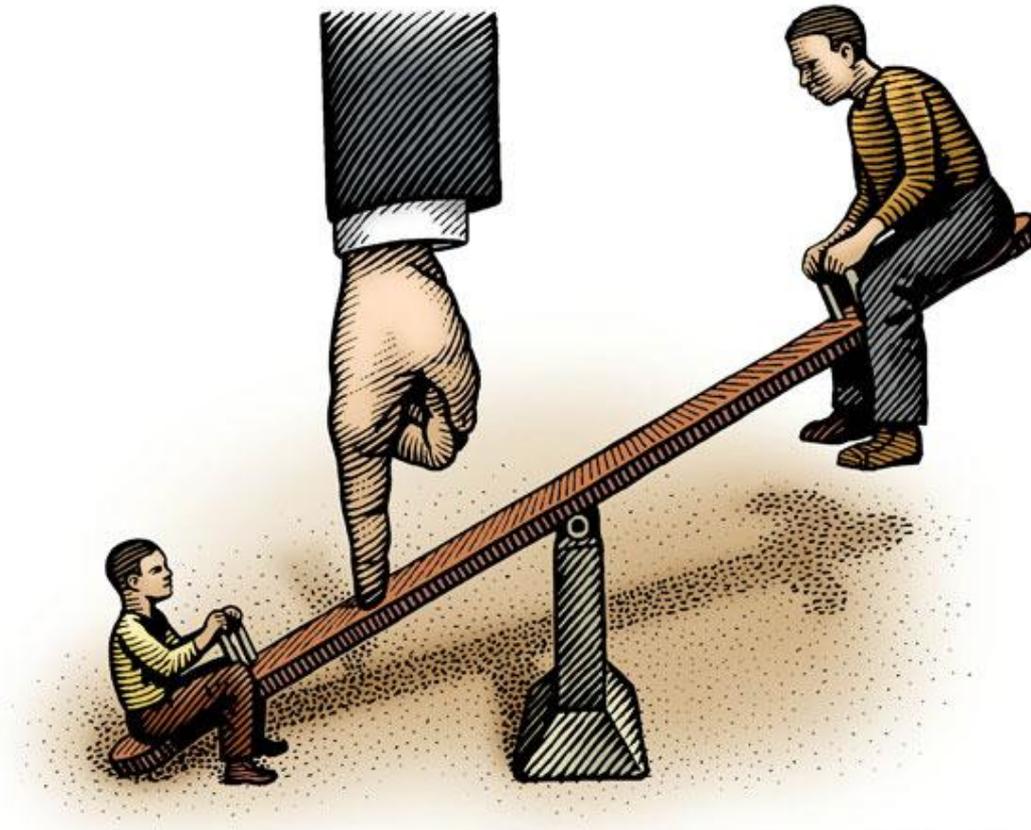
## COLLABORATE

Partner with the public in decision-making, including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.

- ★ Citizen Advisory Committees
- ★ Participatory Decision Making (Charrettes)

# Fair distribution of land use benefits and impacts

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© Michael Custode

# The Municipal (Town) Plan

**What:** a guide for future land development in your town.



# Town Plan Schedule

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## **RENEWING**

Berlin

East Montpelier

Orange

Marshfield

Waterbury

Williamstown

## **CONSULTS**

Barre Town

Fayston

Northfield

Warren

Worcester



# Lifespan of a Town Plan

- ❑ Adoption/amendment (renew)  
8 years
- ❑ 1<sup>st</sup> consult (check-in)  
2-3 years
- ❑ 2<sup>nd</sup> consult (check-in)  
1-2 years before expiration
- ❑ Regional approval (review)  
6 months before adoption  
Optional
- ❑ Living document (ongoing)

# Municipal Plan Adoption Process

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Plans expire every  
8 years

- Revise or rewrite the plan before expiration – at a minimum, make necessary edits to data and implementation program

Adoption process  
can take several  
months

- Planning Commission hearing - notice to adjacent communities
- Selectboard hearing (1 in rural and 2 in urban)
- Decision on adoption shall be made by Legislative Body, unless the Legislative Body or voters have elected to decide by Australian Ballot
- Plans go into effect upon adoption

# Regional Plan Approval & Confirmation

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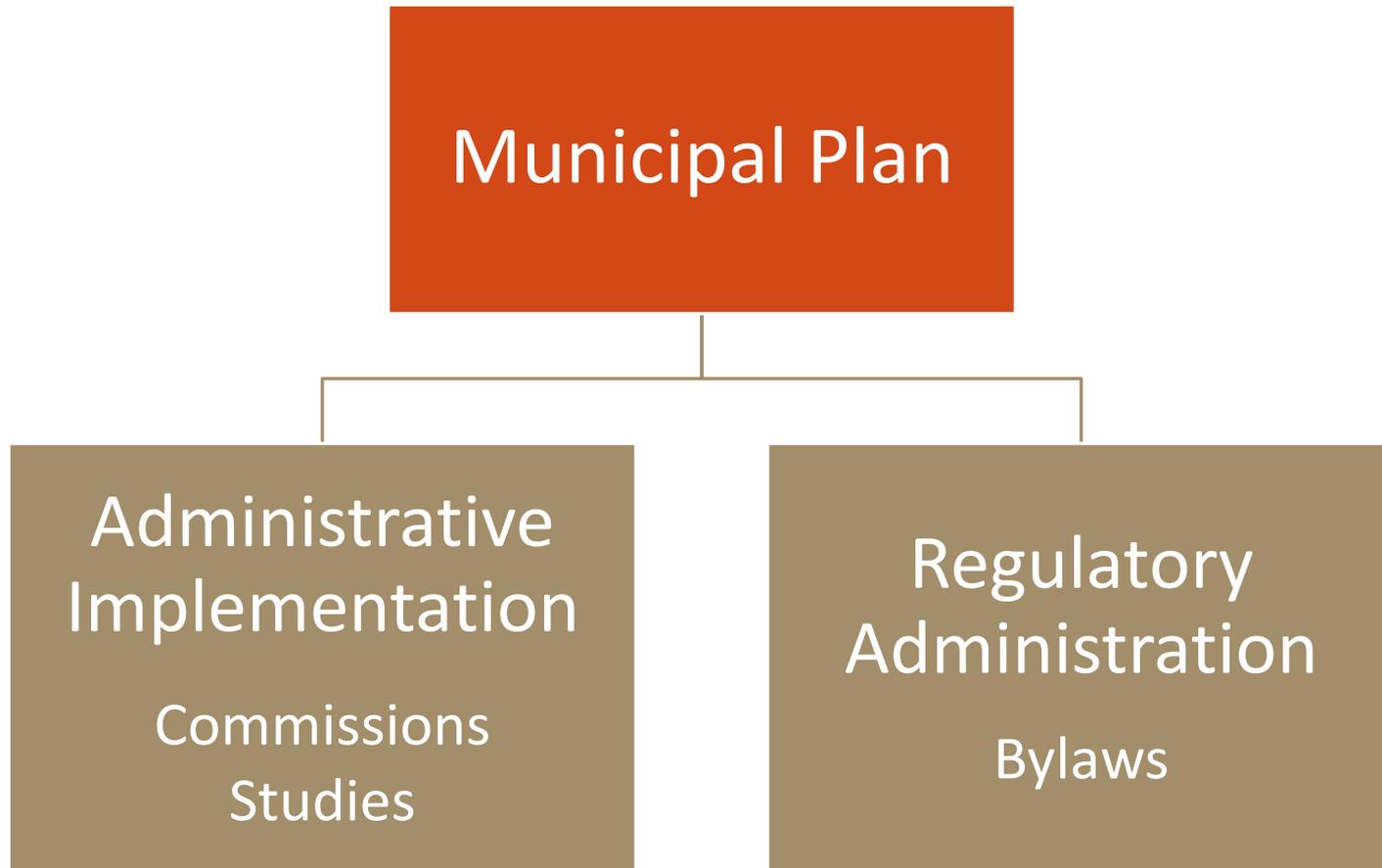
May request  
Regional Planning  
Commission  
approval

- Voluntary process, after municipality has adopted

RPC approval  
allows  
municipalities to:

- Apply for Municipal Planning Grants
- Levy impact fees
- Have plan considered by state agencies in their planning

# Implementing the Plan



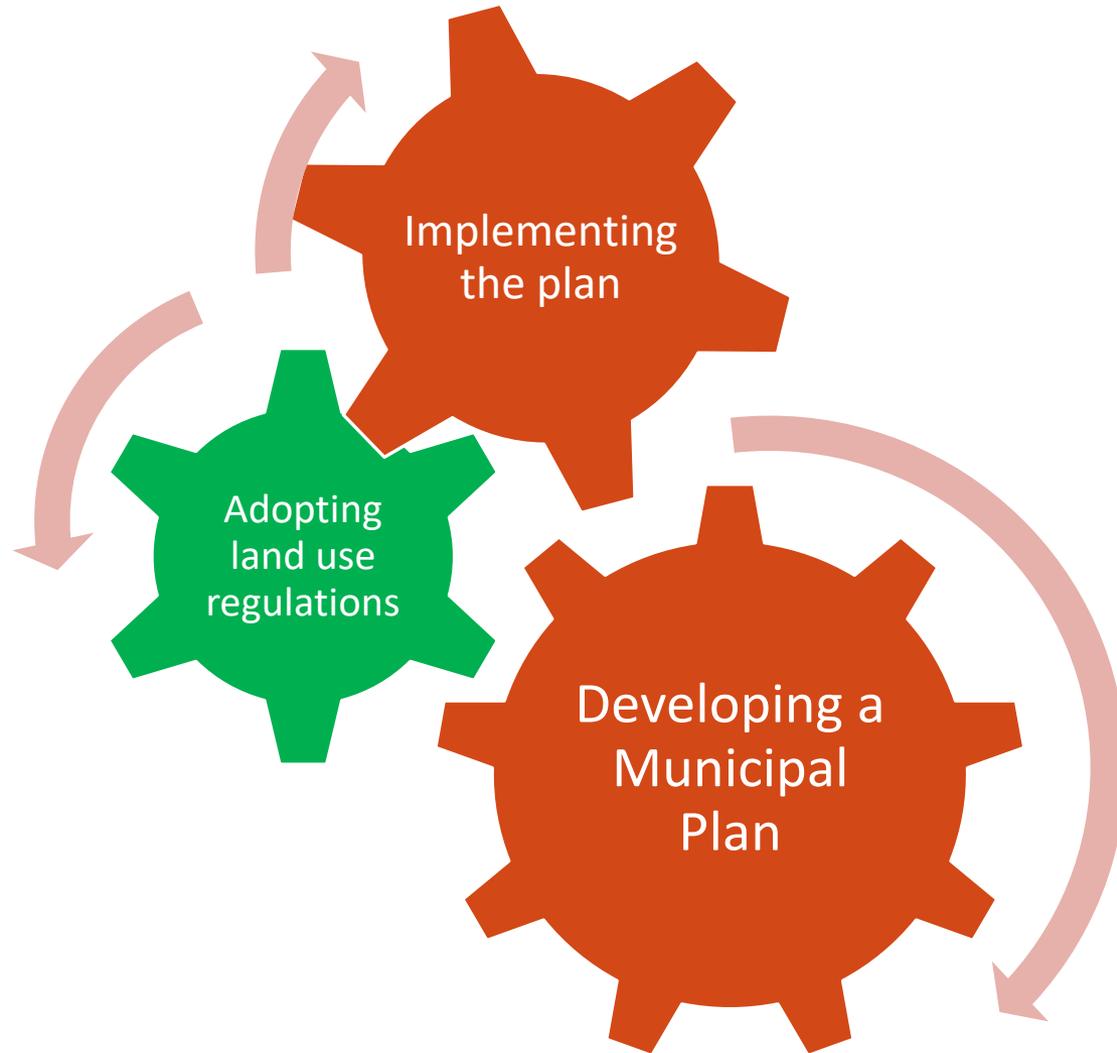
# Ongoing Revisions

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## New laws:

- Housing
  - HOME Act
- Flood hazard
  - River corridor
  - Flood hazard
- Act 181
  - Future Land Use Map and designations

# Begin the planning cycle again



# What Act 181 Means

SECTION 3

# ACT 181 MUNICIPAL PRE-EMPTIONS

	 On Farm Businesses	 Planning	 Multi- Family Units	 Hotel Conversion	 Parking	 More Parking	 AMP Timeline	 Appeals
Amended Statute	24 V.S.A. § 4412(11)	24 V.S.A. § 4348	24 V.S.A. § 4412	24 V.S.A. § 4413	24 V.S.A. § 4428	24 V.S.A. §4414 (Act 47 of 2023)	24 V.S.A. § 4464	24 V.S.A. § 4465
What does it do?	Expands the definition of accessory on-farm businesses removing the requirement that 50 percent of the annual sales are produced on the specific farm.	Removes municipalities' ability to veto a regional plan.	<p>Municipalities may not require more land for duplexes</p> <p>Quadplexes allowed on the same size lot as single-unit dwellings</p> <p>Prohibits density and minimum lot size restrictions for multiunit dwellings</p> <p>Density bonuses rounded up</p> <p>Prohibits restrictions on unrelated occupants in the same unit</p>	Adds "hotels and motels converted to permanently affordable housing developments" to list of uses with restricted municipal zoning authority.	<p>Sets maximum parking spot size limit to 9 feet by 18 feet, with exceptions</p> <p>Requires nonconforming parking spaces to count towards requirements when new residential units are being added to an existing unit</p> <p>Allows municipalities to count adjacent parking for residential parking requirements</p>	Parking minimums shall be rounded up when calculating minimum spaces in areas served by water and sewer.	Sets a new 120-day requirement for an appropriate municipal panel's hearing to be warned and noticed after receiving a complete application.	Raise the threshold of appeal from any 10 people to any 20 people.



3 approaches:



Proactive – update your regs



Pragmatic – update your DRB



Problematic – wait for case to go to Environmental Court



# Washington County Towns

Location	Owner homes	% Owner	Renter homes	% Renter	Seasonal homes	% Seasonal	Vacant homes	% Vacant	Total homes	% of county homes
Washington County	18,682	61%	7,247	24%	3,973	13%	795	3%	30,697	100%
Barre City	1,860	46%	2,107	52%	0	0%	121	3%	4,088	13%
Barre Town	3,047	83%	569	15%	27	1%	50	1%	3,693	12%
Berlin	974	81%	124	10%	57	5%	49	4%	1,204	4%
Cabot	519	68%	107	14%	116	15%	19	3%	761	2%
Calais	664	74%	90	10%	117	13%	27	3%	898	3%
Duxbury	484	76%	84	13%	56	9%	15	2%	639	2%
East Montpelier	1,011	82%	144	12%	30	2%	51	4%	1,236	4%
Fayston	445	41%	61	6%	565	52%	9	1%	1,080	4%
Marshfield	550	77%	75	11%	45	6%	46	6%	716	2%
Middlesex	708	88%	32	4%	48	6%	13	2%	801	3%
Montpelier	2,192	53%	1,755	42%	88	2%	136	3%	4,171	14%
Moretown	636	76%	102	12%	77	9%	23	3%	838	3%
Northfield	1,388	68%	514	25%	58	3%	69	3%	2,029	7%
Plainfield	372	62%	182	30%	19	3%	28	5%	601	2%
Roxbury	372	66%	64	11%	124	22%	7	1%	567	2%
Waitsfield	679	61%	209	19%	233	21%	0	0%	1,121	4%
Warren	635	25%	130	5%	1,735	68%	56	2%	2,556	8%
Waterbury	1,551	61%	789	31%	171	7%	42	2%	2,553	8%
Woodbury	264	40%	29	4%	341	52%	26	4%	660	2%
Worcester	331	68%	80	17%	66	14%	8	2%	485	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022 (Table B25003, B25004) from [housingdata.org](https://www.housingdata.org).

# Orange County Towns

Figure 19-4: Orange County home types by town

Location	Owner homes	% Owner	Renter homes	% Renter	Seasonal homes	% Seasonal	Vacant homes	% Vacant	Total homes	% of county homes
Orange County	10,602	71%	2,317	15%	1,634	11%	445	3%	14,998	100%
Bradford	910	68%	334	25%	54	4%	50	4%	1,348	9%
Braintree	395	74%	31	6%	86	16%	23	4%	535	4%
Brookfield	551	70%	118	15%	116	15%	0	0%	785	5%
Chelsea	433	59%	96	13%	179	24%	31	4%	739	5%
Corinth	622	72%	78	9%	132	15%	32	4%	864	6%
Fairlee	423	64%	132	20%	73	11%	33	5%	661	4%
Newbury	758	60%	183	14%	279	22%	51	4%	1,271	8%
Orange	393	81%	38	8%	36	8%	16	3%	483	3%
Randolph	1,389	63%	710	32%	44	2%	74	3%	2,217	15%
Strafford	510	77%	53	8%	97	15%	4	1%	664	4%
Thetford	1,071	78%	182	13%	81	6%	34	3%	1,368	9%
Topsham	381	66%	73	13%	123	21%	0	0%	577	4%
Tunbridge	438	70%	74	12%	96	15%	18	3%	626	4%
Vershire	316	70%	45	10%	63	14%	29	6%	453	3%
Washington	494	83%	28	5%	55	9%	15	3%	592	4%
West Fairlee	298	76%	47	12%	47	12%	0	0%	392	3%
Williamstown	1,220	86%	95	7%	73	5%	35	3%	1,423	9%

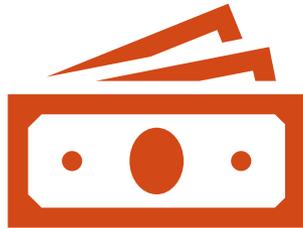
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022 (Table B25003, B25004) from housingdata.org.

# Resources

SECTION 4

# Resources

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Money



Training

# New Funding Opportunities through CVRPC

## GRANTS

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** FEMA hazard mitigation funding is available after a declared event for projects that reduce the risk of flooding or other hazards

## BROWNFIELDS

**EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant:**

UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2029

**EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund :**

UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2030



Contact Keith Cubbon,  
[cubbon@cvregion.com](mailto:cubbon@cvregion.com)



Contact Eli Toohey,  
[toohey@cvregion.com](mailto:toohey@cvregion.com)



# Other Funding Opportunities

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## ❖ Grants:

- Municipal Planning Grants
- Historic Preservation Grants
- Downtown and village tax credits

## ❖ Transportation

- Bicycle and pedestrian access planning/design
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities funding

## ❖ Community and economic development and affordable housing funds

# CHIP: Housing & Infrastructure Development

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**New!**



# CVRPC Trainings

**Section 248 Process for  
Municipalities**

**Aka: Utility Infrastructure Siting)**

**Spring, 2026**



This is a refresher training intended to walk Central VT municipalities through the main components of **Utility Infrastructure and Facility Review at the Municipal, Regional, and State levels)**



Contact Sam Lash, [lash@cvregion.com](mailto:lash@cvregion.com)

# Open Meeting Training Required for

---



## **Municipal legislative bodies**

- Selectboards
- City councils
- Village trustees



## **Local land-use panels**

- Planning commissions
- Development Review Boards (DRBs)
- Zoning Boards of Adjustment (ZBAs)

# Open Meeting Training

---

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

vlct.org

- Happen regularly
- Recordings available
- <https://www.vlct.org/training-events-calendar>

# Ethics and Conflict of Interest Training Required for

---



## **Municipal legislative bodies**

- Selectboards
- City councils
- Village trustees



## **Local land-use panels**

- Development Review Boards (DRBs)
- Zoning Boards of Adjustment (ZBAs)

# Ethics and Conflict of Interest Training

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Through State Ethics Commission

- <https://ethicscommission.vermont.gov/training>.

# Governing with Skill Training Optional for

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## **Boards, Commissions, Committees**

- Members
- Chairpersons

# Governing with Skill Training

---

Online modules

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

[vlct.org](http://vlct.org)

## More Tools & Resources:

## Bedtime Reading



Essentials of Local Land Use Planning and Regulation – VAPDA.org – email CVRPC



ACCD Vermont Planning Module 1: The Municipal Plan – email CVRPC



ACCD Vermont Planning Module 2: State Designation Programs – email CVRPC



ACCD Vermont Planning Module 3: Building Better Places – email CVRPC

# Resources

DHCD  
Planning  
Manual  
+  
Legislative  
Summaries



## Vermont Planning Manual Module 1: The Municipal Plan

Agency of Commerce and Community Development

June, 2025

# Even More Tools & Resources

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Title 24, Chapter 117, V.S.A, current and up to date:  
[www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes](http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes)

Department of Housing and Community Development  
<http://accd.vermont.gov/community-development>

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission  
<https://centralvtplanning.org/>

Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)  
[www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org)

# Meet the Team

## ELI TOOHEY

Grant writing,  
community  
engagement, and  
brownfields assistance  
[toohey@cvregion.com](mailto:toohey@cvregion.com)



## LORRAINE BANBURY

Municipal plan update,  
land use planning, and  
bylaw assistance  
[banbury@cvregion.com](mailto:banbury@cvregion.com)



## NIKI SABADO

Municipal plan update,  
land use planning, and  
bylaw assistance  
[sabado@cvregion.com](mailto:sabado@cvregion.com)





**Thank You**

# More info on Regional Housing Targets

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# Washington County Current Growth Projections

## Household Growth and Projected Needs

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of households living in Washington County year-round increased by 0.3% to 25,842. By 2029, a projected 28,159-29,654 households will live in the county.

*Figure 22-1 Projected Washington County year-round household demand, 2025 and 2029*

Year-round households	2010	2020	2025 (projected)		2029 (projected)	
			Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Total households	25,027	25,842	27,040	27,646	28,159	29,654
Owner households	17,540	18,158	19,646	20,087	19,994	21,055
Renter households	7,487	7,684	7,393	7,559	8,166	8,599

*Source: 2010 and 2010 Decennial Census, 2025 and 2029 projected based on Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates and statewide 2016-2019 average annual growth of 1% ("Lower") and 1.8% in 2019-2022 ("Higher").*

Since 2020, demand to live in Vermont has increased while the supply of new homes has not kept pace. To accommodate demand to live in the county and meet other housing market needs such as normalizing the vacancy rate, Washington County is likely to need a projected 2,289-3,385 additional homes between 2025 and 2029.

# Orange County Current Growth Projections

## Household Growth and Projected Needs

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of households living in Orange County year-round increased by 0.4% per year to 12,364. By 2029, a projected 14,199-14,953 households will live in the county.

*Figure 19-1 Projected Orange County year-round household demand, 2025 and 2029*

Year-round households	2010	2020	2025 (projected)		2029 (projected)	
			Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Total households	11,887	12,364	13,635	13,940	14,199	14,953
Owner households	9,349	9,732	11,240	11,492	11,249	11,847
Renter households	2,538	2,632	2,395	2,449	2,950	3,107

*Source: 2010 and 2010 Decennial Census, 2025 and 2029 projected based on Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates and statewide 2016-2019 average annual growth of 1% ("Lower") and 1.8% in 2019-2022 ("Higher").*

Since 2020, demand to live in Vermont has increased while the supply of new homes has not kept pace. To accommodate demand to live in the county and meet other housing market needs such as normalizing the vacancy rate, Orange County is likely to need a projected 1,105-1,658 additional homes between 2025 and 2029.

# 2030 Orange County Housing Targets

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*Figure 19-2 Projected year-round homes needed by tenure, 2025-2029*

<b>Additional homes needed</b>	<b>Pre-pandemic growth (Lower)</b>	<b>Pandemic-era growth (Upper)</b>
Owner homes	256	742
Renter homes	848	916
<b>Total additional homes needed</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>1,658</b>

*Source: VHFA analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data (Building Permits, Housing Completions, American Community Survey estimates, Population and Housing Unit Estimates and Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey) and the Vermont 2023 Point-In-Time Count of those Experiencing Homelessness. "Pre-pandemic demand" assumes resuming trends that occurred in 2016-2019. "Pandemic-era demand" assumes continuation of trends that occurred in 2019-2022 Assumes a target vacancy rate of 5% for rental and 2% for owner homes and annual housing destruction rate of 0.15%.*

# 2030 Washington County Housing Targets

Figure 22-2 Projected year-round homes needed by tenure, 2025-2029

Additional homes needed	Pre-pandemic growth (Lower)	Pandemic-era growth (Upper)
Owner homes	780	1,646
Renter homes	1,509	1,739
Total additional homes needed	2,289	3,385

Source: VHFA analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data (Building Permits, Housing Completions, American Community Survey estimates, Population and Housing Unit Estimates and Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey) and the Vermont 2023 Point-In-Time Count of those Experiencing Homelessness. "Pre-pandemic demand" assumes resuming trends that occurred in 2016-2019. "Pandemic-era demand" assumes continuation of trends that occurred in 2019-2022 Assumes a target vacancy rate of 5% for rental and 2% for owner homes and annual housing destruction rate of 0.15%.