

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Regional Plan Committee

Draft Minutes

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

Staff: Christian Meyer, Eli Toohey, Niki Sabado, Will Pitkin (in person)

Public: Chris Lorek, Barre Town resident

A Peal Called the meeting to order at 4:05PM

Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments to the agenda.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of Minutes

J. Brabant moved to approve the draft 2/4/2025 meeting minutes, D. Greason seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Community Outreach Survey

N. Sabado requested feedback on the survey that committee members received several weeks ago. D. Greason requested a broader range of choices on some questions, and suggested adding options that are less progressive/planners may not be as excited about, such as increasing truck access as a possible transportation network priority, in order to address the concerns of a broad range of possible survey participants. A. Peal suggested adding local road improvements to the same question.

J. Brabant suggested adding a question that addresses participants' concerns about environmental impacts of housing (and other) development and addresses the trade-offs of conservation vs. development. M. Miller noted state and municipal policy efforts to encourage development in areas that would minimize those trade-offs.

M. Miller suggested that to better identify participants' priorities, the survey switch questions that ask participants to use the Likert Scale or choose all that apply to asking them to pick their top two or top three options.

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2 A. Peel suggested including questions that request participants' opinions on today's hot button issues in
3 the state and the region, such as homelessness.

4
5 M. Miller stated that public surveys are most effective when they either ask participants what they think
6 the biggest problems are (so planners know which problems to focus on solving) or when they ask
7 participants to weigh several specific actions (which planners have already identified as possible
8 solutions), and that surveys produce less effective feedback when they ask the public to rank general
9 approaches to solving problems.

10
11 The committee suggested modifying questions that ask participants to list all issues that they find
12 important to listing their top two or three most important issues.

13 14 **Housing Chapter Decision Points – Housing Targets**

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16 E. Toohey provided background on the state and regional housing targets that state agencies developed
17 and the statutory mandate that RPCs disaggregate those targets to a municipal level. She then explained
18 the proposed municipal disaggregation methodology, which would assign a certain percentage of the
19 overall regional target to each future land use category on the upcoming Regional Plan Future Land Use
20 Map. E. Toohey and C. Meyer noted that the percentages of the total regional housing target that would
21 be assigned to each future land use category were tentative and subject to revision once staff receive
22 feedback from the committee and towns, plus once the map is developed and we know how much land
23 area falls in each category.

24
25 Committee members generally approved of the proposed percentages allocated to each future land use
26 category but suggested possibly reducing the percentage allocated to downtown centers and village
27 centers due to constraints on developable land in areas that are already densely developed and have
28 historic districts. Staff clarified that percentages would vary from municipality to municipality and the
29 intention is to have the allocations add to the proposed percentages across the region as a whole.

30
31 M. Miller moved to approve the use of the Vermont Housing Needs Assessment Regional Targets for
32 2025-2030 as the basis for establishing CVRPC's Regional Housing Targets in the Regional Plan Update, J.
33 Brabant seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

34 35 **Substantial Regional Impact Definition**

36
37 The committee discussed the role that the definition of Substantial Regional Impact plays in CVRPC's
38 project review procedure, the statutory requirements that the Regional Plan include a definition, and
39 proposed updates to that definition. Staff noted that CVRPC may still choose to review and comment on
40 projects that do not meet the definition of Substantial Regional Impact, so increasing the definition's
41 specificity does not necessarily exclude any projects from review; it just determines which projects will
42 automatically be reviewed.

43
44 Discussion turned to what would be the ideal level of specificity to include in the Substantial Regional

1 Impact definition that's adopted in the Regional Plan. Committee members agreed that, if possible, it
2 would be best to keep a more general, qualitative definition in the Regional Plan and house proposed
3 revisions that add quantitative thresholds in a separate document that is easier to modify if CVRPC later
4 decides to do so.

5
6 Additionally, M. Miller noted that the numerical thresholds that the Project Review Committee
7 proposed in 2018 may be outdated due to recently introduced Act 250 exemptions. Because many
8 projects in larger municipalities will likely be exempt from Act 250 and Act 250 review will be focused on
9 the more sensitive areas, it might make sense to lower the numerical thresholds in CVRPC's Substantial
10 Regional Impact guidelines to help compensate for the statewide reduction in regulatory oversight of
11 development.

12
13 M. Miller also noted that the proposed Substantial Regional Impact guidelines from 2018 contained
14 several words that could become sticking points if there were ever a legal challenge of CVRPC's
15 comments; the committee directed staff to remove such words from future drafts of the guidelines.

16
17 **Upcoming Meeting Topics**

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19 The topics for upcoming meetings are to be determined.

20
21 M. Miller moved to adjourn, D. Greason seconded, all in favor.

22
23 A. Peal adjourned meeting at 5:53 PM

24
25 *Respectfully submitted by W. Pitkin*