VERMONT
LAND USE REVIEW BOARD
Application #:
RPC03-0001
Exhibit #: 081
Date Received: 11-01-2026

From the Residents and Landowners of Cabot: Addendum to Our Objection on the Central Vermont 2026 Regional Plan

Oct 31, 2026

A note from your neighbors in Cabot

To the members of the Land Use Review Board:

We live in Cabot. Some of us farm, some of us log, some of us simply own a house and a few acres we hope to pass on. We signed the attached petition because a plan that will shape what we can do with our land for the next eight years was adopted before most of us had a chance to read it.

We want to be fair about this. The regional plan has a lot of useful information in it, and plenty of its ideas are sound. What worries us is how it will be used, how it will be imposed on small towns and the people in them, and how fast it was pushed through.

The objection form asks what is wrong, one box at a time. It does not leave room to tell you what actually happened to us, or which laws we believe were not followed. That is what these pages are for. Please read them with our form, and if anything here falls outside an objection, please take it as public comment on the plan (24 V.S.A. § 4348(h) and (i)).

Our Selectboard has filed its own objection for the town. We stand behind it.

We spoke up and asked questions

The law allows 20 or more residents or landowners to object by petition, as long as the person representing them took part in the adoption process (24 V.S.A. § 4348(i)). Here is what we did:

- Our representative, Ken Denton of Cabot, Ken Denton took part in the CVRPC adoption process by speaking at the CVRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting 9/8/26 in Montpelier, Public Q&A 10/15/26, submitted written responses and voicemail to plan, noted in Regional Plan Public Comments on 9/8/26, also requested category breakdown by percentages for future land use maps. The signed petition of [number] Cabot and CVRP residents and property owners is attached. Those comments are Attachment B.
- In early September, Ken asked CVRPC for a simple breakdown: how much land falls in each map category. We asked for it to be printed on the map.
- He asked again at a Cabot Selectboard meeting on 10/06/26.
- The breakdown finally arrived by email from CVRPC staff (Christian Meyer) on 10/08/26, after the vote. It still is not on the map. See Attachment C.
- 68 Cabot and Central Vermont residents signed the petition (Attachment A).

Years to write it, 30 days to read it

CVRPC worked on this plan for years. Residents had about 30 days with the final version before the hearing and vote. That is the bare minimum the law allows (24 V.S.A. § 4348(f)), for a document that grew from 286 pages in 2024 to 416 pages now.

The ground also moved under everyone's feet. In June the Legislature passed Act 152, which rewrote the map categories and repealed Tier 3 and the road rule. Cabot's map was redrawn over the summer. No one showed us what changed.

That same law gave existing town and regional plans until December 31, 2027, and other Act 181 dates were pushed back a year or two [confirm which]. So we have to ask: if other deadlines could move, why couldn't this one?

When	What residents saw
June 9, 2026	CVRPC starts the formal adoption process
June 16, 2026	Act 152 signed; map categories change
Summer 2026	Cabot's map redrawn, no redline shared
On or about August 27,2026	Residents ask for the land-by-category breakdown
September 8 and 14	Public meetings on the plan
September 20	Date on the final copy of the plan [confirm]
October 8, 2026	Land category percentage breakdown emailed to a resident
October 13	Cabot Selectboard asks CVRPC to postpone; tells Cabot's commissioner(s) to vote no
October 20	Final hearing and adoption vote, in Montpelier

What this map could mean for the land we live on

For most of us, our land is the biggest thing we own. Many of our families have worked the same fields and woodlots for generations.

Future Land Use Map should be called “Current Land Use Map”.

Rural categories reflect current uses, based on size and enrollment in Current Use and other Land Conservation programs. It can restrict future land use possibilities-based on inaccuracy and future needs for some landowners. No one knows what the future holds. Insects, disease, weather and severe storms could affect forests and agricultural lands. Keyholing land into a designated classification can slow down future and complicate actions to address such issues.

Once established and blindly accepted by towns, the maps can be used to determine eligibility for specific state programs (presently Tier 1A and 1B). As with the Vermont Conservation Design Map developed in 2015 as a reference for towns to use in local development plans. In 2024 with the passage

of Act 181, it became a regulatory tool in land use legislation. The VCD Map is described as a “science-based” map, however members from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and others have stated that it has not been verified by physical ground data. Utilizing the VDC map in conjunction with the FLU Map subjects landowners to financial loss and creates Constitutional issues depending on future legislation.

The FLU Map does not provide for multiple parcel designations within a single parcel. Parcels could be part “Rural General” and part “Rural Forestry and Agriculture”.

This map is not just a sketch of the region's hopes anymore. Under Act 181, the categories on it help decide where Act 250 applies and how. CVRPC has said the approved plan will be used in Act 250 and Section 248 reviews. A shaded area on a map in Montpelier can change what we are allowed to build, cut or sell, and what our land is worth. Most of us were never told our land had been mapped at all, let alone placed in a new category.

Even before any rule takes effect, the map is public record. A buyer, a bank or a lister can look at it and decide our land is worth less, because no one yet knows what the rules will be.

The category that worries us most is **Rural; Agriculture and Forestry.** We don't yet know what it will mean. Some of the restrictions tied to it are not expected until 2028. We think a landowner should know what a designation could mean before it is locked in. Thirty days gave none of us that chance.

Municipal Future Land Use Area by Percentage
September 20, 2026

	Barre City	Barre Town	Berlin	Cabot	Calais	Duxbury	East Montpelier	Fayston	Marshfield	Middlesex	Montpelier
Downtown Center	5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Village Center	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Planned Growth Area	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Village Area	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Transition - Infill	4%	1%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	5%
Enterprise	7%	6%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Resource-based Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Rural - General	14%	26%	13%	16%	13%	12%	19%	19%	7%	15%	15%
Rural - AgForest	13%	46%	57%	61%	64%	42%	44%	43%	54%	60%	23%
Rural - Conservation	13%	15%	21%	22%	21%	46%	32%	26%	38%	25%	18%
Special Use	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Moretown	Northfield	Orange	Plainfield	Roxbury	Waitsfield	Warren	Washington	Waterbury	Williamstown	Woodbury	Worcester
Downtown Center	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Village Center	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Planned Growth Area	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Village Area	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Transition - Infill	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Enterprise	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Resource-based Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Rural - General	9%	13%	9%	15%	9%	23%	18%	9%	18%	25%	14%	8%
Rural - AgForest	72%	71%	63%	60%	66%	50%	34%	68%	30%	58%	58%	30%
Rural - Conservation	17%	13%	27%	22%	24%	24%	32%	23%	49%	16%	26%	62%
Special Use	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

State planning law backs us up. It says anyone using its regulatory powers must take care to protect people's constitutional right to acquire, own and protect property (24 V.S.A. § 4302(a)). It also says decisions should be made at the most local level that makes sense (§ 4302(b)(2)). The Board must find the plan consistent with those goals (§ 4348(h)(4)(A)). Cabot wrote its own Town Plan, adopted March 4, 2025, about where growth belongs and what should stay working land. Where the regional map departs from it, nobody explained the difference to us.

How hard it was to find out

The law asks regional commissions to reach out to towns and residents early, in ways that fit local life, and to help communities take part fully (24 V.S.A. § 4348(a); "meaningful participation," 3 V.S.A. § 6002). Here is what trying to take part actually looked like for us:

- **The hearings were hard to get to.** There were three, they were poorly advertised, and all were in Montpelier. None was in Cabot.
- **No one told us our land had changed.** Owners whose parcels were put in a new category got no notice.
- **Our question went unanswered until it was too late.** We asked how much land was in each category. The answer came after the town of Cabot Selectboard vote, and it is still not on the map.
- **Online isn't enough here.** CVRPC leaned on online notices and online maps. Parts of Cabot have poor internet, and many of us work long or inflexible hours, often outdoors.
- **Discriminates against small rural towns.** Small rural towns are unfairly bearing the brunt of land conservation efforts. Small towns like Cabot are classified as an “Economically Disadvantaged and Rural Community” lacking the resources of other larger towns and municipalities to respond and evaluate the complex Regional Plans and have meaningful public involvement as noted above.

Our town boards could not fill the gap. Cabot has no planning staff. The people on our Selectboard and Planning Commission are neighbors who volunteer, meet once or twice a month and hold full-time jobs. The Selectboard had one meeting to consider the plan, and the Planning Commission had no time to go through the map with residents parcel by parcel. Bigger towns have paid planners for this work. We don't.

The result: many residents are not aware of the 2026 Regional Plan, let alone their property designation on the FLU map or what it means.

Fairness for a small rural town:

When a process moves this fast, the people who lose out are the ones in small towns without staff, money or time to keep up. That is us. We believe this process discriminates against small rural towns, and it runs against the plan's own environmental justice section.

It also runs against Vermont's environmental justice law (Act 154 of 2022, 3 V.S.A. chapter 72). That law says no group of Vermonters should be shut out of a fair share of environmental benefits, and that communities deserve help to take part, with particular attention to low-income areas called "focus populations" (§ 6003). Part of Cabot meets the income test for a focus population. The Board itself is one of the agencies this law covers (§ 6004).

Regional plans are also supposed to spread benefits and burdens fairly (Goal 15, 24 V.S.A. § 4302). Under Act 181, the areas mapped for growth get the good things: Act 250 relief, State investment and housing and infrastructure money. Without the benefits-and-burdens analysis that was never finished, none of us can tell whether a town like Cabot is getting its share.

No one has studied what the map will do to our land values, our property taxes, or what we can do with our own land. We think that should happen before the map is final.

What would make this right

If the Board agrees with us, the law lets it suggest changes to the plan (24 V.S.A. § 4348(i)). All we are really asking for is time: time to read the plan, understand it, ask questions and see how it will affect our land. Specifically, we hope the Board will suggest that CVRPC:

1. Give Cabot that time **without penalty**, so the town keeps its planning grants, designation benefits and Act 250 housing exemptions.
2. Send every owner whose land changed category a **letter** saying so, and what the new category could mean.
3. **Hold off on Rural; Agriculture and Forestry** in Cabot until the rules that go with it are written.
4. Leave Cabot's rural land **as it is zoned today**, or in the least restrictive rural category, until a 2027 review, and revisit the rural and conservation categories once the Legislature finishes its natural resources work.
5. Hold **working sessions in Cabot** on Cabot's map, as part of a 2027 update.
6. **Print the numbers on the map**: how much land is in each category, town by town, plus a redline of how Cabot's map changed after Act 152.
7. Open a new comment period of **at least 90 days**, with a hearing in or near Cabot, current paper copies in every town office and library, and written answers to residents' questions.
8. **Study the economic effects** on land values and taxes, town by town, before Cabot's map is final.
9. Finish and publish the **benefits-and-burdens analysis**.

So these concerns are not lost

We know the Board does not decide constitutional questions. We list these so they stay on the record:

- We were not given the meaningful participation the law promises (24 V.S.A. § 4348(a); 3 V.S.A. § 6002).
- The process did not take care to protect our property rights (24 V.S.A. § 4302(a)).
- Mapping our land in a way that may limit its use, without notice or a fair chance to respond, raises concerns under the Vermont Constitution (Chapter I, Articles 1, 2 and 4), which protect our right to own and protect property, to be compensated when property is taken for public use, and to have a remedy when property is harmed. A map that may lower our land's value before the rules are even known, with no study of the effect, is part of that concern.
- If the law allows no appeal of the Board's approval (24 V.S.A. § 4348(m)), landowners would be left with no way to fix these harms, which is itself a concern under Article 4.

Attachments

- A. Signed petition of [number] Cabot and Central Vermont residents and property owners
- B. The designated representative's comments to CVRPC:
    - Provided comments on portal and phone message, end of August. My comments posted at CVRPC meeting 09/08/2026, under public Comments.

- Comment 3: Pg 255 Housing Units By Future Land Use Areas: "And replace homes in Hamlets and Working Lands". Sounds like you want to remove or discourage people from living on their land in rural areas. Sort of like the Federal Government want to buy up Northeast Kingdom Land and move the residents to villages (1930 ?). The plan should support people who live on their farms and work the land- not have them commute to work from villages or hamlets. That is the impression I get.
- Pg 285 Strategies: #2 Oppose c) Policies that increase financial or regulatory barriers for small business. In my opinion, this is exactly what the regional plan does. It allows the foundation for towns and state government to add additional costs and regulation all along the way including additional fees, permits or applications. There is nothing in the plan that addresses Act 250 reform that will help small and large businesses. Act 181 went so far as to require Act 250 review for structures around existing dwellings on Tier 3 properties. In Cabot, would have required an Act 250 permit to build a 100 sqft woodshed. The word "Support" is used throughout the document. I feel it needs to go further and explain in specifics, what "Support" means.
- Lastly, please provide the land percentage for each of the 11 categories on the town of Cabot Map. It would appear that about 10% of the land is Village or Rural General. Also please provide the percentage of Flood Areas for the town. It appears that the Village areas overlap with the flood areas reducing the amount of land available for housing. Plan comments posted on CVRPC site

- Requested Map category percentages 2nd time at Cabot Selectboard Special Meeting on 10/6/2026 to CVRPC Chair Christian Meyer.

C. Our request for the land-by-category breakdown, and CVRPC's emailed reply dated

meyer@cvregion.com Thu, Oct 8, 7:32 PM

to me, Lorraine

Hi Ken,
I wanted to share the requested table of future land use areas broken out by town and percentage. While it isn't part of the plan, we wanted to make it available as a reference on our web page. Link below:
https://centralvtplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/FLUAreasByMunicipality260319ByPercentageTable.pdf

Let us know if you have any comments or questions.

Thanks for your input,
Christian

ANALOLGY:

When getting a bank mortgage to buy a home, would you accept a mortgage where the bankers states, ”We do this every day, everything is taken care of, there is nothing to be afraid of, sign here”? A

reasonable person would not sign the mortgage until they had time to read, understand the terms, financial consequences and long-term effects. The same methodology should apply to the Regional Plan, allowing towns and citizenry time to thoroughly review, understand the financial ramifications and long-term effects.

We appreciate all the hard work and effort The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Commissioners have put into this plan. We want to thank them. But, please give us, the residents of Cabot and Central Vermont, more time to review and evaluate the information so that we can make an informed decision and provide feedback.

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

On behalf of the Cabot and CV residents and landowners who signed the attached petition,

Ken Denton, designated representative

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10/31/2026