



From: [Kati Gallagher](#)
To: [Act250 - Board](#)
Subject: VNRC Comments re: CCRPC FLU Preapplication
Date: Monday, December 1, 2025 5:03:03 PM
Attachments: [Regional Plan Preapplication Review Comment Form.docx](#)
[CCRPC FLUM Comments - VNRC.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Chair Hurley,

Please see VNRC's comments attached regarding CCRPC's regional future land use map.

As before, my apologies for the formatting issues with the form document!

Thank you.

Kati Gallagher

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December 1, 2025

Janet Hurley, Chair
Vermont Land Use Review Board
10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-3201

Dear Ms. Hurley:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's (CCRPC) draft Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

As you know, the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) recently submitted comments regarding the Northwest and Rutland Regional Planning Commissions' draft FLUMs. Our review of those maps raised several concerns regarding compliance with statutory requirements that also apply to CCRPC's draft. These include:

- In several instances, areas proposed for Village Center (VC), Planned Growth Area (PGA), Downtown (DC) and Village Area (VA), do not meet the statutory description for these designations, and are not consistent with smart growth principles. We believe that other, more appropriate, designations, especially Transition Areas – a category created to facilitate the transition from commercial strip development and other forms of sprawl – is a much more appropriate land use classification for several parts of Chittenden County characterized by sprawl. As noted below (and in prior comments to the LURB) many areas identified as PGAs and VAs are governed by land use policies that will prohibit the development patterns anticipated in statute. While VAPDA's future land use mapping guidance addresses the need to consider local policies, there appears to be several instances where that is not the case.
- The statutory intent of Act 181 was to facilitate the efficient expansion of historic centers into surrounding areas served by infrastructure and multi-modal transportation opportunities. A key consideration is whether such areas are within walking distance (1/4 – 1/2-mile distance). The CCRPC map includes substantial areas that do not meet this criterion, in some cases including land in excess of two miles from historic centers.
- An important requirement for designation as Tier 1B is that the *“(t)he Board shall review the portions of future land use maps that include downtowns or village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas to ensure they meet the requirements under 24 V.S.A. §§ 5803 and 5804 for designation as downtown and village centers and neighborhood areas”* (10 V.S.A. §6033(b)). Several proposed VC's that are proposed for Tier 1B status do not meet this requirement, and it is not clear that the LURB has undertaken such a

review for previous FLUMs.

Specifically with regard to CCRPC’s draft maps, we recognize that suburban development patterns in Chittenden County established over many decades have continued to evolve, to include increased urbanization in more suburban parts of the county that are served by municipal water and sewer. As a result, the region’s development pattern and context differ from that of other regions in the state. That said, given limited public resources, we are concerned that a significant increase in the proposed number of downtown and village centers, as included on CCRPC’s FLU map, could adversely affect its existing, traditional centers.

New downtown and village centers currently under development, such as South Burlington’s City Center, reflect extensive long-term planning and community investment, and should be recognized and mapped accordingly. Defining “new” village centers in towns that currently lack designated centers is also supported under related mapping guidance. The thoughtful expansion of existing centers to accommodate much needed housing development is also a key consideration. However, several proposed centers as mapped and addressed more specifically below consist primarily of auto-oriented commercial shopping center, big box, and strip development, and clearly do not meet the criteria for a downtown or village center. As noted, these areas would be more appropriately mapped as Transition Areas or included under other FLU categories until such time as there are master plans and capital improvement plans in place in support of their development, or redevelopment under the statutory definition of “sprawl repair.”

In addition to those overarching concerns, please consider the following specific comments regarding the CCRPC’s proposed FLUM’s compliance with Act 181 and associated statutes.

Proposed Downtown & Village Centers (DC, VC)

Conformance with the Regional Plan Future Land Use Element (§ 4348a(A) Centers). For purposes of future land use mapping, Downtown and Village Centers are defined under 24 V.S.A. § 4348a as “... *the mixed-use centers bringing together community economic activity and civic assets. They include downtowns, villages, and new town centers previously designated under chapter 76A and downtowns and village centers seeking benefits under the Community Investment Program under section 5804 of this title* [note: this section pertains to “neighborhood” designation]. *The downtown or village centers are the traditional and historic central business and civic centers within planned growth areas, village areas, or may stand alone. Village centers are not required to have public water, wastewater, zoning, or subdivision bylaws.*

For purposes of future land use mapping, the statutory description of a center does not clearly differentiate between “downtown” centers that are more regional and urban in form and function, and smaller, more local “village” centers that are typically more limited in extent, and in the type and mix of uses present. As noted above, our review of a proposed center also considered whether, as mapped, a proposed center is consistent with relevant state planning goals and smart growth principles, and Act 250 – i.e., whether it maintains the historic development pattern of a compact village or urban center separated by rural countryside, generally avoids strip

development (as also defined under Act 250), and allows for a mixed-use center at a scale appropriate for the community and the region.

CCRPC's FLUM, as proposed, depicts 11 separately mapped **Downtown Centers**, including:

- Two legacy Downtown Development Districts – Burlington and Winooski:
 - The **Burlington Downtown Center**, as the county's traditional urban center, clearly complies with the statutory description. No significant expansion of its legacy boundary is proposed.
 - The proposed **Winooski Downtown Center** extends beyond its legacy downtown "center" as redeveloped in recent decades, to include adjoining industrial properties, as well as previously developed properties fronting the length of both Main Street and Mallets Bay Avenue – for nearly a mile in each direction. While some expansion of the downtown core may be reasonable, these linear extensions, separate from adjoining neighborhoods, would more appropriately be included in the adjoining PGA. This would still allow for higher density, mixed use redevelopment along main roads within walking distance of an expanded urban core,
- One legacy New Town Center – South Burlington's City Center, also including its larger Neighborhood Development Area. The proposed **Market Street Downtown Center** has developed into a more urban, master planned, mixed use regional center that clearly meets the definition of a downtown center. It also, however, includes the University Mall within its legacy boundary, which might be more appropriately mapped as a Transition/Infill area or, within walking distance of the existing center, included within the PGA if proposed for higher density, mixed use redevelopment.
- Two legacy Growth Centers, including **Taft Corners** in Williston and **Severance Corners** in Colchester. Though Taft Corners in particular is clearly developing as a higher density, mixed use regional center, neither of these growth centers represent traditional, historic downtown centers or central business districts as described and, per statute, would more appropriately be mapped as PGA around more clearly defined and mapped commercial cores.
- Two legacy Village Centers – the **Essex Junction and Shelburne Village Downtown Centers**:
 - The proposed **Essex Junction DC** also includes its larger Neighborhood Development Area and additional auto-oriented commercial strip development along RT 15. Downtown Essex Junction clearly meets the statutory definition of a Downtown Center, though neighborhoods and other areas within walking distance of the Center might be more appropriately included in the adjoining PGA.

- The proposed **Shelburne DC** also meets the definition of a more regional downtown center but has been enlarged beyond its legacy boundary to include the Shelburne Museum and other properties that, if generally within walking distance of the downtown, would more appropriately be included within its PGA.
- Four new Downtown Centers: **Cambrian Rise** and **South End Innovation DCs** in Burlington, and the **Essex DC** and **Milton DC**:
 - The proposed **Essex DC**, though long planned for redevelopment as the town's new town center, does not yet clearly meet the statutory definition of a traditional downtown. It has a small core of higher density mixed use development that could serve as a commercial core but still consists largely of auto-oriented commercial development. Like the proposed Williston Downtown Center, this is an area in transition that, based on master planning, may in time evolve as a more traditional downtown center. Currently it's more representative of a PGA or Transition Area.
 - The three new downtown centers proposed in Burlington do not meet the statutory definition of a downtown center – **Cambrian Rise** (legacy NDA) is a newly developed higher density residential neighborhood. The **South End Innovation** area (legacy NDA) is also being planned for higher density residential neighborhood development. As such, per statute these would more appropriately be included within Burlington's PGA, which would still allow for limited mixed use neighborhood development without compromising the benefits available to the city's traditional downtown center.
 - The proposed **Milton DC** – currently consisting largely of auto-oriented commercial strip development – also does not meet the statutory definition of a downtown center. If proposed for future redevelopment, it could instead be included as a mapped Transition Area.

CCRPC's proposed FLUM also incorporates 28 proposed **Village Centers**, including:

- Eight legacy Village Centers for which no significant boundary modifications are proposed, including the **East and West Charlotte VCs**, the **Essex Center VC**, the **Jericho Center VC**, the **Riverside/Underhill Flats VC** (Jericho, Underhill), the **Hinesburg VC**, the **Milton VC**, and the **Richmond VC**. Hinesburg's existing NDA has been included in the adjoining PGA. These are all presumed to meet statutory criteria and have not been reviewed for this purpose.
- Six legacy Village Centers that are proposed for expansion and should therefore meet relevant statutory criteria: the **Huntington Lower Village and Center VCs**, the **Jericho Corners VC**, the **Underhill Center VC**, the **Westford VC**, and the **Williston VC**.

- The existing **Huntington Lower Village and Center VCs** are proposed for expansion to include roads characterized by low density residential development and land within the town’s Groundwater Overlay District which would more appropriately be included in another FLU category, such as the surrounding Village Area, if within walking distance of one of the centers.
 - The **Jericho Corners VC** is proposed for expansion to a cemetery, and lower density residential (R1) parcels on Lee River Road that are within walking distance of the existing center – which may allow for additional residential and infill development off of RT 15 within planned service areas. If proposed only for higher density residential development, this area might more appropriately be included in the surrounding Village Area.
 - **The Underhill Center VC** is proposed for limited expansion to include the low density (R2) residential properties located within the mapped river corridor that would more appropriately be included Resource Conservation.
 - The **Westford VC** boundary is proposed for expansion to include residential properties and undeveloped land north and south of the existing center, which would more appropriately be included in the surrounding Village Area, allowing for higher density neighborhood development within walking distance of the center.
 - The **Williston VC’s** boundary is proposed for expansion to include school and town properties north of US2, generally bounded by Allen Brook, as well as protected town land to the south, and the state rest area on I-89. While this southern expansion bordering the I-89 corridor may be intended to accommodate some additional residential development, given existing development limitations it appears to be better suited for inclusion under another FLU category.
- Fourteen new Village Centers, including
 - Three new Village Centers in **Bolton, Colchester, and St. George**, which currently have no designated village center. These centers, while limited in extent, meet the statutory definition of a traditional town center – though St. George lacks a registered historic district, and much of the Bolton VC along US2, including the town garage, lies within the Winooski River FHA (the focus of recent mitigation efforts), and the Joiner Brook river corridor.
 - The proposed **New North End VC** in Burlington, and the **Shelburne Road/ Farrel Street VC**, which extends into South Burlington. These proposed centers, which include auto-oriented shopping centers and strip development, along with newer, higher density residential development (especially in the portion extending into S. Burlington), are zoned as “Neighborhood Activity Centers,” and do not meet the statutory definition of a traditional downtown or village center. As such

they would more appropriately be included in either a PGA, or as a Transition Area, as proposed for redevelopment.

- The **Fort Ethan Allen VC** in Colchester, which extends into Essex, does not clearly meet the definition of a traditional village center. In Colchester this area includes housing and commercial development associated with adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the former military base. Though historic, and supporting much needed housing development, this area in form and function is not characteristic of a traditional village center. The portion of the proposed VC in Essex, consisting mainly of shopping centers and associated auto-oriented development, clearly does not meet the definition of a village center. If proposed for redevelopment, this proposed center, especially within Essex, would more appropriately be included in a PGA or Transition Area.
- The **Mallets Bay, Town Office, and Warner's Corner VCs** in Colchester. These proposed centers clearly do not meet the statutory definition of a traditional village center and would be more appropriately included in other FLU categories.
 - o The proposed **Mallets Bay VC** is outside of existing service areas, and is largely comprised of the state's boat access, a marina and a few other commercial properties, and includes protected land and lakeshore. It is more representative of outdoor recreational use than a village center.
 - o The **Town Office VC**, which potentially could be expanded and redeveloped as a new village center within the corresponding Village Area, as proposed is limited to the town's municipal complex and fronting residential properties across the street. Unlike Colchester' Main Street VC, it is not a registered historic district, and does not incorporate a traditional mix of uses, including supporting businesses.
 - o The proposed **Warner's Corner VC** currently consists mainly of auto-oriented commercial shopping center and strip development. If proposed for higher density, mixed use infill and redevelopment, this area would be more appropriately mapped as a Transition Area.
- The proposed **Juniper Ridge and Long Meadow Drive VCs** in Shelburne, and the **Fayette Drive and Kimball Avenue VCs** in South Burlington are all representative of auto-oriented commercial strip development that clearly does not meet the statutory definition of a traditional village center. They do not include historic properties or a traditional mix of uses and are not pedestrian friendly. If proposed for higher density mixed use development, redevelopment, or infill development, these areas would be more appropriately mapped as Transition Areas.

We also reviewed proposed downtown and village enters under related mapping guidance (Future Land Use Methodology and Process, Version.3.0, April 18, 2025):

- *That there should generally be one Downtown Center in each region.* As mapped there are 11 proposed regional downtown centers, including two legacy downtown district (Burlington and Winooski), one legacy new town center (Market Street), two legacy growth centers (Taft Corners, Severance Corners), two legacy village centers (Essex Jct, Shelburne), and four new downtown centers (Cambrian Rise, South End, Essex, and Shelburne Village). As noted above, not all of these meet FLU criteria for a Downtown Center.
- *That there should generally be at least one Village Center in each town, provided the area meets the statutory definition.*
 - Most towns in the region have more than one proposed Village Center, as allowed, to include both new and legacy centers. New Village Centers are proposed for Bolton, Colchester, and St. George, which currently lack a designated Village Center. As noted above, some other new village centers do not appear to meet FLU Village Center criteria.
- *Village Centers not meeting Tier 1B requirements should still be included on the FLUM, to qualify for state designation benefits.*
 - Not all centers shown on the proposed FLUM qualify for Tier 1B status (see below), in part due to the absence of an eligible historic district or historic properties as required for state designation and Tier 1B consideration.
- *If a Downtown or Village Center includes protected natural resources, the municipal plan should note that these resources may be present and will need to be field verified during any development review.* The majority of mapped centers reviewed specifically exclude mapped FHAs and river corridors, except where they exist within existing settlements. Some include mapped, wetlands and RTEs as determined from available data layers. Given that no plan or regulations are required for initial mapping and designation as a Village Center, this alone does not preclude FLU mapping but may limit subsequent village development. For example:
 - As noted, much of Bolton’s proposed village center and a portion of Underhill Center’s expanded Village Center are within mapped flood hazard areas, and are subject to flooding.
 - All proposed Centers are covered under the NFIP, based on locally adopted flood hazard area regulations, but these were not reviewed to determine if they also meet state flood hazard area standards, especially as applicable to infill development within these areas, since this is not a requirement for initial mapping as a Downtown or Village Center FLUA.

Of particular note – to qualify for state designation as a new or expanded downtown or village “Center” under 24 V.S.A § 5803, as defined under 24 V.S.A. § 5801(12), a proposed center as shown on the FLUM must also represent “...a contiguous downtown or village *a portion of*

which is listed or eligible for listing in the national register of historic places...” Grandfathered preexisting nonconforming (legacy) centers in existence on or before December 31st may also qualify for state designation.

- It was noted in our review that, based on available information, the following new, reclassified or expanded Downtown and Village Centers as mapped do not incorporate a registered historic district, and therefore may not meet this requirement, unless they are found to include unidentified historic properties that may otherwise be eligible for district listing:

Cambrian Rise DC (NDA)	Huntington Lower VC (expanded)
New North End VC (new)	Milton DC (new)
Shelburne Rd/Farrel St VC (new)	St. George VC (new)
South End Innovation DC (new)	Juniper Ridge VC (new)
Mallets Bay VC (new)	Longmeadow Drive VC (new)
Severance Corners DC (GC)	Fayette Drive VC (new)
Town Office VC (new)	Kimball Ave VC (new)
Warner’s Corner VC (new)	Underhill Center VC (expanded)
Essex DC (new)	Westford VC (expanded)

Proposed Planned Growth Areas (PGAs)

Conformance with Regional Plan Future Land Use Element (§4348a(B) Planned growth areas. These areas include the high-density existing settlement and future growth areas with high concentrations of population, housing, and employment in each region and town, as appropriate. They include a mix of historic and nonhistoric commercial, residential, and civic or cultural sites with active streetscapes, supported by land development regulations; public water or wastewater, or both; and multimodal transportation systems. These areas include new town centers, downtowns, village centers, growth centers, and neighborhood development areas previously designated under chapter 76A of this title. These areas should generally meet the smart growth principles definition in chapter 139 of this title and the following criteria:

- (i) The municipality has a duly adopted and approved plan and a planning process that is confirmed in accordance with section 4350 of this title and has adopted bylaws and regulations in accordance with sections 4414, 4418, and 4442 of this title.*
- (ii) This area is served by public water or wastewater infrastructure.*
- (iii) The area is generally within walking distance from the municipality’s or an adjacent municipality’s downtown, village center, new town center, or growth center.*
- (iv) The area excludes identified flood hazard and river corridor areas, except those areas containing preexisting development in areas suitable for infill development as defined in section 29-201 of the Vermont Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Rule.*
- (v) The municipal plan indicates that this area is intended for higher-density residential and mixed-use development.*
- (vi) The area provides for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in the community.*

The CCRPC FLUM includes substantial areas of land proposed as PGAs, large portions of which do not meet one or more criteria for designation. While we appreciate CCRPC's intent to leverage existing water/wastewater infrastructure for potential infill development, the use of the PGA designation appears to be used as a blanket designation for lands characterized by a variety of settlement patterns, governing land use policies, and development suitability. Several portions of proposed PGAs, for example industrial parks in Milton and Essex, would more appropriately be defined as Enterprise areas. Other large areas, for example areas characterized by existing strip development along Route 7 in Shelburne, Milton and South Burlington, were identified as areas warranting the creation of the Transition Area future land use category ("sprawl repair") during legislative discussions. Additional concerns include:

- **We are very concerned that the CCRPC has proposed PGA boundaries that are not *"generally within walking distance from the municipality's, or an adjacent municipality's, downtown, village center, new town center, or growth center."*** The walking distance criteria is among the most specific of the requirements under §4348a(B). A widely accepted standard for walkability is ¼ to ½ mile from end to end. In this case the end point associated with the existing center is the *"municipality's or .. adjacent municipality's downtown, village center, new town center, or growth center."* Many of the PGA boundaries are well in excess of one mile – and in several cases greater two miles – from associated downtowns and village centers.

This concern is exacerbated by PGAs not being contiguous to designated centers, or in the case of eighteen proposed VCs (see list above), drawn to be extensions of proposed VCs that do not meet the statutory requirements for that designation. As noted above, the proposed Juniper Ridge and Longmeadow Drive VCs in Shelburne, and the proposed Fayette Drive VC in South Burlington and adjacent Shelburne Rd VC in Burlington do not meet the requirements for VC designation. Consequently, the PGA that stretches from the City of Burlington along Route 7 to Shelburne Village spans an area of roughly five miles between eligible centers.

- **Several proposed PGAs do not *"generally meet the smart growth principles definition in chapter 139 of this title,"* as required by statute.** We have raised concerns in prior comments that underlying land use policies actually prohibit compact, mixed-use development patterns that meet smart growth principles. While an analysis of municipal zoning standards is not a requirement for approval, VAPDA's *Future Land Use Methodology and Process* guidance document emphasizes the need to consider governing land use policies. That guidance states that PGA boundaries should, in part, be drawn by using the following criteria:

Compare with the municipal land use plan and verify that the area is generally planned for higher density residential and mixed-use development. The PGA may be made up of several land use planning areas or zoning districts and some of them may not be mixed use. If the plan is vague, look at the bylaws. If the municipal plan (or bylaws) does not indicate an area for higher density

residential or mixed-use development, then the area should not be included in the PGA unless it is part of an existing NDA or Growth Center.

Several areas, including land designated in Shelburne’s Residential District and Essex Town’s Medium Density Residential District, require 0.5 acre minimum lots sizes for single family homes, and larger lots for multi-unit dwellings. Other districts are zoned for various industrial uses and are better suited for designation as an Enterprise area.

- **In addition**, substantial portions of some of the proposed PGAs have been developed as predominately commercial land uses, in several instances as commercial strips. Act 181 anticipated that RPCs may choose to plan for the transition of these areas to higher density, mixed use and residential areas. According to 24 VSA (§ 4348a (D) Transition or infill areas:

“...include areas of existing or planned commercial, office, mixed-use development, or residential uses either adjacent to a planned growth or village area or a new stand-alone transition or infill area and served by, or planned for, public water or wastewater, or both. The intent of this land use category is to transform these areas into higher-density, mixed-use settlements, or residential neighborhoods through infill and redevelopment or new development. New commercial linear strip development is not allowed as to prevent it negatively impacting the economic vitality of commercial areas in the adjacent or nearby planned growth or village area. This area could also include adjacent greenfields safer from flooding and planned for future growth.”

As noted previously, the PGA designation should not be a catch-all to include lands more appropriately included in other future land use categories (i.e., Transition, Enterprise, Village Areas)

Proposed Village Areas (VAs)

Conformance with Regional Plan Future Land Use Element (§ 4348a(C) Village areas).

These areas include the traditional settlement area or a proposed new settlement area, typically composed of a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed-use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core. These areas include existing village center designations and similar areas statewide, but this area is larger than the village center designation. Village areas shall meet the following criteria:

- (i) The municipality has a duly adopted and approved plan and a planning process that is confirmed in accordance with section 4350 of this title.*
- (ii) The municipality has adopted bylaws and regulations in accordance with sections 4414, 4418, and 4442 of this title.*
- (iii) Unless the municipality has adopted flood hazard and river corridor bylaws, applicable to the entire municipality, that are consistent with the standards established pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 755b (flood hazard) and 10 V.S.A. § 1428(b) (river corridor), the*

area excludes identified flood hazard and river corridors, except those areas containing preexisting development in areas suitable for infill development as defined in 29-201 of the Vermont Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Rule.

(iv) The municipality has either municipal water or wastewater. If no public wastewater is available, the area must have soils that are adequate for wastewater disposal.

(v) The area has some opportunity for infill development or new development areas where the village can grow and be flood resilient.

Because CCRPC applied the PGA designation disproportionately in areas where wastewater is available, the draft FLUM raises fewer concerns with regard to proposed VA mapping, especially in the smaller communities outside of the Burlington core.

The exception to this is the Town of Colchester, where we have many of the same or similar concerns related to proposed PGAs. These include:

- Much of the area is not walkable from designated centers, especially given that several proposed VCs (Mallets Bay, Town Office, Warner’s Corner) should not be designated as centers.
- Much of the area does not meet the statutory description of a “Village Area.” The areas proposed for VA designation are expansive, not contiguous, and decidedly not “*composed of a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed-use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core.*”
- Because much of the area is not served by municipal wastewater, it is not clear whether soil conditions are suitable to accommodate the compact, high-density development envisioned in this land use category.

Tier 1B Eligibility

To qualify for Tier 1B eligibility under 10 V.S.A. § 6033, as requested by a municipality, a Downtown or Village Center must be identified on the FLUM as reviewed and approved by the LURB. Tier 1B eligibility is limited to mapped centers that are eligible for state designation as a “Center” under 24 V.S.A. § 5803 – as noted above to include mapped centers that meet the statutory definition of a “State Designated Center.” This includes a requirement that the “*(t)he Board shall review the portions of future land use maps that include downtowns or village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas to ensure they meet the requirements under 24 V.S.A. §§ 5803 and 5804 for designation as downtown and village centers and neighborhood areas*” (10 V.S.A. §6033(b)). Based upon our analysis, the following proposed centers do not qualify for Tier 1B status.

Cambrian Rise DC (NDA)
New North End VC (new)

Shelburne Rd/Farrel St VC (new)
South End Innovation DC (new)

Milton DC (new)
Juniper Ridge VC (new)
Longmeadow Drive VC (new)

Fayette Drive VC (new)
Kimball Ave VC (new)

In addition, as noted above, some proposed PGAs are overly broad and encompass significant areas that are not walkable to eligible centers, do not meet the statutory description for PGA designation or smart growth principles, and are more appropriately designated as other future land use categories. We urge the LURB to direct CCRPC to reconsider the draft FLUM in accordance with the future land use mapping guidance developed by VAPDA in redrawing these areas to comply with those guidelines and the requirements of Act 181.

Thank you again for your consideration of our comments.

Kati Gallagher,
VNRC Sustainable Program Director

Sharon Murray, FAICP

Brian Shupe, FAICP

**PREAPPLICATION REVIEW: COMMENT FORM
DRAFT REGIONAL PLAN**

Regional Planning Commission: Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

Submission Date: December 1, 2025

State Agency: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of Reviewer: Vermont Natural Resources Council

Reviewer Email: kgallagher@vnrc.org

INSTRUCTIONS

Who can submit this form?

If a state agency wishes to make comments on a filed preapplication, this form **must** be used. Members of the public may also use this form to provide written comments or can provide verbal comments at a Board meeting during the preapplication 60-day review period.

How to submit this form?

This comment form must be submitted electronically by emailing a PDF copy to **Act250.Board@vermont.gov** within **30 days** from notification that the Board has deemed a preapplication complete.

What is the scope of comments?

The purpose of the Board's preapplication review of a draft regional plan is to provide comments to the regional planning commission on whether draft regional plan conforms with 24 V.S.A. §§ 4302, 4348a, 5803, and 5804.

This comment form lays out the statutory requirements for a regional plan to receive an affirmative determination from the Board. ***This form does not need to be completed in its entirety, and a commentor can elect to complete only certain sections.*** If you have no comments under a given section, leave that section blank.

What does conformance mean?

Because the draft regional plan is prospective in nature, the Board will review the preapplication to determine if the draft regional plan were implemented in its entirety:

	Would the draft regional plan lead to substantial progress toward meeting the state goals in 24 V.S.A. 4302;
	Whether the draft regional plan contains the requirements of 24 V.S.A. § 4348a;
	If the draft regional plan includes neighborhood designations, whether the requirements of 24 V.S.A. §§ 5803 and 5804 are met.
	If the draft regional plan includes proposed s Tier 1B areas, whether the requirements of 10 V.S.A. § 6033(c) are met.

OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATION

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN PLAN DEVELOPMENT

24 V.S.A. § 4348 calls on Regional Planning Commissions to “allow for meaningful participation” in the adoption and amendment of a regional plan. Meaningful participation is defined in 3 V.S.A. § 6002. This section reports on the community outreach efforts undertaken for this plan’s development that advance meaningful participation, including information about engagement of Environmental Justice Focus populations, also defined in 3 V.S.A. § 6002.

Does the preapplication include information about the outreach strategy, how the RPC sought to reach Environmental Justice Focus populations in the development of this plan, and the results of these efforts?

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART A – CONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLANNING GOALS

Per 24 V.S.A. § 4348(h)(4), for the Land Use Review Board to issue a determination of plan compliance, it must find that the plan is consistent with the State planning goals as established in 24 V.S.A. § 4302. The application must describe plan compliance.

In this section, the applicant must provide detailed information about how the plan meets the general and specific goals outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 4302(b) and § 4302(c).

4302(b) – GENERAL GOALS

- (1) To establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework to guide decisions by municipalities, regional planning commissions, and State agencies.
- (2) To encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process, and to assure that decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact.
- (3) To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the region and the State, as well as the community in which it takes place.
- (4) To encourage and assist municipalities to work creatively together to develop and implement plans.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

4302(c) – SPECIFIC GOALS

Goal 1: To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

- (A) Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas as described in section 4348a of this title, and strip development along highways should be avoided. These areas should be planned so as to accommodate a substantial majority of housing needed to reach the housing targets developed for each region pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title.

- (B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally and regionally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both.
- (C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the planned growth patterns of the area.
- (D) Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Are the proposed designated areas (downtown and village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas) adequate to accommodate the regional housing targets as required by 24 V.S.A. § 4202(c)(1)(A)?

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 2: To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 3: To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 4: To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.

- A) Highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.**

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 5: To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:

- A) significant natural and fragile areas;**
- B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands;**
- C) significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;**
- D) important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites, and archaeologically sensitive areas.**

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 6: To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.

- A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).**
- B) Vermont's water quality should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.**
- C) Vermont's forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.**

Comments: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Goal 7: To make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

- A) General strategies for achieving these goals include increasing the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings; identifying areas suitable for renewable energy generation; encouraging the use and development of renewable or lower emission energy sources for electricity, heat, and transportation; and reducing transportation energy demand and single occupancy vehicle use.**
- B) Specific strategies and recommendations for achieving these goals are identified in the State energy plans prepared under 30 V.S.A. §§ 202 and 202b.**

Comments: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Goal 8: To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.

- A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.
- B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 9: To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

- A) Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forestlands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.
- B) The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.
- C) The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged.
- D) Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.
- E) Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 10: To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont’s natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 11: To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.

- (A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income, and consistent with housing targets provided for in subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title.**
- (B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.**
- (C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family dwellings.**
- (D) Accessory dwelling units within or attached to single-family residences that provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.**

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 12: To plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.

(A) Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply, and sewage and solid waste disposal.

(B) The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 13: To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

*** Goal 14: (14) To encourage flood resilient communities.**

(A) New development in identified flood hazard and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

(B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.

(C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.

**This goal is effective until 1/1/28, after which it is replaced with updated language accounting for the forthcoming statewide minimum flood hazard area standards established by rule by the Agency of Natural Resources*

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Goal 15: To equitably distribute environmental benefits and burdens as described in 3 V.S.A. chapter 72

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B – CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF A REGIONAL PLAN

Per 24 V.S.A. § 4348(h)(4), for the Land Use Review Board to issue a determination of plan compliance, it must find that the plan is consistent with the purposes of a regional plan as established in 24 V.S.A. § 4347. “Consistency” is defined in 24 V.S.A. § 4302(f)(1), and above.

The application must provide detailed information describing how the plan is consistent with the purposes of a regional plan.

24 V.S.A. § 4347 – PURPOSES OF A REGIONAL PLAN

A regional plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, efficient, equitable, and economic development of the region that will, in accordance with the present and future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, and welfare of current and future inhabitants as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. This general purpose includes recommending a distribution of population and of the uses of the land for urbanization, trade, industry, habitation, recreation, agriculture, forestry, and other uses as will tend to:

- (1) create conditions favorable to transportation, health, safety, civic activities, and educational and cultural opportunities;
- (2) reduce the wastes of financial, energy, and human resources that result from either excessive congestion or excessive scattering of population;
- (3) promote an efficient and economic utilization of drainage, energy, sanitary, and other facilities and resources;
- (4) promote the conservation of the supply of food, water, energy, and minerals;
- (5) promote the production of food and fiber resources and the reasonable use of mineral, water, and renewable energy resources;
- (6) promote the development of housing suitable to the needs of the region and its communities; and
- (7) help communities equitably build resilience to address the effects of climate change through mitigation and adaptation consistent with the Vermont Climate Action Plan adopted pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 592 and 3 V.S.A. chapter 72.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

PART C – REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF A REGIONAL PLAN

Per 24 V.S.A. § 4348(h)(4), for the Land Use Review Board to issue a determination of plan compliance, it must find that the plan is consistent with the regional plan elements as described in 24 V.S.A. § 4348a, except that the requirements of 24 V.S.A. § 4352 related to enhanced energy planning are under the sole authority of the Department of Public Service.

The application must provide details about how the regional plan is consistent with the regional plan elements listed below.

(1) A statement of basic policies of the region to guide the future growth and development of land and of public services and facilities, and to protect the environment

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(2) A natural resources and working lands element, which shall consist of a map or maps and policies, based on ecosystem function, consistent with Vermont Conservation Design, support compact centers surrounded by rural and working lands, and that:

- (A) Indicates those areas of significant natural resources, including existing and proposed for forests, wetlands, vernal pools, rare and irreplaceable natural areas, floodplains, river corridors, recreation, agriculture using the agricultural lands identification process established in 6 V.S.A. § 8, residence, commerce, industry, public, and semipublic uses, open spaces, areas reserved for flood plain, forest blocks, habitat connectors, recreation areas and recreational trails, and areas identified by the State, regional planning commissions, or municipalities that require special consideration for aquifer protection; for wetland protection; for the maintenance of forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors; or for other conservation purposes.
- (B) Indicates those areas that have the potential to sustain agriculture and recommendations for maintaining them that may include transfer of development rights, acquisition of development rights, or farmer assistance programs.
- (C) Indicates those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. A plan may include specific policies to encourage

the active management of those areas for wildlife habitat, water quality, timber production, recreation, or other values or functions identified by the regional planning commission.

- (D) Encourages preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources.
- (E) Encourages protection and improvement of the quality of waters of the State to be used in the development and furtherance of the applicable basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Do the Rural Conservation areas identified on the plan's FLU map help meet the requirements of the Community Resilience and Biodiversity Act (10 V.S.A. Chapter 89) (see 24 V.S.A. 4348a(12)(J))?

Click or tap here to enter text.

(3) An energy element, including an analysis of resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems within the region across all energy sectors, including electric, thermal, and transportation; a statement of policy on the conservation and efficient use of energy and the development and siting of renewable energy resources; a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy; and an identification of potential areas for the development and siting of renewable energy resources and areas that are unsuitable for siting those resources or particular categories or sizes of those resources.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(4) A transportation element consisting of a statement of present and prospective transportation and circulation facilities, and a map showing existing and proposed highways, including limited access highways, and streets by type and character of improvement, and where pertinent, anticipated points of congestion, parking facilities, transit routes, terminals, bicycle paths and trails, scenic roads, airports, railroads and port facilities, and other similar facilities or uses, and recommendations to meet future needs for such facilities, with indications of priorities of need, costs, and method of financing.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(5) A utility and facility element, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective local and regional community facilities and public utilities, whether publicly or privately owned, showing existing and proposed educational, recreational and other public sites, buildings and facilities, including public schools, State office buildings, hospitals, libraries, power generating plants and transmission lines, wireless telecommunications facilities and ancillary improvements, water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage, and other similar facilities and activities, and recommendations to meet future needs for those facilities, with indications of priority of need.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(7) A program for the implementation of the regional plan’s objectives, including a recommended investment strategy for regional facilities and services based on a capacity study of the elements in this section.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(8) A statement indicating how the regional plan relates to development trends, needs, and plans and regional plans for adjacent municipalities and regions.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(9) A housing element that identifies the regional and community-level need for housing that will result in an adequate supply of building code and energy code compliant homes where most households spend not more than 30 percent of their income on housing and not more than 15 percent on transportation. To establish housing needs, the Department of Housing and Community Development shall publish statewide and regional housing targets or ranges as part of the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment. The regional planning commission shall consult the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment; current and expected demographic data; the current location, quality, types, and cost of housing; other local studies related to housing needs; and data gathered pursuant to subsection 4382(c) of this title. If no such data has been gathered, the regional planning commission shall gather it. The regional planning commission’s assessment shall estimate the total needed housing investments in terms of price, quality, unit size or type, and zoning district as applicable and shall disaggregate regional housing targets or ranges by municipality. The housing element shall include a set of recommended actions to satisfy the established needs.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(10) An economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(11)(A) A flood resilience element that:

- (i) identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, based on river corridor maps provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1428(a) or maps recommended by the Secretary, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property; and**
- (ii) recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated under this subdivision (A) and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and public investments.**

(B) A flood resilience element may reference an existing regional hazard mitigation plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

(12) A future land use element, based upon the elements in this section, that sets forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity, and character of such land uses in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and services and that consists of a map delineating future land use area boundaries for the land uses in subdivisions (A)–(J) of this subdivision (12) as appropriate and any other special land use category the regional planning commission deems necessary; descriptions of intended future land uses; and policies intended to support the implementation of the future land use element using the land use categories as defined by 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(12)

Applicants must use the following mapping checklist to demonstrate conformance with this required element of the regional plan.

Definitions for each land use category can be found in [24 V.S.A. § 4348a\(a\)\(12\)](#). In addition, [Mapping Process and Standards v 3.0](#) summarizes the methodology and planning considerations followed by RPCs in developing the future land use map.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Downtown Center

Municipalities with a Downtown Center:

Municipality	Downtown Center Name	Boundary Note (optional)
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: CCRPC’s FLUM, as proposed, depicts 11 separately mapped Downtown Centers, including:• Two legacy Downtown Development Districts – Burlington and Winooski:- The Burlington Downtown Center, as the county’s traditional urban center, clearly complies with the statutory description. No significant expansion of its legacy boundary is proposed. - The proposed Winooski Downtown Center extends beyond its legacy downtown “center” as redeveloped in recent decades, to include adjoining industrial properties, as well as previously developed properties fronting the length of both Main Street and Mallets Bay Avenue – for nearly a mile in each direction. While some expansion of the downtown core may be reasonable, these linear extensions, separate from adjoining neighborhoods, would more appropriately be included in the adjoining PGA. This would still allow for higher density, mixed use redevelopment along main roads within walking distance of an expanded urban core,• One legacy New Town Center – South Burlington’s City Center, also including its larger Neighborhood Development Area. The proposed Market Street Downtown Center has developed into a

more urban, master planned, mixed use regional center that clearly meets the definition of a downtown center. It also, however, includes the University Mall within its legacy boundary, which might be more appropriately mapped as a Transition/Infill area or, within walking distance of the existing center, included within the PGA if proposed for higher density, mixed use redevelopment.

- Two legacy Growth Centers, including Taft Corners in Williston and Severance Corners in Colchester. Though Taft Corners in particular is clearly developing as a higher density, mixed use regional center, neither of these growth centers represent traditional, historic downtown centers or central business districts as described and, per statute, would more appropriately be mapped as PGA around more clearly defined and mapped commercial cores. In time, these areas may evolve to include functioning downtown centers.
- Two legacy Village Centers – the Essex Junction and Shelburne Village Downtown Centers:- The proposed Essex Junction DC also includes its larger Neighborhood Development Area and additional auto-oriented commercial strip development along RT 15. Downtown Essex Junction clearly meets the statutory definition of a Downtown Center, though neighborhoods and other areas within walking distance of the Center might be more appropriately included in the adjoining PGA.
- The proposed Shelburne DC also meets the definition of a more regional downtown center but has been enlarged beyond its legacy boundary to include the Shelburne Museum and other properties that, if generally within walking distance of the downtown, would more appropriately be included within its PGA.
- Four new Downtown Centers: Cambrian Rise and South End Innovation DCs in Burlington, and the Essex DC and Milton DC: . - The proposed Essex DC, though long planned for redevelopment as the town’s new town center, does not yet clearly meet the statutory definition of a traditional downtown. It has a small core of higher density mixed use development that could serve as a commercial core but still consists largely of auto-oriented commercial development. Like the proposed Williston Downtown Center, this is an area in transition that, based on master planning, may in time evolve as a more traditional downtown center. Currently it’s more representative of a PGA or Transition Area.
- The three new downtown centers proposed in Burlington do not meet the statutory definition of a downtown center – Cambrian Rise (legacy NDA) is a newly developed higher density residential neighborhood. The South End Innovation area (legacy NDA) is also being planned for higher density residential neighborhood development. As such, per statute these would more appropriately be included within Burlington’s PGA, which would still allow for limited mixed use neighborhood development without compromising the benefits available to the city’s traditional downtown center.
- The proposed Milton DC – currently consisting largely of auto-oriented commercial strip development – also does not meet the statutory definition of a downtown center. If proposed for future redevelopment, it could instead be included as a mapped Transition Area.

Village Center

Municipalities with a Village Center:

Municipality	Village Center Name	Boundary note (optional)
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: • Eight legacy Village Centers for which no significant boundary modifications are proposed, including the East and West Charlotte VCs, the Essex Center VC, the Jericho Center VC, the Riverside/Underhill Flats VC (Jericho, Underhill), the Hinesburg VC, the Milton VC, and the Richmond VC. Hinesburg’s existing NDA has been included in the adjoining PGA. These are all presumed to meet statutory criteria and have not been reviewed for this purpose. • Six legacy Village Centers that are proposed for expansion and should therefore meet relevant statutory criteria: the Huntington Lower Village and Center VCs, the Jericho Corners VC, the Underhill Center VC, the Westford VC, and the Williston VC. - The existing Huntington Lower Village and Center VCs are proposed for expansion to include roads characterized by low density residential development and land within the town’s Groundwater Overlay District which would more appropriately be included in another FLU category, such as the surrounding Village Area, if within walking distance of one of the centers. - The Jericho Corners VC is proposed for expansion to a cemetery, and lower density residential (R1) parcels on Lee River Road that are within walking distance of the existing center – which may allow for additional residential and infill development off of RT 15 within planned service areas. If proposed only for higher density residential development, this area might more appropriately be included in the surrounding Village Area. - The Underhill Center VC is proposed for limited expansion to include the low density (R2) residential properties located within the mapped river corridor that would more appropriately be included Resource Conservation. - The Westford VC boundary is proposed for expansion to include residential properties and undeveloped land north and south of the existing center, which would more appropriately be included in the surrounding Village Area, allowing for higher density neighborhood development within walking distance of the center. - The Williston VC’s boundary is proposed for expansion to include school and town properties north of US2, generally bounded by Allen Brook, as well as protected town land to the south, and the state rest area on I-89. While this southern expansion bordering the I-89 corridor may be intended to accommodate some additional residential development, given existing development limitations it appears to be better suited for inclusion under another FLU category. • Fourteen new Village Centers, including- Three new Village Centers in

Bolton, Colchester, and St. George, which currently have no designated village center. These centers, while limited in extent, meet the statutory definition of a traditional town center – though St. George lacks a registered historic district, and much of the Bolton VC along US2, including the town garage, lies within the Winooski River FHA (the focus of recent mitigation efforts), and the Joiner Brook river corridor. - The proposed New North End VC in Burlington, and the Shelburne Road/ Farrel Street VC, which extends into South Burlington. These proposed centers, which include auto-oriented shopping centers and strip development, along with newer, higher density residential development (especially in the portion extending into S. Burlington), are zoned as “Neighborhood Activity Centers,” and do not meet the statutory definition of a traditional downtown or village center. As such they would more appropriately be included in either a PGA, or as a Transition Area, as proposed for redevelopment.-The Fort Ethan Allen VC in Colchester, which extends into Essex, does not clearly meet the definition of a traditional village center. In Colchester this area includes housing and commercial development associated with adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the former military base. Though historic, and supporting much needed housing development, this area in form and function is not characteristic of a traditional village center. The portion of the proposed VC in Essex, consisting mainly of shopping centers and associated auto-oriented development, clearly does not meet the definition of a village center. If proposed for redevelopment, this proposed center, especially within Essex, would more appropriately be included in a PGA or Transition Area.- The Mallets Bay, Town Office, and Warner’s Corner VCs in Colchester. These proposed centers clearly do not meet the statutory definition of a traditional village center and would be more appropriately included in other FLU categories. o The proposed Mallets Bay VC is outside of existing service areas, and is largely comprised of the state’s boat access, a marina and a few other commercial properties, and includes protected land and lakeshore. It is more representative of outdoor recreational use than a village center. o The Town Office VC, which potentially could be expanded and redeveloped as a new village center within the corresponding Village Area, as proposed is limited to the town’s municipal complex and fronting residential properties across the street. Unlike Colchester’ Main Street VC, it is not a registered historic district, and does not incorporate a traditional mix of uses, including supporting businesses.o The proposed Warner’s Corner VC currently consists mainly of auto-oriented commercial shopping center and strip development. If proposed for higher density, mixed use infill and redevelopment, this area would be more appropriately mapped as a Transition Area.- The proposed Juniper Ridge and Long Meadow Drive VCs in Shelburne, and the Fayette Drive and Kimball Avenue VCs in South Burlington are all representative of auto-oriented commercial strip development that clearly does not meet the statutory definition of a traditional village center. They do not include historic properties or a traditional mix of uses and are not pedestrian friendly. If proposed for higher density mixed use development, redevelopment, or infill development, these areas would be more appropriately mapped as Transition Areas.

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Planned Growth Area

Municipalities with a Planned Growth Area:

Municipality	Planned Growth Area Name/Description	Boundary note (optional)
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- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: The CCRPC FLUM includes substantial areas of land proposed as PGAs, large portions of which do not meet one or more criteria for designation. While we appreciate CCRPC’s intent to leverage existing water/wastewater infrastructure for potential infill development, the use of the PGA designation appears to be used as a blanket designation for lands characterized by a variety of settlement patterns, governing land use policies, and development suitability. Several portions of proposed PGAs, for example industrial parks in Milton and Essex, would more appropriately be defined as Enterprise areas. Other large areas, for example areas characterized by existing strip development along Route 7 in Shelburne, Milton and South Burlington, were identified as areas warranting the creation of the Transition Area future land use category (“sprawl repair”) during legislative discussions. Additional concerns include:

- We are very concerned that the CCRPC has proposed PGA boundaries that are not “generally within walking distance from the municipality’s, or an adjacent municipality’s, downtown, village center, new town center, or growth center.” The walking distance criteria is among the most specific of the requirements under §4348a(B). A widely accepted standard for walkability is ¼ to ½ mile from end to end. In this case the end point associated with the existing center is the “municipality’s or .. adjacent municipality’s downtown, village center, new town center, or growth center.” Many of the PGA boundaries are well in excess of one mile – and in several cases greater two miles – from associated downtowns and village centers. This concern is exacerbated by PGAs not being contiguous to designated centers, or in the case of eighteen proposed VCs (see list above), drawn to be extensions of proposed VCs that do not meet the statutory requirements for that designation. As noted above, the proposed Juniper Ridge and Longmeadow Drive VCs in Shelburne, and the proposed Fayette Drive VC in South Burlington and adjacent Shelburne Rd VC in Burlington do

not meet the requirements for VC designation. Consequently, the PGA that stretches from the City of Burlington along Route 7 to Shelburne Village spans an area of roughly five miles between eligible centers. • Several proposed PGAs do not “generally meet the smart growth principles definition in chapter 139 of this title,” as required by statute. We have raised concerns in prior comments that underlying land use policies actually prohibit compact, mixed-use development patterns that meet smart growth principles. While an analysis of municipal zoning standards is not a requirement for approval, VAPDA’s Future Land Use Methodology and Process guidance document emphasizes the need to consider governing land use policies. That guidance states that PGA boundaries should, in part, be drawn by using the following criteria: Compare with the municipal land use plan and verify that the area is generally planned for higher density residential and mixed-use development. The PGA may be made up of several land use planning areas or zoning districts and some of them may not be mixed use. If the plan is vague, look at the bylaws. If the municipal plan (or bylaws) does not indicate an area for higher density residential or mixed-use development, then the area should not be included in the PGA unless it is part of an existing NDA or Growth Center.

Several areas, including land designated in Shelburne’s Residential District and Essex Town’s Medium Density Residential District, require 0.5 acre minimum lots sizes for single family homes, and larger lots for multi-unit dwellings. Other districts are zoned for various industrial uses and are better suited for designation as an Enterprise area. • In addition, substantial portions of some of the proposed PGAs have been developed as predominately commercial land uses, in several instances as commercial strips. Act 181 anticipated that RPCs may choose to plan for the transition of these areas to higher density, mixed use and residential areas. According to 24 VSA (§ 4348a (D) Transition or infill areas: “...include areas of existing or planned commercial, office, mixed-use development, or residential uses either adjacent to a planned growth or village area or a new stand-alone transition or infill area and served by, or planned for, public water or wastewater, or both. The intent of this land use category is to transform these areas into higher-density, mixed-use settlements, or residential neighborhoods through infill and redevelopment or new development. New commercial linear strip development is not allowed as to prevent it negatively impacting the economic vitality of commercial areas in the adjacent or nearby planned growth or village area. This area could also include adjacent greenfields safer from flooding and planned for future growth.” As noted previously, the PGA designation should not be a catch-all to include lands more appropriately included in other future land use categories (i.e., Transition, Enterprise, Village Areas)

Village Area

Municipalities with a Village Area:

Municipality	Village Area Name/Description	Boundary note (optional)
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- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Because CCRPC applied the PGA designation disproportionately in areas where wastewater is available, the draft FLUM raises fewer concerns with regard to proposed VA mapping, especially in the smaller communities outside of the Burlington core. The exception to this is the Town of Colchester, where we have many of the same or similar concerns related to proposed PGAs. These include:

- Much of the area is not walkable from designated centers, especially given that several proposed VCs (Mallets Bay, Town Office, Warner’s Corner) should not be designated as centers.
- Much of the area does not meet the statutory description of a “Village Area.” The areas proposed for VA designation are expansive, not contiguous, and decidedly not “composed of a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed-use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core.”
- Because much of the area is not served by municipal wastewater, it is not clear whether soil conditions are suitable to accommodate the compact, high-density development envisioned in this land use category.

Enterprise Areas

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Transition Areas

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Resource-based Recreation Areas

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Hamlets

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Rural Areas: General

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Rural Areas: Agriculture and Forestry

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Rural Areas: Conservation

- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards.
- RPC mapped this area consistent with the mapping process and standards with the following modifications to address local and regional context:

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

PART D – COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT REGIONAL PLANNING AREAS

Per 24 V.S.A. § 4348(h)(4), for the Land Use Review Board to issue a determination of plan compliance, it must find that the plan is compatible with adjacent regional planning areas. 24 V.S.A. § 4302(f)(2) defines “compatibility” as follows:

(2) As used in this chapter, for one plan to be “compatible with” another, the plan in question, as implemented, will not significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the other plan. If a plan, as implemented, will significantly reduce the desired effect of the other plan, the plan may be considered compatible if it includes the following:

(A) a statement that identifies the ways that it will significantly reduce the desired effect of the other plan;

(B) an explanation of why any incompatible portion of the plan in question is essential to the desired effect of the plan as a whole;

(C) an explanation of why, with respect to any incompatible portion of the plan in question, there is no reasonable alternative way to achieve the desired effect of the plan; and

(D) an explanation of how any incompatible portion of the plan in question has been structured to mitigate its detrimental effects on the implementation of the other plan.

Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

Tier 1B Status Requests (see Tier 1B form)