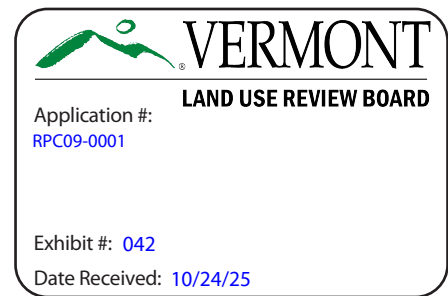


From: [Farrell, Alex](#)
To: [Act250 - Board](#)
Cc: [Kurrle, Lindsay](#); [Brooks, Tayt](#); [Formalarie, Nate](#); [Cochran, Chris](#)
Subject: DHCD Review of RRPC Preapplication
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:56:30 PM
Attachments: [DHCD_RRPC_LURB-PreapplicationReviewComment.pdf](#)
[DHCD_ReviewAndComment_RRPC-FLUA_Final.pdf](#)



Good afternoon LURB members,

Attached is DHCD's review of the RRPC preapplication utilizing the LURB comment form. As additional context, I have also attached the formal comment that DHCD submitted to RRPC as required by statute. The substance is essentially the same in both documents; however, the DHCD memo contains exhibits with images from the FLU map.

Thank you.

Alex Farrell | Commissioner
Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development
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**PREAPPLICATION REVIEW: COMMENT FORM
DRAFT REGIONAL PLAN**

Regional Planning Commission: Rutland Regional Planning Commission

Submission Date: September 17, 2025

State Agency: Department of Housing & Community Development

Name of Reviewer: Alex Farrell, Commissioner

Reviewer Email: Alex.Farrell@vermont.gov

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?

DHCD applauds the work of the RRPC to engage with municipalities and residents within its region to support each community in realizing their vision for the future. This review and comment provides region-wide insights for RRPC to consider as they work towards a determination of compliance. The Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) submitted a pre-application to LURB on September 17, 2025. The LURB provided notice to partner agencies on September 23, 2025, with submitted materials. The RRPC regional plan has 446 pages and DHCD staff had 10 business days to complete its review. The Department’s review and comments are primarily limited and focused on FLUAs establishing a Community Investment Designation and region-wide mapping topics or issues. The Department did not review the remainder of the plan.

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: The VC requires a continuous and connected area with a mix of uses that bring together community activity, civic assets, and is the traditional historic central business and civic center (24 VSA §5801 & 24 VSA §4348a(12)(C)). DHCD noted tracts of undeveloped land in proposed centers without any use, activity, asset or historic asset mapped as VC. Undeveloped tracts of land and residential-only areas of land may be better suited for another FLUA, including FLUAs that establish neighborhoods. DHCD recommends that the Region consider other adjacent land uses meeting the criteria, like VA, PGA, or transition. These categories are more aligned with residential uses and development. Regarding FLUA boundaries, DHCD notes that many instances exist where single buildings or parcels are bisected by regional future land use areas. In some cases, a bisected building or parcel complies with necessary flood hazard and river corridor area exclusions, as required by statute. Version 3.0 of the methodology developed by VAPDA does not include guidance on treatment of existing buildings. It does include advice on ‘snapping’ to parcel boundaries as appropriate for three (3) of the FLUA. However, in many instances, the Region chooses not to ‘snap.’ DHCD observes that this most often occurs when a FLUA defaults to another map layer (such as suitable soils for septic or a sewer service area) without a localized review to determine if ‘snapping’ to parcel lines is appropriate. DHCD recommends that the Region consider the map’s impacts on future Act 250 Tier 1B/1A jurisdiction, municipal future land use mapping and zoning, use of the regional plan in other regulatory proceedings, and other carry-forward effects when FLUAs bisect a building or parcel. Additionally, DHCD notes that some FLUAs are extremely small and disconnected from larger resources, including but not limited to the rural conservation FLUA. The VAPDA methodology and the Region may wish to consider when bisected parcels are appropriate for regional-scale mapping as prescribed by statute, and when ‘snapping’ a FLUA to a parcel boundary is appropriate. Example 1: DHCD observed small areas excluded from the Shrewsbury VA and included in three separate FLUAs because they do not contain suitable soils. None of these excluded areas encompass an entire parcel or a majority of a parcel.

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: The department is keenly interested in ensuring that the FLUAs included in the plan will support the Region’s ability to meet its statewide and regional housing targets, established as part of Act 181 (24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(9)). While statute (24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(A)) requires that a substantial majority of the units be encouraged in downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas, DHCD suggests the Region ensure sufficient land mass is mapped to allow nearly all of the units identified in the housing targets to be accommodated in those areas. While this is a review and comment of the Regional Plan, and thus the underlying municipal plan, it does not provide direct comment on local zoning and bylaws. The Department encourages RRPC and municipalities ensure that zoning and bylaws account for and accommodate the growth needed to achieve the statewide and regional housing targets and to enable the growth sought by this Regional Plan.

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: While walkability is not defined by statute, the Region may want to consider if a proposed neighborhood/PGA/VA is generally a walkable distance from a center, or has capital plans to provide for multi-modal transportation, complete streets, or transportation choice. DHCD noted that the Region's ROW mapping is not consistent. In some cases: the ROW corresponds with adjacent FLUA(s), the ROW is mapped as a distinct FLUA, or small portions of ROW appear in multiple FLUAs. See exhibits. For the purposes of State designation DHCD recommends that the ROW logically correspond to adjacent land uses since the regional maps could take on more policy and investment importance in the years ahead. For example, VTrans is creating a new Multimodal Roadway Guide that will enable road designs that are more context sensitive to surrounding land use and municipalities' interest in ROW that enhances public interest outcomes along streets in centers and neighborhoods and their qualifying FLUAs. Example 1: DHCD noted an isolated portion of Route 4 ROW in Rutland Town within the rural general FLUA adjacent to a VC and PGA, as well as railway in the transition FLUA; Example 2: DHCD noted ROW in Wallingford Town mapped as rural general adjacent to rural conservation. Example 2: DHCD noted ROW in Benson Town mapped as both rural general and VA FLUAs adjacent to rural conservation and VA.

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: While this is a review and comment of the Regional Plan, and thus the underlying municipal plan, it does not provide direct comment on local zoning and bylaws. The Department encourages RRPC and municipalities ensure that zoning and bylaws account for and accommodate the growth needed to achieve the statewide and regional housing targets and to enable the growth sought by this Regional Plan.

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: Flood Hazard (FH) & River Corridor (RC) Area ExclusionsThe PGA and VA FLUAs -- as areas planned for settlement expansion -- have distinct exclusions for flood hazard and river corridor areas in statute to discourage encroachment on development and functional floodplains and river corridors as well as unregulated development at risk of flood inundation and riverine erosion. Presently, the regulation of development in these areas is optional and administered at the municipal level, which has resulted in a fragmented patchwork of regulation across Vermont. The PGA and VA may include FH and RC areas with pre-existing development when regulated locally in VAs and may include areas suitable for infill development for PGA absent local regulation, so long as the areas meet State rule suitability. In other words, statute does not consider local FH and RC bylaws and regulations for PGA and does for VA. DHCD noted that the Region maps VA and PGA as including flood hazard and river corridors. Although encroachments into undeveloped flood hazard and river corridor may or may not be regulated locally, all regions may want to consider the merits of mapping undeveloped areas for settlement expansion FLUAs (e.g. PGA, VA, and transition and infill areas), except where pre-existing development exists and development within the FH and RC is regulated locally. Example 1: Undeveloped flood hazard and river corridor area in Brandon are mapped as a VA. Although regulated by FH and RC bylaws locally, the VA mapping includes encroachments into undeveloped flood hazard areas and river corridors that provide floodwater and sediment storage. Example 2: Developed river corridor in Fair Haven is mapped as a PGA; this appears to be an appropriate inclusion (even absent RC bylaws) since it is a preexisting developed area. Example 3: FH and RC in Rutland City mapped as a PGA; Rutland City has FH bylaws

and does not have RC bylaws regulations per the ERAF database; this appears to be an appropriate inclusion (even absent RC bylaws) since it is a preexisting developed area.

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: Rutland has chosen a target in the mid-range between the lower bound and the high bound of the Housing Targets as set by the Department. While statute does not specify at which level within the range of the housing targets the region must incorporate, and while most regions are choosing to utilize a target in the middle of the range, the Department strongly encourages regions to use the High targets to enable and plan for the most ambitious housing creation. If plans do not account for or enable the highest level of housing creation, the Department would be concerned that we are knowingly aiming below the optimal housing outcomes.

(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.
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.
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.
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: 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: Click or tap here to enter text.

Village Area

Municipalities with a Village Area:

Municipality	Village Area Name/Description	Boundary note (optional)
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.
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.
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: Click or tap here to enter text.

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)

TO: Rutland Regional Planning Commission
FROM: Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development
DATE: October 9, 2025
RE: Rutland Regional Planning Commission Regional Plan Pre-Application
SUBJECT: FORMAL REVIEW AND COMMENT BY DHCD

Overview

- This memo provides formal review and comment by the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) on the proposed regional plan referenced above.
 - The primary objective of this Memo is to address potential issues prior to RPC hearings, support review and comment by the CIB, and support a positive determination of compliance by the LURB.
 - The LURB is ultimately responsible for holding hearings and determining compliance with a regionally adopted plan (24 VSA §4348).
-

Process

- The **Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC)** submitted a pre-application to LURB on **September 17, 2025**.
- The LURB provided notice to partner agencies on **September 23, 2025**, with [submitted materials](#).
- To establish the new community investment designated downtown centers and village centers and neighborhoods, the LURB must ensure future land use areas (FLUA) proposed for designation meet the requirements under 24 V.S.A. § 5803 and 5804 for designation as downtown and VCs and neighborhood areas (10 VSA §6033).
- A positive determination of compliance by the LURB transfers all legacy State designated areas (Downtown Centers, Village Centers, New Town Center, Growth Centers, and Neighborhood Development Areas) and establishes eligibility for the new [State Community Investment Designations](#) and Act 250 Tier 1B and Tier 1A jurisdiction.
- Upon determination of compliance of the regional plan by the LURB, all future land use areas (FLUA) that establish designation will be recognized as Community Investment Program designated downtown/village centers and neighborhoods and tracked in the State's Planning Atlas and Data Center.
- Proposed regional plans will now apply a [standard methodology for FLUA](#) mapping developed by VAPDA and the [Enterprise GIS Consortium](#) is presently considering a proposed regional plan FLUA data standard to support statewide-consistent map data. Both implement the land use categories established by statute: *downtown centers (DC)*, *village center (VC)*, *planned growth area (PGA)*, *village area (VA)*, *transition area*, *enterprise area*, *resource-based recreation*

area, hamlets, rural general, rural ag/forestry, and rural conservation (24 VSA §4348a).

- The LURB developed a [Mapviewer](#) to assist in its partner agency reviews of the preapplication FLUA map.
- **The RRPC regional plan has 446 pages and DHCD staff had 10 business days to complete its review.** The Department’s review and comments are primarily limited and focused on FLUAs establishing a Community Investment Designation and region-wide mapping topics or issues. The Department did not review the remainder of the plan.
- The designated downtown/village centers have three “steps” for (beginner [1], intermediate [2], advanced [3]) with graduated requirements and benefits. All DCs and VCs mapped by the RPCs enter the Community Investment Program. Centers associated with a legacy designated downtown enter the program at Step 3. Centers associated with a legacy designated new town center or village center enter the program at Step 2. All other centers, including all newly mapped centers with no legacy designation associated with it, enter the program at Step 1. Municipalities may then apply to submit an administrative application to the Department to advance to Step 2 and 3 (24 VSA §5803). The step data developed will support updates to the [Vermont Planning Atlas](#) and [Data Center](#) upon LURB determinations of compliance.

Municipalities & FLUAs Proposed for Designation

Summary on FLUAs proposed as Centers & Neighborhoods

Department findings:

<u>Total number of designated areas proposed:</u>	67
<u>Total number of centers proposed:</u>	38
Total number of Step 1 <u>centers</u> proposed:	11
Total number of Step 2 <u>centers</u> proposed:	24
Total number of Step 3 <u>centers</u> proposed:	3
Total number of legacy <u>centers</u> :	26
Total number of new <u>centers</u> :	12
<u>Total number of neighborhoods proposed:</u>	29
Total number <i>planned growth</i> <u>neighborhoods</u> :	12
Total number of VA <u>neighborhoods</u> :	17
Total number of legacy <u>neighborhoods</u> :	1
Total number of new <u>neighborhoods</u> :	28

Commentary

DHCD applauds the work of the RRPC to engage with municipalities and residents within its region to support each community in realizing their vision for the future. This review and comment provides region-wide insights for RRPC to consider as they work towards a determination of compliance. The department is keenly interested in ensuring that the FLUAs included in the plan will support the Region's ability to meet its [statewide and regional housing targets](#), established as part of Act 181 (24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(9)).

While statute (24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(A)) requires that a substantial majority of the units be encouraged in downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas, DHCD suggests the Region ensure sufficient land mass is mapped to allow nearly all of the units identified in the housing targets to be accommodated in those areas.

While this is a review and comment of the Regional Plan, and thus the underlying municipal plan, it does not provide direct comment on local zoning and bylaws. The Department encourages RRPC and municipalities ensure that zoning and bylaws account for and accommodate the growth needed to achieve the statewide and regional housing targets and to enable the growth sought by this Regional Plan.

Region-wide Mapping Topics

Flood Hazard (FH) & River Corridor (RC) Area Exclusions

The *PGA* and *VA* FLUAs -- as areas planned for settlement expansion -- have distinct exclusions for flood hazard and river corridor areas in statute to discourage encroachment on development and functional floodplains and river corridors as well as unregulated development at risk of flood inundation and riverine erosion. Presently, the regulation of development in these areas is optional and administered at the municipal level, which has resulted in a fragmented patchwork of regulation across Vermont.

The *PGA* and *VA* may include FH and RC areas with pre-existing development when regulated locally in *VAs* and may include areas suitable for infill development for *PGA* absent local regulation, so long as the areas meet State rule suitability. In other words, statute does not consider local FH and RC bylaws and regulations for *PGA* and does for *VA*.

DHCD noted that the Region maps *VA* and *PGA* as including flood hazard and river corridors. Although encroachments into undeveloped flood hazard and river corridor may or may not be regulated locally, all regions may want to consider the merits of mapping undeveloped areas for settlement expansion FLUAs (e.g. *PGA*, *VA*, and *transition and infill areas*), except where pre-existing development exists and development within the FH and RC is regulated locally.

Exhibit: This shows undeveloped flood hazard and river corridor area in Brandon mapped as a VA. Although regulated by FH and RC bylaws locally, the VA mapping includes encroachments into undeveloped flood hazard areas and river corridors that provide floodwater and sediment storage.



Exhibit: This shows developed river corridor in Fair Haven mapped as a PGA; this appears to be an appropriate inclusion (even absent RC bylaws) since it is a preexisting developed area.

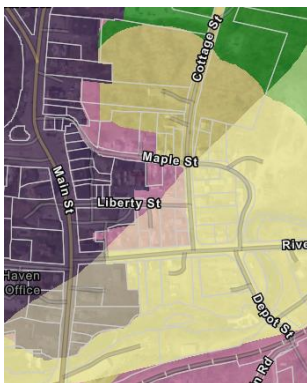


Exhibit: This show FH and RC in Rutland City mapped as a PGA; Rutland City has FH bylaws and does not have RC bylaws regulations per the [ERAF database](#); this appears to be an appropriate inclusion (even absent RC bylaws) since it is a preexisting developed area.



Treatment of Right of Way (ROW)

DHCD noted that the Region's ROW mapping is not consistent. In some cases: the ROW corresponds with adjacent FLUA(s), the ROW is mapped as a distinct FLUA, or small portions of ROW appear in multiple FLUAs. See exhibits.

For the purposes of State designation DHCD recommends that the ROW logically correspond to adjacent land uses since the regional maps could take on more policy and investment importance in the years ahead. For example, VTrans is creating a new Multimodal Roadway Guide that will enable road designs that are more context sensitive to surrounding land use and municipalities' interest in ROW that enhances public interest outcomes along streets in centers and neighborhoods and their qualifying FLUAs.

Exhibit: Shows an isolated portion of Route 4 ROW in Rutland Town within the rural general FLUA adjacent to a VC and PGA, as well as railway in the transition FLUA



Exhibit: Shows ROW in Wallingford Town mapped as rural general adjacent to rural conservation.



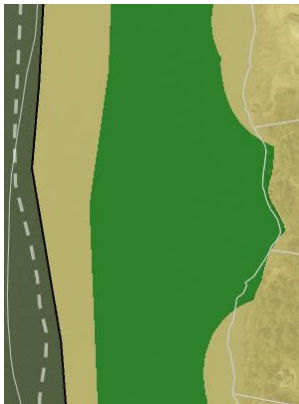
Exhibit: Shows ROW in Benson Town mapped as both *rural general* and *VA* FLUAs adjacent to *rural conservation* and *VA*.



Treatment of Waterways

The Region mapped most waterways with adjacent FLUAs using shoreline/parcel line as an edge, but there is some inconsistency that the Region may wish to adapt. See exhibit.

Exhibit: Shows Lake Champlain and portions of Benson Town shoreline in *rural general* and *rural conservation*.



FLUAs that Bisect Buildings or Parcels, or Are Close to Parcel Edges

DHCD notes that many instances exist where single buildings or parcels are bisected by regional future land use areas. In some cases, a bisected building or parcel complies with necessary flood hazard and river corridor area exclusions, as required by statute. Version 3.0 of the methodology developed by VAPDA does not include guidance on treatment of existing buildings. It does include advice on 'snapping' to parcel boundaries as appropriate for three (3) of the FLUA. However, in many instances, the Region chooses not to 'snap.' DHCD observes that this most often occurs when a FLUA defaults to another map layer (such as suitable soils for septic or a sewer service area) without a localized review to determine if 'snapping' to parcel lines is appropriate.

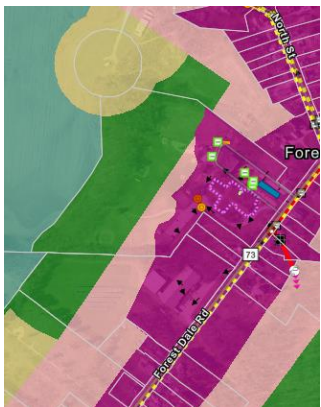
DHCD recommends that the Region consider the map's impacts on future Act 250 Tier 1B/1A jurisdiction, municipal future land use mapping and zoning, use of the regional

plan in other regulatory proceedings, and other carry-forward effects when FLUAs bisect a building or parcel.

Exhibit: Shows VA and *rural general* FLUAs bisecting buildings in Benson Town.



Exhibit: Shows a single school parcel in Brandon Town mapped with four FLUAs.



De minimus Future Land Use Areas

DHCD notes that some FLUAs are extremely small and disconnected from larger resources, including but not limited to the *rural conservation* FLUA.

The VAPDA methodology and the Region may wish to consider when bisected parcels are appropriate for regional-scale mapping as prescribed by statute, and when 'snapping' a FLUA to a parcel boundary is appropriate.

Exhibit: Shows how buffering of *rural general* FLUA around building sites overlays flood hazard and river corridors and leaves extremely small *rural conservation* FLUAs, like this 1/10th of an acre spot zone.



Exhibit: Shows small areas excluded from the Shrewsbury VA and included in three separate FLUAs because they do not contain suitable soils. None of these excluded areas encompass an entire parcel or a majority of a parcel.



Generally Walkable Neighborhoods & Walking Distance

While walkability is not defined by statute, the Region may want to consider if a proposed neighborhood/PGA/VA is generally a walkable distance from a center, or has capital plans to provide for multi-modal transportation, complete streets, or transportation choice.

Village Center (VC) FLUA & Vacant/Residential-Only Lands

The VC requires a continuous and connected area with a mix of uses that bring together community activity, civic assets, and is the traditional historic central business and civic center (24 VSA §5801 & 24 VSA §4348a(12)(C)).

DHCD noted tracts of undeveloped land in proposed centers without any use, activity, asset or historic asset mapped as VC.

Undeveloped tracts of land and residential-only areas of land may be better suited for another FLUA, including FLUAs that establish neighborhoods. DHCD recommends that the Region consider other adjacent land uses meeting the criteria, like VA, PGA, or *transition*. These categories are more aligned with residential uses and development.

Downtown Center (DC) FLUA & Step 3 Requirements

DHCD noted that the *DC* FLUAs mapped throughout the region include expansions outside areas that are not planned and regulated in ways that meet legacy DC or new Step 3 DC requirements. Municipalities should be aware that they risk reverting to a Step 2 center for the new, expanded boundaries if they do not meet Step 3 requirements prior to the State approval of the next regional plan (24 V.S.A. § 5803(f)). [Municipal Planning Grants](#) are available to support this work (due November 3 this year) and provide priority to support the maintenance of Step 3 DC status.