



VERSHIRE PLANNING COMMISSION & SELECTBOARD

Vershire, Vermont 05079

July 14, 2026

Kevin Geiger, Chief Planner

Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission (TRORC)

128 King Farm Road, Woodstock, VT 05091

CC: Peter G. Gregory

Meghan Asbury

Vershire Selectboard Members, Vershire Town Clerk, TRORC Representative

Janet Hurley, LURB Chair

Michael Tarrant, Town Council

Michael Tagliavia, OC State Representative

John Benson, OC Senator

Lt. Gov. John Rodgers

RE: TRORC 2026 Regional Plan First Hearing Draft — Formal Response of the Vershire Planning Commission

Dear Mr. Geiger:

At its meeting on July 8, 2026, the Vershire Planning Commission discussed the proposed regional land use maps and plan and, as a result, agreed to send this letter. It addresses three distinct but related concerns: the inadequacy of the timeline TRORC has established for municipal review; specific process failures in how parcel-level map changes have been communicated to the town and its landowners; and the Planning Commission's substantive objection to the prescriptive nature of the 2026 Regional Plan First Hearing Draft. We ask that this letter be entered into the formal public record for the plan's first hearing process.

I. TIMELINE IS INSUFFICIENT FOR MEANINGFUL REVIEW

Vershire's Selectboard Chair received the TRORC first hearing draft materials on June 27, 2026. The Planning Commission Chair and members received them on June 29, 2026. TRORC has set August 1, 2026 as the deadline for written comments and objections. That is a window of 33 days from the date the Selectboard Chair received the documents for materials that, by TRORC's

own acknowledgment in its transmittal letter, include changes across all seven Future Land Use Area categories affecting parcels across the entire town.

This timeline does not allow for the minimum due diligence required of a responsible planning body. As of this writing, TRORC has not held an in-person presentation in Vershire at which town officials and residents can view the 2026 draft maps at appropriate scale, ask questions in real time, and identify the specific designations assigned to their own properties. The three informal information sessions TRORC is holding regionally are not a substitute for a town-level meeting where parcel-level questions can be raised.

The Vershire Planning Commission formally requests that the August 1 comment deadline not apply to Vershire until: (a) TRORC has attended an in-person public meeting in Vershire with large-format maps and parcel-level data, and (b) a minimum of 30 days has elapsed from the date of that meeting. A municipality cannot be expected to provide meaningful comment on a plan it has not been able to review with its residents.

II. SPECIFIC REQUESTS — PARCEL DATA, MAPPING, AND LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

TRORC's June 27, 2026 letter to Vershire stated that the 2026 draft plan reflects changes in all seven Future Land Use Area categories. It tells us nothing about which parcels are affected, which category each parcel is moving from, which category it is moving to, or what the policy implications of those changes are for individual landowners. The Planning Commission considers this disclosure to be inadequate.

The Vershire Planning Commission formally requests the following:

1. **A complete parcel-level list of every Vershire parcel whose Future Land Use Area designation changes between the 2025 adopted plan and the 2026 first hearing draft,** specifying the category each parcel is moving from and the category it is being assigned to. This is the baseline information required for any meaningful municipal review.
2. **Priority disclosure of all parcels being reclassified into Rural Conservation (RC),** the most restrictive designation. RC carries binding caps on structure density and impervious surface, and activates the Section 248 commercial solar ban without any Act 250 trigger required. Landowners in RC face material constraints on future use that other categories do not. These landowners have a right to know.
3. **An in-person presentation by TRORC in Vershire,** with large-format parcel-overlay maps, at which town officials and residents can identify their own properties on the 2026 draft map and ask questions directly. TRORC is obligated under 24 V.S.A. §4345a(3) to provide technical assistance to member municipalities. This is not a discretionary request.
4. **Rural Conservation designation data** on where Vershire lies relative to the other 29 towns in the region in regards to the total percentage of land in the rural conservation category. Internally we've estimated that to be around 41%, but we would request verified data for

Vershire and other neighboring towns at the very least. It is understood that large areas of town are permanently conserved already; this data is relevant for planning purposes.

5. **Extension of the Vershire comment deadline** to no sooner than 30 days following the in-person Vershire public meeting described in Request 3 above.

III. SUBSTANTIVE OBJECTION: SCOPE AND PRESCRIPTIVE NATURE OF THE PLAN

The Vershire Planning Commission does not support the 2026 Regional Plan in its current form. Our objection is to the plan's character, not merely its details.

Regional planning commissions in Vermont are designed to be advisory bodies. Their plans are meant to provide guidance to municipalities, state agencies, and the Land Use Review Board — not to function as a second tier of zoning that imposes binding rules on individual landowners. The TRORC 2026 draft departs from that model in ways the Planning Commission considers a fundamental overreach of the RPC's proper role.

A member of the Vershire Planning Commission reviewed the 2026 draft plan against the other regional plans submitted for LURB preapplication review and identified 273 instances of mandatory language — 'shall' and 'must' — in the [TRORC document](#). Peer RPCs use this language far more sparingly, if at all. This was not lost on the Land Use Review Board at the June 26, 2026 preapplication hearing. LURB Chair Janet Hurley noted directly: '...you say things like, you know, something shall not happen in rural conservation... I noticed that that's something that other regional planning commissions are not doing.' LURB member Alex Weinhagen confirmed: 'You're right, Peter. It is different from all the others that I've seen.' LURB member Brooke Dingle called for 'caution' in replacing the 'aspirational nature of what these planning documents were originally to be used for' with mandatory prohibitions. Weinhagen characterized TRORC's inclusionary zoning provision as 'quasi-zoning through regional planning.'

The Vershire Planning Commission shares these concerns. Policies that tell landowners what shall not occur on their property — particularly when those policies interact with Act 250 and Section 248 triggers — are not advisory guidance. They are effectively land use regulations without the procedural protections that accompany municipal zoning: no local vote, no public hearing process under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, and no direct accountability to the affected property owners. The only mechanism by which those owners can contest a Future Land Use designation is to appear at a regional hearing on a compressed timeline, with no parcel-level data in hand.

IV. POSITION

The Vershire Planning Commission formally objects to adoption of the TRORC 2026 Regional Plan in its current form. We urge TRORC to: extend the municipal comment deadline as requested; provide parcel-level disclosure to Vershire and its landowners before that deadline runs; hold an

in-person meeting in Vershire; and revise the plan's mandatory-policy language to restore the advisory character that is appropriate for a regional planning document.

We remain committed to constructive engagement with TRORC and are willing to meet to discuss these concerns at a mutually agreeable time and place. Please confirm receipt of this letter and advise when TRORC can attend a public meeting in Vershire, which must be warned 15 days in advance.

Respectfully submitted,

Vershire Planning Commission and Selectboard Members

Vershire, Vermont

July 14, 2026

MICHELLE E. MASSA

Michelle Massa, Chair

Vershire Planning Commission

GREGORY WILSON

Gregory Wilson

Vershire Planning Commission

LIANA HORSTER

Laina Horster

Vershire Planning Commission

MARTY HALE

Marty Hale

Vershire Planning Commission

AMY RECORD

Amy Record

Vershire Selectboard