

Gott, Catherine

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Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 12:18 PM
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Cc: wbemmons3; nmalmquist@drm.com; npj.4251@gmail.com; peter.berger; todd Heyman; Act250 - Board; Michael Tagliavia; John Benson; Hurley, Janet; Weinhausen, Alex; Dingledine, Brooke
Subject: Re: A note from Vershire's Planning Commission Chair regarding TRORC Regional Plan & Process
Attachments: JO article MM op-ed - TRORC objections 072226.png; JO article P2 - TRORC objections 072226.png; JO article P1 - TRORC objections 072226.png
Categories: Catherine

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PS - attached is the article from today's JO in Bradford written by Cynthia Shelton of Thetford, who has served on that planning commission, as well as my op-ed. Note - the 20 year term I mentioned on this regional plan may be an overshoot, but the point is, we are stuck with it once it's adopted.

Please share as people deserve to know what's happening and how this entire process is a disaster and needs the brakes put on hard.

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Subject: Re: A note from Vershire's Planning Commission Chair regarding TRORC Regional Plan & Process

Hi all~

Quick follow-up to my note from Sunday re: **the TRORC regional draft plan**. I am adding the known members of the TRORC ExecComm and LURB members as I am seeking as much transparency on this matter as possible. Many town officials and citizens are very unhappy with the particulars of the plan and the process. The lack of time for PUBLIC comments in this process is among our biggest concerns. Peter Gregory said at the March 25 Exec Committee meeting that he needs to "get this plan adopted" ([read the backstory here from Neil Ryan](#) + video clip). If that doesn't concern everyone here, that's a problem.

An article hit this morning in the [Bradford JO paper](#) (subscription required for full access) in addition to my own commentary; trying to get a sharable copy (my submission attached).

Todd Heyman of Fat Sheep Farm in Hartland has submitted an 11-page formal comment letter to TRORC and LURB (PDF attached: link to the [RVR Facebook post](#)), and I wanted to make sure it reached you all.

Todd is a trained attorney who got entangled in an Act 250 proceeding a few years back when he was trying to diversify his farm's income — he spent years and tens of thousands of dollars navigating that process, and he testified before the Legislature on Act 181 with some of the most compelling firsthand testimony anyone brought to those hearings. His letter is substantive, specific, and citable. It goes deep on the overbroad "substantial regional impact" definition, the mandatory language problem, and the accountability deficit in how this plan was built. Worth reading before you submit comments or your designated town TRORC rep attends the meeting to vote on this. TRORC indicates that they expect this to be adopted in October; that's not a lot of time for draft iterations and public comment to be considered

Two quick questions for you:

1. Did TRORC meet with your town's planning commission and/or selectboard in person to review the Future Land Use maps in the current 2026 draft — and if so, when?
2. Would you want to be part of an informal information-sharing group across the 30 TRORC towns — coordinating questions and making sure we're not all reinventing the wheel? If yes, reply with your name, town, email, and role and I'll put together a list.

August 10 is the comment deadline. Formal hearings are happening next week; info meeting tomorrow night in Woodstock. Written comments go to LURB at act250.board@vermont.gov and to TRORC at regionalplan@trorc.org.

Thanks for your attention and sharing with the right folks in your towns. We don't need our RPC mandating that every larger scale housing unit have an EV charger and an alternative primary heat source; we need guidance and support on the matters that we support locally, in our own communities.

Michelle Massa

685-7806

From: Michelle Massa <shellfro@hotmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, July 18, 2026 8:00 PM

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Subject: A note from Vershire's Planning Commission Chair regarding TRORC Regional Plan & Process

Hello from Vershire!

my name is Michelle Massa. I'm Chair of the Vershire Planning Commission and a landowner. I'm reaching out to fellow local officials across our TRORC region because I believe most of us don't yet have the information we need to respond effectively to [TRORC's draft 2026 Regional Plan](#) — and the window to do that is closing fast. I'm reaching out to those whose emails were available publicly (about 27 contacts here); please share with your colleagues/town officials.

What's in this plan, and why it matters

Under Act 181 (passed by the Legislature in 2024), all Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) were required to update their regional plans. RPCs have discretion in both how they conduct that process and what goes into the plan. It should be an inclusive, collaborative, and iterative process. What TRORC has produced is not simply an advisory planning guide as other RPCs have done. At the June 26 pre-application hearing, Vermont's Land Use Review Board — the state body that must approve these plans — flagged TRORC's language as *unlike anything they had seen from other RPCs*, describing it as *quasi-zoning*. I have documented all of this. I am concerned about the loss of local control in favor of centralized planning as this hyper-condensed review process plays out in July.

The Vershire Planning Commission filed [formal written comments on July 14](#). More than 120 residents across the region signed a separate [citizen's petition letter](#). Our shared concerns, in brief:

1. **Mandatory language.** The plan uses "shall" and "must" nearly 300 times. Regional plans are meant to guide, not require. LURB Chair Janet Hurley and board member Alex Weinhausen said explicitly that this plan is unlike any other RPC plan they have reviewed (it's an outlier), and ultimately they decide if it gets approved or rejected.
2. **Parcel-level reclassification without adequate notice.** Thousands of parcels across our region were reclassified into more restrictive future land use categories — farmland, woodlands, residential properties, and this is all part of the Act 181. However, TRORC has not released reclassifications on a parcel-level basis. We received a letter saying that *some* parcels are moving from rural into rural-ag/forestry and rural-conservation, but which ones? A parcel-level map exists but is not clearly identified on their website and took significant effort to find. Approximately 35% of our region is now designated Rural Conservation, the most restrictive category, with direct implications for Act 250 review and local zoning. I just want people to have the opportunity to know this *before* a plan is adopted, not after. I call for transparency.
3. **An inadequate public process.** Vershire received the 210-page plan with 33 days before the original comment deadline and held no individual town meeting showing these new maps. Compare: Windham Regional Commission met individually with all 27 of its member towns. Central Vermont RPC met with all 23 of theirs. Addison County RPC held three public hearings over three months with revised drafts at each stage. Chittenden County's process ran ~ six months. TRORC compressed the equivalent into about three weeks.

This is my full analysis, FLU map interpretation, and all referenced letters and articles:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KY0A--CacJJvDmTqjkXnk3QK7AaxB3j/edit>

What I'm asking:

Whether or not your town has filed comments, four actions matter before August 10:

- Attend a formal hearing — or send a representative. All hearings start at 6:00 PM:
 - Tuesday, July 28 — Bethel Town Hall, 318 Main St., Bethel
 - Wednesday, July 29 — Bradford Academy, 172 North Main St., Bradford
 - Thursday, July 30 — Bugbee Senior Center, 262 North Main St., White River Junction
 - Friday, July 31 — TRORC Offices, 128 King Farm Rd., Woodstock
 - Remote access: trorc.org/calendar
- Submit written comments by August 10 to regionalplan@trorc.org
Comments on the record carry weight at LURB's formal compliance review.
- Write to the Land Use Review Board directly at act250.board@vermont.gov
Board members: Janet Hurley (Chair), Alex Weinhausen, Brooke Dingledine, Sarah Hadd, and Kirsten Sultan.

- Contact me if you've had difficult experiences working with TRORC — on town plans, bylaw updates, grant applications, Act 250, or otherwise. We are not well-connected across our region, but I'd like us to be. If there is any formal or informal community among town planners, please let me know.

I'm not asking you to take a position today. But I do want to make sure my counterparts in surrounding towns have the full story and understand what this plan could mean for your community. Please get your voice on record before August 10 IF you have concerns or questions. I am just trying to make sure that citizens get their due process and towns retain their local control based on their needs and not receive mandates from a body that lacks statutory authority to do so. In the event that I got something wrong or you believe is misunderstood, please let me know. I take great pride in accuracy/doing due diligence and this is all moving quickly.

Best,
Michelle Massa
Chair, Vershire Planning Commission
shellfro@hotmail.com
685-7806

Key Resources

- **Full analysis + all documents:** <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KYoA--CAcJJvDmTqjkXnk3QK7AaxB3j/edit>
- TRORC Draft 2026 Regional Plan: trorc.org/trorc-regional-plan
- Comments (August 10 deadline): regionalplan@trorc.org
- Vershire PC letter (July 14): docs.google.com/document/d/1pcmWLHktil2xliENeaVWJVW4Va1FYNUUP
- Citizen letter (120+ signatures): docs.google.com/document/d/1B4fpJaAP34689Agd3o7iq-JLofA95hHmuuuVEIbpiRs

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