

July 31, 2026

TRORC Board of Commissioners

Delivered via email to regionalplan@trorc.org

Re: Town of Tunbridge, Municipal Comments on 2026 Draft Regional Plan

Dear Members of the TRORC Board of Commissioners,

The Tunbridge Planning Commission and Selectboard write jointly to formally record our objection to the draft TRORC Regional Plan and the proposed Future Land Use Map.

This draft plan moves beyond an advisory framework, imposing rigid, top-down mandates that undermine local municipal authority and conflict with the ground realities in Tunbridge. Under Vermont law, regional planning commissions serve in advisory and technical support capacities; we therefore challenge any implication that TRORC possesses the legal authority to dictate local land-use bylaws.

We request that all unlawful, prescriptive mandates be removed by converting regulatory policy language in rural land-use categories from "shall" and "shall not" back into non-binding, advisory guidance. Vermont statute explicitly requires a regional plan to "guide" future growth and development (24 V.S.A. § 4348a). Instead, this draft establishes mandatory prohibitions designed to function as binding regulatory bylaws.

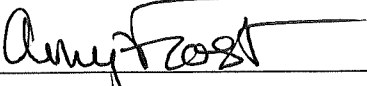
In addition, we formally submit our objections to the following key areas:

- **De Facto Zoning Without Local Consent:** By layering Act 181 tier designations and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) environmental mapping over mandatory regional policies, this framework creates backdoor zoning. It would effectively impose land-use regulations on our town without the consent or vote of Tunbridge residents.
- **Unrealistic Housing Expectations:** The draft plan caps housing density in rural zones while shifting regional growth targets onto village areas that lack municipal infrastructure required to absorb them. There is no "one-size-fits-all" housing solution for a rural community rooted in a working agricultural landscape.
- **Harm to the Rural Economy:** Restricting commercial enterprises, farm businesses, and agritourism in rural zones directly contradicts the statutory mandate to support working lands and preserve local agricultural economies.

This letter was approved by the Tunbridge Selectboard on July 28, 2026 in a publicly warned regular meeting. Please include this letter in the official administrative record for the draft TRORC Regional Plan and submit this letter to the Vermont Land Use Review Board.

Sincerely,

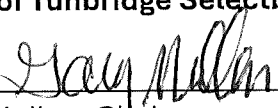
Town of Tunbridge Planning Commission:



Amy Frost, Chair

On behalf of the Planning Commission: Amy Frost, Brenda Field; Katharine Maguire; Israel Provoncha; Dan 'rudi' Ruddell; Janet Wells; Shane Young

Town of Tunbridge Selectboard:



Gary Mullen, Chair

On behalf of the Selectboard: Gary Mullen, Mike McPhetres, John O'Brien