

SUMMARY: REGIONAL PLAN APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR [RPC NAME]

This summary and the pages that follow document how the Windham Regional Commission’s plan dated June 5, 2026 meets the requirements for approval by the Land Use Review Board. Per 24 V.S.A. § 4348(h)(4), the Land Use Review Board (LURB) will approve the regional plan upon finding that the regional plan meets the following requirements:

- (A) Consistency with the **State planning goals** as described in Section 4302 of Chapter 117 with consistency determined in the manner described under subdivision 4302(f)(1) of this chapter.
- (B) Consistency with the **purposes of the regional plan** established in section 4347 of chapter.
- (C) Consistency with the **regional plan elements** as described in section 4348a of this chapter, except that the requirements of section 4352 of this chapter related to enhanced energy planning shall be the under the sole authority of the Department of Public Service.
- (D) Compatibility with **adjacent regional planning areas** in the manner described under subdivision 4302(f)(2) of this chapter.

In addition, the LURB conducts **regional plan map review** following the requirements of 10 V.S.A. § 6033. This approval may happen separately from regional plan approval.

Plan Consistency G Compatibility

As used in Chapter 117, *“consistent with the goals” requires substantial progress toward attainment of the goals established in this section, unless the planning body determines that a particular goal is not relevant or attainable. If such a determination is made, the planning body shall identify the goal in the plan and describe the situation, explain why the goal is not relevant or attainable, and indicate what measures should be taken to mitigate any adverse effects of not making substantial progress toward that goal. The determination of relevance or attainability shall be subject to review as part of a consistency determination under this chapter.”* 24 V.S.A. § 4302(f)(1).

“...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 meets certain criteria listed in 24 V.S.A. § 4302(f)(2).

The following checklists summarize how the Windham Regional Commission’s plan meets the requirements above. Further details regarding how the plan and map meet the various requirements are on the following pages.

A. Consistency - State Planning Goals: § 4302		Met	Not Met
1	Development Pattern	X	☐
2	Economy	X	☐
3	Education	X	☐
4	Transportation	X	☐
5	Natural and Historic Resources	X	☐
6	Quality of Resources	X	☐
7	Energy	X	☐
8	Recreation	X	☐
9	Agriculture and Forest Industries	X	☐

10	Use of Resources	X	☐
11	Housing	X	☐
12	Public Facilities	X	☐
13	Child Care	X	☐
14	Flood Resilience	X	☐
15	Environmental Benefits and Burdens	X	☐

B. Consistency – Regional Plan Purposes § 4347 Met Not Met

Is the plan consistent with the purposes of the Regional Plan? X ☐

C. Consistency - Required Elements § 4348a Met Not Met

1	Statement of Policies to Guide Development	X	☐
2	Natural Resources and Working Lands	X	☐
3	Energy	X	☐
4	Transportation	X	☐
5	Utility and Facility	X	☐
6	Implementation Program	X	☐
7	Development Trends	X	☐
8	Housing Element	X	☐
9	Economic Development	X	☐
10	Flood Resilience	X	☐
11	Future Land Use	X	☐

D. Compatibility – Adjacent Regional Planning Areas § 4302(f)(2) Met Not Met

Is the plan consistent with the plans of adjacent regional planning areas? X ☐

Mapping – Future Land Use Areas Met Not Met

Does the plan's Future Land Use Map delineate areas following the required mapping process and standards? X ☐

PLAN AND PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATION

The following summarizes outreach and notice as required by 24 V.S.A. § 4348, Adoption of a Regional Plan.

Outreach and Notification Timelines	Complete	Actual or anticipated date(s)
Throughout the planning process, the RPC has solicited the input of member municipalities, local residents, and organizations (24 V.S.A. § 4348(a))	X	January 2025 - May 2026 (See Chapter 1 - Introduction for additional information on public outreach)
60 days before first RPC hearing: Send draft regional plan to LURB (24 V.S.A. § 4348(b))	X	June 5, 2026
At least 30 days before first RPC hearing, plan and accompanying documentation sent to state and regional partners ((24 V.S.A. § 4348(d)(1))	☐	July 1, 2026 (anticipated)
At least 30 days before first RPC hearing, RPC provides member municipalities with description of map changes, Tier 1B info, designation info (24 V.S.A. § 4348(d)(2))	☐	July 1, 2026 (anticipated)
RPC holds at least two public hearings (24 V.S.A. § 4348(c))	☐	#1 August 18, 2026 (anticipated) #2 November 2026 (anticipated)
Regional Plan adoption by regional planning commission (24 V.S.A. § 4348(g))	☐	December 2026 (anticipated)
Within 15 days following adoption, RPC submits regionally adopted plan to LURB for determination compliance (24 V.S.A. § 4348(h)(1))	☐	December 2026 (anticipated)
	☐	

See 24 V.S.A. § 4348(f) for information on amendments to the plan during this process.

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. Document outreach efforts in this section. Please include information about the outreach strategy, how the RPC sought to reach Environmental Justice Focus populations, and the results of these efforts. This section may include a list or table summarizing outreach activities undertaken in the development of this plan.

WRC last completed an update to the Windham Regional Plan in July 2025. The 2025 Regional Plan represented a major update to the plan, which was previously updated in 2014 and then re-adopted in 2022. Because WRC was already close to completing the 2025 Regional Plan at the time of Act 181’s passage in 2024, WRC chose to move ahead with adopting the current plan and then revise the plan to address the new planning requirements by the

statute deadline.

For the 2025 Regional Plan update, WRC completed public engagement over the course of several years. At the beginning of the planning process, a public webinar was held and WRC staff met with stakeholder groups and WRC Committees. Outreach to organizations representing environmental justice focus populations was also completed. In February 2025, a series of four in-person meetings were held across the region, as well as one remote meeting, to present the draft Regional Plan and WRC's priorities. The plan was revised based on comments received. Two public hearings were held in July 2025 prior to WRC adopting the plan.

WRC staff began outreach to municipal officials about Act 181 and the new regional planning requirements in 2025. Staff presented an overview of the required changes to the plan at the WRC Full Commission meeting in January 2025. A public meeting for town officials was held in June 2025. A summary about Act 181 was distributed to towns in the region and WRC created a page on its website with up-to-date information about Act 181, the draft regional plan and maps, and upcoming public meeting dates with towns.

Between October 2025 – May 2026, WRC staff met with each town in the region to review and finalize the draft regional future land use map, go over local housing targets, and discuss the purpose and role of the Regional Plan. The regional future land use map was updated based on local knowledge and municipal planning efforts. These meetings were open to the public and often had large turnouts. In total, WRC staff held approximately 30 meetings in towns throughout the region and engaged with well over 200 local officials and members of the public.

WRC also hosted two meetings specifically about the Act 250 reforms under Act 181 and the new Tier system in response to numerous questions from town officials and members of the public. These meetings were attended by a member of the Land Use Review Board who provided an update on the mapping and rulemaking process for Tier 3 and the Road Rule. One meeting was held in the town of Grafton in December 2025 and a second meeting was held remotely in March 2026. Both meetings were well attended by members of the public and local officials.

A final draft of the plan was presented at the WRC Full Commission meeting in April 2026. Two additional public meetings were held in Brattleboro and virtually in May 2026 to present a summary of the revisions to the Regional Plan and to receive any final feedback prior to submitting a pre-application to the Land Use Review Board. Both meetings were attended by members of the public, municipal officials, and WRC Commissioners.

NEW TIER 1B REQUESTS

With this application, Windham Regional Commission is requesting Tier 1B area approvals for portions of the following municipalities: *Brattleboro, Rockingham, Westminster, Putney, Newfane, Winhall, Weston and Marlboro.* These Tier 1B area requests are documented in the attached memo.

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. Describe plan compliance below.

In this section, please 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.

<u>Page numbers:</u> Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1 – 8), Chapter 11: Implementation (pp. 1 – 9), Appendix F: Implementation Matrix
<u>Narrative:</u> (1) The Introduction of the plan includes information on the role of the Windham Regional Commission and the purpose and use of the Regional Plan. This chapter also includes a series of statements on the long-range shared vision for the region and a set of regional goals. Each chapter in the plan includes a set of policies that as a whole provide a framework to guide decisions at the local, regional and state level. Under the “Putting the Regional Plan into Action” section in the Implementation chapter is a description of how WRC will coordinate with municipalities, state agencies, and regional entities to implement the plan. (2) The Planning Process section in the Introduction provides an overview of WRC’s public engagement process for the for Regional Plan update completed in July 2025 and the current update process to meet Act 181 requirements. (3) Under the Project Review: Act 250 and Section 248 section in the Implementation chapter of the plan is a description of WRC’s process for reviewing Act 250 and Section 248 proposals and making a determination of potential Substantial Regional Impact. (4) Under the Putting the Regional Plan into Action section in the Implementation chapter is a description of how WRC will work with member towns on inter-municipal coordination efforts to address regional issues, pool resources for shared services, and implement municipal plans. The Implementation Matrix in Appendix F provides actions steps WRC will undertake to work with towns to implement the regional and municipal plans.

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 3: Land Use (pp. 3 – 13, 21 – 22), Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 26 – 33), Chapter 5: Transportation (pp. 23 – 28), Chapter 8: Housing (pp. 19 – 21), Chapter 9: Economic Development (pp. 1 – 15)

Narrative:

- (A) This is addressed in the narrative descriptions of the regional future land use areas in the Land Use chapter of the plan and is also supported by policies within this chapter. Higher intensity residential development is directed towards downtown and village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas. The Land Use chapter includes a policy that states a substantial majority of the regional housing targets should be accommodated in downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas. Regional housing targets assign 60% of the needed additional housing units in the region to these land use areas.
- (B) The Land Use chapter encourages new growth, including commerce and industry, in downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, village areas, enterprise areas, and infill and transition areas. The Economic Development chapter supports the continued growth and development of large-scale industrial and commercial uses in the Enterprise areas.
- (C) The Land Use chapter encourages developing and expanding public infrastructure, including water and sewer systems and pedestrian and bicycle facilities, to promote and enable greater densities in development centers, including Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Resource-Based Recreation Areas, and Enterprise Areas. The Community Utilities, Facilities, and Services Chapter encourages the development of public water and wastewater treatment in areas where future growth is appropriate.
- (D) Encouragement of development that follow smart growth principles is addressed throughout the plan, specifically in the Land Use, Housing, Natural Resources, and Transportation Chapters of the plan.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 1 (A):

- Land Use Chapter: Policy #1, page 21: *“Direct new growth, including housing, commerce, public infrastructure, industry, and community facilities, into appropriate land use designation areas, such as Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Enterprise areas, and Infill and Transition Areas.”*

- Land Use Chapter: Policy #7, page 21: *“Maintain and grow an adequate housing stock that satisfies a diversity of needs and income levels for all residents through their life stages and situations. Encourage the siting of a substantial majority of new housing in Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, and Village Areas.”*

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 1 (B):

- Land Use Chapter: Policy #1, page 21: *“Direct new growth, including housing, commerce, public infrastructure, industry, and community facilities, into appropriate land use designation areas, such as Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Enterprise areas, and Infill and Transition Areas.”*
- Economic Development Chapter: Policy #8, page 14: *“Support the continued growth and development of large-scale industrial and commercial enterprises in the Enterprise future land use designation areas as identified in the Regional Plan and the infrastructure necessary to support those uses, including water and wastewater systems.”*

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 1 (C):

- Land Use Chapter: Policy #2, page 21: *“New growth, in-fill development, and redevelopment in Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, and Hamlets shall give attention to the type and scale of existing development forms and patterns in these areas in order to keep these centers culturally, socially, and economically viable.”*
- Land Use Chapter: Policy #10, page 22: *“Develop, maintain, and expand public infrastructure, including water and sewer systems and pedestrian and bicycle facilities, to promote and enable greater densities in development centers, including Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Resource-Based Recreation Areas, Enterprise Areas, and growth areas as identified by town plans.”*

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 1 (D):

- Land Use Chapter: Policy #2, page 21: *“New growth, in-fill development, and redevelopment in Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, and Hamlets shall give attention to the type and scale of existing development forms and patterns in these areas in order to keep these centers culturally, socially, and economically viable.”*
- Housing Chapter, Policy #1, page 19: *“Promote and support an increase in the number of homes available and the diversity of housing stock (types of units, and rental and home ownership opportunities) within the region. This includes offering safe, adequate, accessible (universal design) and affordable housing to meet the needs of all residents across the entire income spectrum. This policy is urgent and of high regional priority.”*
- Transportation Chapter, Policy #38, page 26: *“Support the improvement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the region, including installing and extending new sidewalks where feasible, incorporating bike lanes into our existing roadways, the construction of off-road mixed-use paths where on road infrastructure is not possible, as well as the incorporation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons and raised crossings into crosswalks.”*
- Natural Resources Chapters, Policies #1, #7, and #37, page 26, 27, and 33
 - *Maintain a mixed aged forested landscape in the region composed of a variety of forest blocks that support ecological and economic functions.*
 - *Maintain and restore the chemical, biological, and physical quality of the region’s surface water and, at a minimum, meet the objectives stated in State and Federal water regulations.*

- *Require that the scale, siting, design, and management of new development maintains or enhances the landscape and protects high quality scenic landscapes and scenic corridors as identified by town plans*

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 9: Economic Development (pp. 1 – 15)

Narrative: The Economic Development chapter includes a discussion on current challenges and opportunities for the regional economy. The Regional Plan seeks to build on local existing assets to strengthen the economy. The Economic Development chapter includes a policy on promoting activities and development that contribute to a strong and diverse economy and providing satisfying and reward job opportunities for citizens in all parts of the region. This chapter also includes a policy on the supporting the creation of a variety of stable, year-round jobs with wages and other compensation that provide a livable income.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 2:

- Economic Development Chapter: Policy #3, page 13: *“Promote activities and development that contribute to a strong and diverse economy, providing satisfying and rewarding job opportunities for citizens in all parts of the region and supporting a strong municipal tax base, while maintaining environmental standards and promoting environmental justice.”*
- Economic Development Chapter: Policy #4, page 14: *“Support the creation of a variety of stable, year-round jobs with wages and other compensation that provide a livable income, and that include skills training programs and other benefits that contribute to the personal development and quality of life for all workers, particularly in areas with high unemployment or high numbers of workers earning less than a livable wage.”*

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

Page numbers: Chapter 10: Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (pp. 2 - 4)

Narrative: The Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources chapter lists and discusses the early childhood, elementary, secondary, post-secondary and adult educational options that are located in the Windham Region. The chapter discusses the challenges facing the supervisory districts in terms of enrollment and aging school buildings. For the post-secondary and adult learning opportunities, the chapter notes the types of courses and/or training programs that each option provides. Also included is discussion of the workforce development program that is offered through the Southern Vermont Center of Excellence. To support this planning goal, the policies focus on supporting educational providers in addressing challenges.

The following policies address 4302 (a) Goal 3:

- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #2, Page 11: *“Encourage school renovation and building projects in existing developed areas such as downtown centers, village centers, and surrounding neighborhoods in order to take advantage of existing infrastructure, encourage walking and bicycling to school where appropriate, and to enhance revitalization of communities.”*

- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #4, Page 12: *“Support efforts to provide sufficient funding to modernize school facilities and complete remediation work at schools to address the presence of contaminants, such as PCBs and PFAS.”*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #6, Page 12: *“Support BDCC’s workforce development programs which work with educational organizations and employers and are designed to train young people for employment opportunities and to attract others, including new Americans, to the region.”*

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 5: Transportation (pp. 1 – 27)

Narrative: The Transportation Chapter provides a comprehensive and integrated plan to address the transportation needs of the region. The chapter includes separate sections and supportive policies to address public transit, rail, and pedestrian and bicyclist facilities. The chapter also addresses the interconnection between transportation, land use, energy, and resiliency planning. Detailed information is provided on planning for stormwater management for transportation systems to reduce impacts on surface waters.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 4:

- Transportation Chapter: Policy #1, Page 22: *“Support transportation planning consistent with compact settlement goals, including promoting the incorporation of complete street principles into planning for compact settlement.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #2, Page 22: *“Recognize the link between housing and transportation costs and support planning efforts to reduce transportation costs for Windham Region residents, including improved multimodal transportation linkages between residential, commercial and industrial areas.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #13, Page 23: *“Promote the use and adoption of alternative forms of transportation that reduce emissions, including improvements to the public transportation system, promoting walking and biking including electric bicycles and encouraging carpooling through the expansion and promotion of park and ride lots in the region and the use of the Way To Go! Vermont App.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #14, Page 23: *“Promote the adoption of best practices to ensure that our transportation infrastructure is resilient and able to mitigate the impacts of increasingly severe storms to ensure the safe and efficient function of the network.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #23, Page 24: *“Support projects that ensure the adequate and efficient function of our region’s highway and bridge infrastructure.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #36, Page 25: *“Support the improvement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the region, including installing and extending new sidewalks where feasible, incorporating bike lanes into our existing roadways, the construction of off-road mixed-use paths where on road infrastructure is not possible, as well as the incorporation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons and raised crossings into crosswalks.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #46, Page 26: *“Support maintaining existing Southeast Vermont Transit service and the expansion of SEVT services wherever possible.”*
- Transportation Chapter: Policy #51, Page 27: *“Support the maintenance and improvement of existing passenger rail infrastructure in the region, including efforts to rehabilitate the historic Bellows Falls train*

station

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**

Page numbers: Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 8-16, 19-25, 26-33), Chapter 10: Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (pp. 6-8, 11-12)

Narrative: The Natural Resources chapter provides an overview of the different types and location of natural and fragile areas in the region, including state-designated areas, high elevation lands, bear habitats, deer wintering areas, cold water fish habitats, rare, threatened or endangered species, and critical natural areas. This chapter also discusses surface water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands. The region's scenic resources, including mountain ridges, farmlands, historic villages, and shorelines are addressed in the Natural Resources chapter. Historic structures and sites are discussed in the Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resource Chapter. The plan highlights the role of historic features in defining the character of the region and contributing to the quality of life.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 5 (A):

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #28, Page 31: *"Support the designation and protection of State or regionally significant natural areas, fragile areas, and rare, threatened or endangered species."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #29, Page 31: *"Protect Natural and Fragile Areas from development."*

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 5 (B):

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #12, Page 28: *"Maintain any designated Class I wetlands in their natural condition and restore wetlands when possible."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #14, Page 28: *"Support surface water classification and management strategies which are consistent with the municipal and regional land use planning objectives for the affected watershed, and which will effectively maintain or improve existing water quality."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #21, Page 29: *"Maintain or Improve Class I groundwater. These are high-quality resource areas mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources and so classified by the Secretary as currently being used or suitable for a public water supply source."*

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #23, Page 30: *“Groundwater aquifers are important communal resources and need to be sustainably allocated and used.”*

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 5 (C):

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #36, Page 33: *“Encourage towns to identify their scenic resources and support efforts for their enhancement and maintenance.”*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #37, Page 33: *“Require that the scale, siting, design, and management of new development maintains or enhances the landscape and protects high quality scenic landscapes, scenic corridors and historic resources as identified by town plans.”*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #38, Page 33: *“Plan new or improve existing roads so that they maintain or enhance scenic resources.”*

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 5 (D):

- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resource Chapter: Policy #8, Page 11: *“Protect places of outstanding educational, aesthetic, archeological, or historical value from adverse impacts and require mitigation measures when they cannot be avoided. Encourage preservation of significant historic sites or structures through support of ownership, protective easements, and/or other regulatory options.”*
- Land Use Chapter: Policy #6, Page 18: *“Preserve the historic and architectural character of the region through the reuse and repurposing of viable existing structures and retaining historic development patterns, densities, and characteristics.”*

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 1-33)

Narrative: The Natural Resources chapter includes strategies for maintaining and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources in the Windham Region. This chapter has a separate section addressing air quality concerns and a section on the importance of mineral resources, but also the need to manage extraction activities. Wildlife resources are addressed generally in the Natural Ares, Fragile Areas, and Wildlife Resources, section of the chapter, with more detailed information on bear habitat, deer wintering areas, fish habitat, beavers, and wildlife corridors. The Natural Resources chapter includes information on the current basin plans within the Windham Region and their role in managing surface water resources. The plan discusses the importance of maintaining large forest blocks to protect ecological health and habitat corridors.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 6 (A):

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #31, Page 32: *"Require that development activities meet state and federal standards for air quality."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #32, Page 32: *"Any emissions of hazardous or toxic air pollutants by commercial operations shall monitored for public health and safety so that concentrations of hazardous or toxic air contaminants in local and regional airsheds are below those listed for human health protection by federal and state regulations."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #13, Page 28: *"Evaluate inter-basin transfers of water and require project proposals to demonstrate that the water quality in both the sending and receiving basins will not be significantly lowered, that the water table and stream flow in the sending basin will not be detrimentally lowered, and that peak flows in the receiving basin will not be detrimentally increased. For purposes of this policy, a basin is the drainage area of a watercourse that is at least 1,000 acres in area."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #15, Page 28-29: *"Maintain water flows in streams at levels that support a full range of in-stream uses, habitat needs, and water quality values."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #25, Page 30-31: *"Recommend detailed site studies to determine suitability for development where steep slopes occur with shallow soils. Ensure that all development proposals on such soils provide and conform to a site drainage plan and an ANR approved erosion control plan for construction phases of the development. "*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #26, Page 31: *"Avoid development on wet soils, mucks, clays, silts, and other unstable soils that offer poor support for foundations or footings or that are subject to slippage."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #27, Page 30: *"Ensure that any ground disturbance (including quarry activity) does not have negative impact on groundwater, surface waters, recreation sites, historic sites, scenic areas, and special community resources. Future access to gravel resources should be considered in development proposals."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #1, Page 26: *"Maintain a mixed age forested landscape in the region composed of a variety of forest blocks that support ecological and economic functions."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #30, Page 31: *"Development should be designed and sited in a manner to preserve contiguous areas of active or potential wildlife habitat. Corridors connecting habitat areas for large*

mammals must be incorporated in plans for management and conservation of forested areas. Fragmentation of critical wildlife habitat should not be approved."

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 6 (B)

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #7, Page 27: *"Maintain and restore the chemical, biological, and physical quality of the region's surface water and, at a minimum, meet the objectives stated in State and Federal water regulations."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #8, Page 27: *"Support efforts that reduce Nitrogen and other pollutants from entering our streams and rivers."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #9, Page 28: *"Maintain and/or restore woody buffers of vegetation along watercourses, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and vernal pools consistent with State regulations and the highest precedent established by the District Environmental Commission and State Environmental Court."*

The following policy address 4302 (c) Goal 6 (C)

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #6, Page 27: *"Forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors."*
- Natural Resources: Policy #30, Page 31: *"Development should be designed and sited in a manner to preserve contiguous areas of active or potential wildlife habitat. Corridors connecting habitat areas for large mammals must be incorporated in plans for management and conservation of forested areas. Fragmentation of critical wildlife habitat should not be approved."*

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.**

Page numbers: Chapter 7: Energy (pp. 1-52)

Narrative: This goal is addressed in the Energy Chapter of the plan. The chapter states that a primary purpose of the plan is to implement the 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan and the 2021 Vermont Climate Action Plan. The chapter discusses current and anticipated future energy use for the Windham Region, specific renewable energy targets, and greenhouse gas emission reductions in the electricity, thermal, and transportation sectors. The chapter identifies goals and strategies under the pathways of Conservation and Efficiency, Land Use, Transportation, Renewable Energy Siting, and Equity in order to achieve these energy targets. Energy issues are also addressed within other chapters in the plan, specifically in the Land Use and Transportation chapters.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 7:

- Energy Chapter: Policy #1, Page 49: *"Support energy efficiency and conservation measures that reduce costs, usage, and emissions."*
- Energy Chapter: Policy #2, Page 49: *"Encourage energy conservation in municipal buildings, businesses, and homes."*
- Energy Chapter: Policy #4, Page 49: *"Promote decreased use of fossil fuels for heating."*

- Energy Chapter: Policy #10, Page 50: *"Promote a shift away from single-occupancy vehicle trips through strategies appropriate to the region."*
- Energy Chapter: Policy #11, Page 50: *"Promote a shift away from gas/diesel vehicles to electric or other non-fossil fuel transportation options."*
- Energy Chapter: Policy #12, Page 50: *"Ensure that all energy generation, transmission, and distribution projects further the regional goals for providing a reliable, sufficient, and economical energy supply to the region, promoting energy conservation and efficiency, and furthering the development of energy sources that have zero or low Green House Gas (GHG) emissions."*
- Energy Chapter: Policy #17, Page 50: *"Support sound energy facility siting practices and ensure that new developments give adequate attention to facility siting requirements, development constraints, natural resource protection, and land use compatibility."*
- Energy Chapter: Policy #18, Page 51: *"Development shall be located to avoid state, regional and local known constraints, and to minimize impacts to state and local possible constraints, as defined in the Energy Element of the Regional Plan."*

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 10: Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (pp. 9 - 11)

Narrative: The Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources chapter discusses the importance that outdoor recreational opportunities have on the lives of Vermonters. In the Windham Region, resource-based opportunities include: ski resorts, individual hiking trails, multi-use trails, trail systems, state parks, and water resources. The presence of these resources serves to create the sense of place that the Region seeks to maintain and enhance, for its inherent value, value to residents, and the draw that it creates in our tourism economy.

The following policies address 4302 (a) Goal 8:

- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #10, Page 12: *"Provide varied and accessible opportunities for outdoor recreation."*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #11, Page 12: *"Facilitate the orderly development of public and private recreational facilities and resorts."*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #12, Page 12: *"Recognize the recreational potential of watercourses and shorelines and encourage provision of facilities for sustainable water-oriented day use that does not impair the resource or related habitat."*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #13, Page 12: *"Protect existing trail corridors with a focus on sustainable trail systems."*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #16, Page 12: *"Support increasing public opportunities for multiple-use recreation and for public access to recreation lands. Ensure provision of separate areas or facilities for conflicting uses of recreational resources when such conflicts create safety hazards or significantly impair the use or enjoyment of the resource."*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #17, Page 12: *"Encourage the development of wayfinding signage and other ways to increase access of recreational resources and equity of access."*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #18, Page 12: *"Promote expanding accessibility of recreation resources for people with mobility issues and our aging population."*

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.**

Page numbers: Chapter 9: Economic Development (pp. 9-10); Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 1-7); Chapter 3: Land Use (pp. 7-9)

Narrative: The Windham Region has a long history of agricultural and forestry enterprises being an important component of the region's economic landscape. The Regional Plan highlights the significance of these industries as part of the future of the region in the Natural Resources and Economic Development Chapters. Policies in these chapters address the need to protect agricultural and forested land and strengthen the vitality of the working lands economy. The preservation of forest and agricultural lands is also address in the Land Use chapter through the regional future land use map and supporting policies.

The following policies address 4302 (a) Goal 9:

- Economic Development Chapter: Policy #9, Page 14: *"Encourage development and support of land-based industries, focusing on the production, distribution, and marketing of agricultural and forestry products and programs in a manner that maximizes the sustainable use of these resources, minimizes and repurposes waste, and promotes the economic, physical, and environmental well-being of our communities and their residents."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #1, Page 26: *"Maintain a mixed aged forested landscape in the region composed of a variety of forest blocks that support ecological and economic functions."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #2, Page 26: *"Encourage public, private and business landowners to maintain and enhance forests on their lands to support both ecological and human use functions."*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #5, Page 27: *"Facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the environmental, economic, and recreational benefits offered by the region's forests."*
- Land Use Chapter: Policy #13, Page 19: *"Development in Rural – General and Rural – Agricultural & Forestry areas shall be sited and designed to minimize conversion and fragmentation of forest and agricultural lands and protect the existing rural character. Proposed subdivisions adjacent to Village Centers, Downtown Centers, Planned Growth Areas, and Village Areas shall extend traditional neighborhood development patterns to the greatest extent feasible."*

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 30)

Narrative: The Regional Plan balances the need for the human use of natural resources with the preservation of natural resources for non-human centric needs. Policies from the plan address protection, sustainable use, and restoration of lands that have been disturbed by the extraction of resources.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 10:

- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #24, Page 30 *“Protect the region’s soils.”*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #27, Page 31 *“Ensure that any ground disturbance (including quarry activity) does not have negative impact on groundwater, surface waters, recreation sites, historic sites, scenic areas, and special community resources. Future access to gravel resources should be considered in development proposals.”*

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)(G) 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.**

Page numbers: Chapter 8: Housing (pp. 1 – 20), Appendix E: Housing Target Methodology (pp. 1 - 6)

Narrative: The Regional Plan provides background information on housing affordability and quality in the region. Many households are cost burdened in the region and wages have not kept up with increased housing costs. The regional housing target analysis identified a significant need for affordable owner occupied and rental units. Housing quality is also concern, especially due to the age of the housing stock. The regional plan directs higher intensity residential development towards downtown or village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas. The Regional Plan directs 60% of new housing to growth areas which are also the locations of higher density residential development, including single family, multi-family, and manufactured homes. These areas are located throughout the region. Single family and two family dwellings are encouraged throughout the region at various densities. Accessory dwelling units are promoted as a tool for encouraging affordable housing options.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 11:

- Housing Chapter: Policy #1, Page 18: *“Promote and support an increase in the number of homes available and the diversity of housing stock (types of units, and rental and home ownership opportunities) within the region. This includes offering safe, adequate, accessible (universal design) and affordable housing to meet the needs of all residents across the entire income spectrum. This is policy is urgent and of high regional priority.”*
- Housing Chapter: Policy #2, Page 18: *“New housing should be developed in a manner that maintains the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside. Support growth in and around existing centers to promote walkability and social connectivity. All new development should strive to have*

minimal impact on natural resources, open space, floodplains, fluvial erosion hazard zones, and important agricultural and forest lands.”

- Housing Chapter: Policy #3, Page 19: *“New housing and infill housing should be encouraged throughout the region and especially where public wastewater and water infrastructure are in place and can support the density needed to promote more affordable development, including multi-family housing designed to meet the needs of the region’s changing population (smaller households). Alternative housing opportunities such as condominiums, homesharing, co-housing, housing cooperatives and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) should also be encouraged.”*

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.**

Page numbers: Chapter 6: Community Utilities, Facilities and Services (pp. 1 – 20); Chapter 10: Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (pp. 2 - 4)

Narrative: The Community Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter focuses on the existing conditions, levels of service, and future needs of public and private utilities, facilities and services critical to supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities. The chapter specifically covers water systems, wastewater treatment systems, solid waste management, radioactive waste management (because of the presence of the former Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in this region), emergency services, health care services and facilities, and communications infrastructure. Schools are covered in the Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources chapter. What is needed within each type of resource to maintain standards and support expected growth is discussed in each relevant sub-section.

The following policies address 4302 (a) Goal 12:

- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #1, Page 20: *“Encourage towns to consider and plan for their future public utility needs and support their acquiring of future public and quasi-public utility sites, properties, or interests.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #2, Page 20: *“Support towns to identify and seek opportunities for shared services and infrastructure with other towns in order to reduce cost and improve efficiencies and the quality of service.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #6, Page 21: *“Encourage towns to develop capital improvement plans to budget for public water and wastewater facility management and operations and to have contingency planning in place for facility failure. Plan development so as to manage wastewater effectively and to maintain surface and groundwater quality.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #7, Page 21: *“Support development of new public water and wastewater treatment facilities in areas where future growth is appropriate and in consideration of flood hazards, including downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, village areas, resource-based recreation areas, enterprise areas, transition/infill areas, and other growth areas as identified by town plans, and in areas where extension is required for public health purposes.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #8, Page 21: *“Support the regular review and update of solid waste implementation plans (or “SWIP”) that regulate the safe disposal of all solid waste, including household hazardous wastes. Ensure that each town is covered by a SWIP that meets all state requirements.”*

- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #27, Page 23: *“Ensure that all proposed developments plan for fire hydrants or other water sources in proposed developments so that fire-fighting personnel can adequately serve all structures.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #28, Page 23: *“New roads shall be designed and built so that emergency vehicles can readily maneuver and access all proposed structures.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #29, Page 23: *“Ensure that any additional emergency service personnel, facilities, and equipment needed to effectively service new development are available to avoid placing undue demands on existing resources.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #32, Page 23: *“Promote universal access to broadband telecommunications and information services that are competitive in availability and cost.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #36, Page 24: *“Support the development and maintenance of appropriate facilities to provide for the care of children, elderly residents, and persons with disabilities in the region.”*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #2, Page 11: *“Encourage school renovation and building projects in existing developed areas such as downtown centers, village centers, and surrounding neighborhoods in order to take advantage of existing infrastructure, encourage walking and bicycling to school where appropriate, and to enhance revitalization of communities.”*

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 9: Economic Development (p. 14), Chapter 10: Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (pp. 1 – 2)

Narrative: The Economic Development chapter recognizes the importance of providing adequate childcare options to support a strong regional workforce. The Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter includes information on the current availability of childcare and unmet needs in the region. The chapter discusses the importance of affordable and high quality child care to support full employment, raise income levels, and provide development benefits for children. This chapter includes a policy on supporting efforts to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of childcare, in particular infant programs.

The following policies address 4302 (c) Goal 13:

- Economic Development Chapter: Policy #12, page 14: *“Provide for adequate childcare options that meet the needs of all families in order to support a stronger workforce.”*
- Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Chapter: Policy #1, Page 11: *“Support efforts to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of childcare, and in particular for infant programs.”*

*** 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*

Page numbers: Chapter 3: Land Use (pp. 1 – 2), Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 9-12)

Narrative: Encouragement of directing growth to existing centers is discussed in the Land Use Chapter, as is the acknowledgement that many of the region’s settlements are located adjacent to streams and rivers and are prone to flooding. This overlap of desire to develop compact settlements, but the vulnerability of many of them, is a challenge in the Windham Region. The Natural Resources Chapter includes information on flood vulnerable areas in the region, including floodplains and river corridors. This chapter also includes a discussion on regional and municipal flood resiliency strategies. The Community Utilities, Facilities, and Services Chapter addresses the existing infrastructure for regional emergency planning and the importance for flood preparedness and response planning at the regional and local level.

The following policies address 4302 (a) Goal 14:

- Land Use Chapter: Policy #4, Page 21: *“In order to support climate resilient communities, new development and redevelopment in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development or redevelopment occurs in these areas, it shall not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.”*
- Land Use Chapter: Policy #5, Page 21: *“Efforts to conserve lands for the purpose of stormwater and floodwater attenuation, as well as for aquifer recharge, shall be supported by the Commission.”*
- Natural Resources Chapter: Policy #10, Page 27: *“Restore floodplain areas along rivers in order to accommodate floodwaters.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #20, Page 22: *“Support towns in hazard mitigation planning according to FEMA guidelines that stress consideration of mitigation possibilities and include decisions and programs related to infrastructure, policy, education and the effective utilization of the natural environment to lessen vulnerability.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #21, Page 22: *“Encourage towns to adopt the most stringent flood and fluvial erosion hazard bylaws possible. Support towns in understanding and properly implementing their bylaws. Advocate to the Agency of Natural Resources for training and other needs that towns express around bylaw administration.”*
- Community Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter: Policy #22, Page 23: *“Encourage the development and regular review and update of local emergency plans, including local emergency management plans and local hazard mitigation plans, and encourage towns to engage in climate preparation planning.”*

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

Page numbers: Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 4-5 & 7-8); Appendix A

Narrative: As part of the Regional Plan update process, WRC completed a data and mapping exercise to identify environmental justice communities in our region. Using the Environmental Justice definitions as addressed in Vermont legislation, WRC produced a map, located in Appendix A, that highlights the communities in the Windham Region that have environmental justice concerns. WRC also pulled and analyzed data from five other social and environmental justice Federal and State tools to further help identify environmental justice issues in the region. WRC referred to the environmental benefits and burdens defined in statute and looked at the Windham Regional Plan's policies to see how they aligned with equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens throughout the region. The Regional Goals listed in Chapter 1 – Introduction include the following related to Goal 15: *“To equitably distribute environmental benefits and burdens across the region.”*

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.

Please 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.

Page numbers: Throughout

Narrative: The Introduction of the plan includes a discussion on the role of the Windham Regional Commission and the purpose and use of the Regional Plan. This chapter also includes a series of statements on the long-range shared vision for the region and a set of regional goals. Each chapter within the plan includes a set of policies that as a whole work to address this requirement.

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.

Please 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

Page numbers: Throughout

Narrative: The Introduction chapter includes a series of statements on the long-range shared vision for the region and a set of regional goals. Each chapter within the plan includes a set of policies that as a whole guide the future growth and development of land and development of public services and facilities, and protect the environment.

(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.

Page numbers: Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 26-33), Chapter 9: Economic Development (pp. 14), and Chapter 3: Land Use (pp. 21-22)

Narrative:

Part C (2) A. The natural resource policies in the Windham Regional Plan use Vermont Conservation Design and ecosystem function principals as their base. The policies balance the preservation of natural resources with the need for

growth and development in the region. Economic and social vitality is considered and the policies encourage that new development to support human/societal needs protect the natural environment to the extent possible. The Land Use policies (Policies 1-16, pp. 21-22) and narrative in the Windham Regional Plan also address the balance between development and natural resource preservation. These policies encourage compact development centers surrounded by productive rural lands and important natural resource conservation lands.

Part C (2) B. Productive agriculture often relies on good quality soils as a basis for producing crops or raising animals. The Natural Resources chapter discusses the importance of preserving quality soils, and by extension, agricultural land, in the region. Natural Resources, Policy 24 (pp. 30) address the preservation of important soils. The Economic Development chapter, specifically through Policy 9 (pp. 14), addresses the importance of supporting land-based industries by focusing on the production, distribution, and marketing of agricultural and forestry products and programs. Future Land Use, as outlined in the Land Use chapter, encourages and supports development that maintains the region's historic settlement pattern of compact villages and town centers separated by rural countryside and forests, consistent with state land use law.

Part C (2) C. The Natural Resources Chapter, Policy 6 (pp. 27) addresses managing forest lands to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors. The natural resource policies, and the discussion in the natural resource chapter, highlight the importance of maintaining intact, healthy, large forest blocks and wildlife connectors. The policies help guide conservation and sustainable management of our forest resources.

Part C (2) D. The preservation of rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) species and natural areas are addressed through the narrative and policies in the Natural Resources Chapter of the Windham Regional Plan. Natural Resource Policies 28-30 (pp. 31-32) focus on the protection of RTE species and natural areas.

Part C (2) E. The Windham Regional Plan addresses the protection, maintenance, or improvement of water bodies throughout the region. In the Natural Resources chapter, Policies 7-23 (pp. 27-30) specifically address water quality for surface and groundwater.

The following maps, found in the Windham Regional Plan, identify elements that are called out in Part C, #2, Sections A-E.

Ecological Resources Map Identifies:

- Rare, Threatened, or endangered species occurrence
- Significant natural communities
- Deer wintering areas
- Land over 2500 feet
- Regionally significant bear travel corridors

Forest Block Map identifies:

- Highest priority forest blocks
- Priority forest blocks

Future Land Use Map identifies:

- Village and Downtown Centers
- Planned Growth and Village Areas
- Rural – General, Forestry and Agriculture, and Conservation
- Enterprise Area
- Infill/Transition Area
- Resource Based Recreation Area

Historic Districts Map identifies:

- State or National Register Historic Districts

Important Farmland Soils Map identifies:

- Important farmland soils: Soils of “prime” or “statewide”

Existing Land Use/Land Cover

- Open/Agriculture
- Forest

Sand and Gravel Resources

- Sand resources
- Sand and gravel resources

Steep Slopes

- 15-25 percent slope
- Greater than 25 percent slope

Water Resources

- Outstanding Resource Waters
- Mapped River Corridor
- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Areas dominated by wetlands
- Watershed of Class A(1) waters
- Watershed of Class A(2) waters

(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.

Page numbers: Chapter 7: Energy (pp. 1-52)

Narrative: This element is addressed in the Energy Chapter. The chapter discusses current and anticipated future energy use for the Windham Region, specific renewable energy targets, and greenhouse gas emission reductions in the electricity, thermal, and transportation sectors. The chapter identifies goals and strategies under the pathways of Conservation and Efficiency, Land Use, Transportation, Renewable Energy Siting, and Equity in order to achieve these energy targets. The plan includes maps showing the potential for solar and wind energy generation in the region, known and possible constraints in renewable energy generation siting, transmission and distribution resources and constraints, transportation infrastructure, and possible locations for siting renewable energy generation

(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.

Page numbers: Chapter 5: Transportation (pp. 1 – 27)

Narrative: The Transportation Chapter includes a description of the region’s existing transportation infrastructure and needed improvements. This includes highways, bicycle and pedestrian paths, freight rail, passenger rail, and transit routes. The Transportation Chapter includes recommendations on funding sources for municipal transportation infrastructure improvements. The plan includes maps showing the existing and future regional transportation network. The Implementation Chapter discusses the role of WRC in supporting towns with planning for transportation improvement projects.

(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.

Page numbers: Chapter 6: Community Utilities, Facilities and Services (pp. 1 – 20); Chapter 10: Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources (pp. 1 - 5)

Narrative: The Community Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter focuses on the existing conditions, levels of service, and future needs of public and private utilities, facilities and services critical to supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities, as well as considerations around planning for new facilities and infrastructure. The chapter specifically covers water systems, wastewater treatment systems, solid waste management, radioactive waste management (because of the presence of the former Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in this region), emergency services, health care services and facilities, and communications infrastructure. Schools are covered in the Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources chapter. What is needed within each type of resource to maintain standards and support expected growth is discussed in each relevant sub-section. These facilities are show on the Educational Facilities, Governmental Services, Health Care Social Services, and Utilities maps in the Regional Plan.

(6) 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.

Page numbers: Chapter 11: Implementation (pp. 1 – 5), Appendix F: Implementation Matrix

Narrative: The Implementation chapter includes a discussion on the ways by which the Regional Plan will be implemented. This includes through municipal planning assistances, regional programs, regional planning studies, and coordination with state, regional, private, and non-profit entities. An Implementation Matrix is included in Appendix F and provides specific action steps WRC has identified to implement the plan in coordination with towns, state agencies, and other stakeholders. The Implementation Matrix is organized by plan chapter and identifies the lead entity and partners for each action step, priority level, and potential funding or resources.

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

Page numbers: Chapter 11: Implementation (pp. 9 – 12)

Narrative: The “Regional Plan in Context” section of the Implementation chapter addresses this requirement. In terms of the relationship between the Regional Plan and plans for towns in the Windham Region, WRC maintains an on-going consultation process with our towns regarding the town plan update process and consistency with the Regional Plan and state planning goals. WRC reviewed the regional plans for each of the adjoining regional planning commissions for consistency with the Windham Regional Plan with a focus on planning issues that span the regional boundaries, such as land use, transportation, economic development, and watershed planning. Since RPCs are in the process of updating Regional Plans to comply with the Act 181 requirements, this section will be revised and updated as needed before the final submission of the Windham Regional Plan. The Windham Regional Profile includes a discussion on development trends and changes in regional demographics since the last Plan update was completed. This data was analyzed and the findings incorporated into the separate chapters within the Plan and their respective policies.

(8) 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.

Page numbers: Chapter 8: Housing (pp. 1 – 20), Appendix E: Housing Target Methodology (pp. 1 - 6), Appendix F: Implementation Matrix (pp. 5)

Narrative: The Housing Chapter includes information about housing needs and affordability. WRC consulted the SHNA, housingdata.org, U.S. Census and other resources when developing the Housing Chapter, as well as the municipal housing targets. See Appendix E for more information about how the regional housing targets were municipalized. The regional housing targets identify need based on various housing stock characteristics, including affordability, quality, unit size and geography. The housing policies section lay out strategies WRC will use to support new housing throughout the region. The Implementation Matrix in Appendix F identifies specific actions WRC will undertake to satisfy the housing need.

(9) 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.

Page numbers: Chapter 9: Economic Development (pp. 1 – 15)

Narrative: The Economic Development chapter includes information on existing economic conditions for the region. The chapter discusses the current strengths of the regional economic and how to best build on those, including specific supportive policies. This chapter also includes information on how WRC collaborates with its local Regional Development Corporation, the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. The Land Use chapter guides economic development growth to appropriate locations, including downtown and village centers, planned growth areas, village areas, enterprise areas, transition/infill areas, and resource-based recreation areas.

(10)(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.

Page numbers: Chapter 4: Natural Resources (pp. 8 – 13) and Water Resources Map

Narrative: The Natural Resources chapter and the Water Resources Map together discuss and show the water resources, including flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, of the Region. The primary Flood Resiliency element of the plan is on pages 11-12 of the Natural Resources chapter and includes language that encourages towns to develop policies and regulatory and non-regulatory local strategies to protect floodplains and river corridors. The Community Utilities, Facilities, and Services Chapter addresses the existing infrastructure for regional emergency planning and the importance for flood preparedness and response planning at the regional and local level.

(11) 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)

Use the following mapping checklist to demonstrate conformance with this required element of the regional plan. In the General Narrative, please describe the process by which the RPC determined how the areas proposed for growth (Downtown and Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, and Village Areas) can accommodate a substantial majority of the region’s housing targets.

In future plan reviews, the “Boundary Note” column below will allow the Land Use Review Board to easily compare changes between Future Land Use Areas on maps completed using the Act 181 land use categories.

For this review, where this comparison is not possible, the boundary note is optional. In this column, note each center or neighborhood as “contraction,” “expansion,” “no change,” or “n/a – new center/neighborhood.”

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 3: Land Use (pp. 1 – 13, 21 – 22)

General Narrative: The Regional Future Land Use Map shows all of the land use areas listed in statute. The Land Use chapter includes a narrative description of each land use area and the type and intensity of development that are appropriate in each. The policies in the Land Use chapter further support the implementation of these future land use areas.

Downtown Center		
Municipality	Downtown Center Name	Boundary Note (optional)
Brattleboro	Brattleboro	No change
Rockingham	Bellows Falls	No change
Wilmington	Wilmington	Expansion
☒ 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:		

Village Center		
Municipality	Village Center Name	Boundary Note (optional)
Brattleboro	West Brattleboro	Expansion
Dover	West Dover	Expansion
Dover	East Dover	No change
Dummerston	Dummerston Center	N/A – New Center
Dummerston	West Dummerston	N/A – New Center
Grafton	Grafton	Expansion
Grafton	Cambridgeport	N/A – New Center
Guilford	Algiers	Expansion
Guilford	Guilford Center	Expansion
Halifax	West Halifax	N/A – New Center
Jamaica	Jamaica Village	Expansion
Jamaica	Rawsonville	N/A – New Center
Londonderry	Londonderry	Expansion
Londonderry	South Londonderry	Expansion
Marlboro	Marlboro	No change
Newfane	Newfane	No change
Newfane	South Newfane	No change
Newfane	Williamsville	No change
Putney	Putney	Expansion
Readsboro	Readsboro	Expansion
Rockingham	Saxtons River	Expansion
Rockingham	Cambridgeport	N/A – New Center
Townshend	Townshend	No change
Townshend	West Townshend	No change
Townshend	Harmonyville	N/A – New Center
Vernon	Vernon	Expansion
Wardsboro	Wardsboro	Expansion
Wardsboro	West Wardsboro	N/A – New Center
Westminster	Westminster	Expansion
Westminster	North Westminster	Expansion
Westminster	Westminster Station	Expansion
Westminster	Westminster West	No change
Weston	Weston	Expansion

Whitingham	Whitingham	Expansion
Whitingham	Jacksonville	Expansion
Windham	Windham	N/A – New Center
Windham	Windham Center	N/A – New Center
Winhall	Bondville	Expansion
☒ 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:		

Planned Growth Area		
Municipality	PGA Name/Description	Boundary Note (optional)
Brattleboro	Brattleboro PGA	Expansion
Brattleboro	West Brattleboro PGA	Expansion
Rockingham	Bellows Falls PGA	N/A – New Neighborhood
Putney	Putney PGA	Expansion
☒ 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:		

Village Area		
Municipality	Village Area Name/Description	Boundary Note (optional)
Newfane	Newfane Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Newfane	South Newfane Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Newfane	Williamsville Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Putney	Putney Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Rockingham	Bellows Falls Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Rockingham	Saxtons River Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Westminster*	Westminster Village Area*	N/A – New Neighborhood
Westminster*	North Westminster Village Area*	N/A – New Neighborhood
Weston	Weston Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
Winhall	Bondville Village Area	N/A – New Neighborhood
☒ 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:		
* The Town of Westminster currently has an expired Town Plan and is in the process of updating the plan. It is anticipated the Town Plan will be adopted by the time the Regional Plan is adopted by the Windham Regional Commission.		

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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.

Page numbers: Chapter 11: Implementation (pp. 9 – 12)

Narrative: The “Regional Plan in Context” section of the Implementation chapter addresses this requirement. WRC reviewed the regional plans for each of the adjoining regional planning commissions for compatibility with the Windham Regional Plan with a focus on planning areas that span the regional boundaries, such as land use, transportation, economic development, and watershed planning. Since RPCs are in the process of updating Regional Plans to comply with the Act 181 requirements, this section will be revised and updated as needed before the final submission of the Windham Regional Plan.

Version log

- Version 1 – original draft
- Version 2 – incorporating LURB feedback to ask more specifically about how the process promoted “meaningful engagement.”
- Version 3 – Corrected typos. Changed “comments – optional” to “narrative.” Added text prompting explanation of how each section’s requirements were met. Finalized text about describing how meaningful engagement was undertaken.
- Version 3.1 – Corrected typos, edited all statutory references to ensure consistent format, corrected one inaccurate statutory reference on page 15; made very minor wording changes to “New Tier 1B Requests” and “Part B” headings. Added instructions to address Act 59 goals and how areas planned for growth can accommodate housing targets.
- Version 4 – Expanded Future Land Use Element table with additional columns to describe specific downtown centers, village centers, etc. by municipality.