



LAND USE REVIEW BOARD

10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-3201

LAND USE REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**Pre-Application, Windham Regional Commission
7/8/2026, 1:30 p.m.**

Physical Location: Brooks Memorial Library, Room A – Community Meeting Room,
224 Main Street, Brattleboro

Online Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendance (in-person or virtual)

Board Staff: Catherine Gott

Public: Matt Bachler (WRC), Suzanne Welch, Aileen Tylock, Susan Coakley, Alex Lockie, Liana Rice (WRC), Steve Hayes, Chris Company (WRC), Gretchen Harrelik, Cathy Fales, Annette Smith (VCE), Zoning Administrator zoning@rockbf.org, Andrea Ameden, Kevin Bopp

A. 1:33 p.m. Call to order and Board member roll call

The Land Use Review Board (Board) convened at 1:33 p.m. via in-person attendance and Microsoft Teams, Chair Hurley presiding.

Janet Hurley, Chair – In-person
Sarah Hadd, Vice Chair – In-person
Brooke Dingleline – Absent
Kirsten Sultan – In-person
Alex Weinhagen – In-person

B. Introductions and explanation of preapplication process

The session followed a three-hour site visit earlier in the day; the Board reminded participants that site visit observations are not on the record and must be restated at the meeting or submitted in writing.

Janet Hurley explained the preapplication process, emphasizing that it is a less formal review of a draft plan. The Board has 60 days to review and provide comments to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC). State partners and the public can also submit comments until the end of the comment period. Public comments on the draft will be accepted through mid-July (July 17, 2026) via email to act250.board@vermont.gov or by mail to 10 Baldwin Street.

C. RPC: Virtual mapping tour (centers, village areas, Tier 1B etc.)

WRC Senior Planner Matt Bachler led a virtual tour of the draft Future Land Use (FLU) map, which aligns with Act 181 (2024). The plan identifies Downtown and Village Centers (legacy and expanded), Planned Growth Areas, and Village Areas as core “centers and neighborhoods,” with overlays for flood hazard and river corridors. Other land-use categories include Transition/Infill, Enterprise, Resource-Based Recreation (major ski areas), and Rural areas (General; Agriculture & Forestry; Conservation). WRC reviewed community highlights, noting expanded centers and a number of new village centers (e.g., West Dummerston, Cambridgeport, Harmonyville, Windham Village/Windham Center), as well as neighborhoods around cores guided by the presence of water and wastewater. WRC flagged a pending correction in Brattleboro: a northern Transition/Infill area will be changed to Planned Growth after further consultation with the town.

WRC identified areas likely eligible for Tier 1B across downtowns, village centers, and neighborhoods in multiple towns (e.g., Brattleboro, Rockingham/Bellows Falls, Putney, Newfane, Weston, and others), noting eligibility depends on statutory criteria and local bylaws (e.g., flood/river corridor regulations). Westminster’s Tier 1B neighborhoods will depend on adoption of its updated town plan. WRC indicated that the cross hatching represents either an area that falls within a flood hazard area or an area mapped as a river corridor by the Agency of Natural Resources and for its mapping these areas are shown as an overlay. The Board reiterated that centers can qualify for Tier 1B even if they overlap flood hazard/river corridors (providing local flood hazard / river corridor bylaws are in place), while planned growth areas only allow exceptions for infill; the Board further noted that some of the areas that are mapped underneath the cross-hatched mapped overlay may not be eligible for the.

Act 250 exemptions if the town does not have adequate regulations. The Board also clarified that Tier 1A is a separate process to be pursued after regional plan confirmation.

D. RPC: Overview of the draft regional plan

WRC summarized the planning process: a substantial 2025 update focused on compact settlements, housing, infrastructure, and climate resilience; and 2026 updates focus on alignment with Act 181 categories and mapping. Engagement included stakeholder meetings, about 30 town meetings to refine mapping and housing targets, and regional public sessions. The plan integrates land use, transportation, energy, housing, economic development, and community facilities, with an implementation matrix and a “substantial regional impact” standard for Act 250 participation. The region is about 920 square miles with ~48,500 people (2020); Brattleboro is the largest town.

Housing targets provided by VHFA indicate 2,500–3,700 new units by 2030 and 8,000–15,635 by 2050. WRC proposes at least 60% of new units be in centers and neighborhoods, with the remainder across rural categories. Targets were disaggregated to towns based on population, year-round units, and infrastructure capacity; WRC stressed targets are advisory, not mandates.

E. Questions from Board members and site visit observations

The Board discussed Environmental Justice (EJ): WRC mapped EJ focus areas with a 10% non-white threshold (adjusted from 6%) and used other vulnerability tools, then checked plan policies to ensure benefits are promoted and burdens mitigated. WRC did not conduct a spatial analysis of disproportionate burdens/benefits; the Board recommended adding such analysis and expanding the energy-burden equity discussion. WRC described outreach efforts to EJ and underrepresented groups, noting challenges but some engagement (NAACP, The Root Social Justice Center, Abenaki leadership, SE VT Housing Coalition).

Policy conversations included considering Class 3 wetlands in Act 250 reviews (noting DEC's jurisdiction limits and WRC's advisory role), an interbasin water transfer policy informed by ski-area experience and retaining a hydrogen-fueling policy as technology-agnostic support for lower-carbon fuels. WRC highlighted sand and gravel supply challenges tied to MRGP-driven materials demand and disaster recovery, urging ANR to help proactively identify extraction sites; the Board suggested adding resource mapping and known permitted sites. Other topics included emergency response water sourcing (intended for larger developments with substantial regional impact), a workforce housing mitigation policy for projects adding 50+ FTEs (reflecting resort impacts, noting past limitations in Act 250 case law), PFAS awareness (primarily private wells), and expanding transportation discussion of bridge needs and prioritization.

Local context was discussed: Brattleboro's Planned Growth Area near I-91 is about a mile from Downtown with sidewalks/bike lanes, and WRC will fix the Transition/Infill mapping at the far north. In Putney, the River Road Planned Growth Area is separated by steep, flood-prone terrain but is served by water/sewer and connected via Mill Street (steep but walkable), with improvements planned; WRC will reconcile local water/sewer data with state layers (e.g., Landmark College service). The board asked WRC to update the plan text to reflect recent legislation (Act 152 aka S.325), removing outdated references (e.g., "Tier 3").

F. Questions from State partner agencies and the public

Public comments highlighted rural housing concerns (WRC clarified Rural Conservation allows very low-density housing with careful siting; the 60% centers target is a planning benchmark, not a prohibition on rural housing). Londonderry announced adoption of subdivision bylaws, enabling village areas and Tier 1B pursuit; WRC will coordinate. Brattleboro advocated for the broadest possible Tier 1A coverage, especially north along Putney Road; WRC and the town will coordinate on Tier 1B/Tier 1A strategy. Windham asked about Tier 1B process after adopting bylaws; the board advised requesting through WRC. A consultant noted river corridor mapping inaccuracies and burdens on landowners; that issue lies with ANR. Putney praised parcel-based district mapping and consistent definitions and raised battery energy storage siting as an evolving statewide policy gap not covered by enhanced energy plans; the PUC recently

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approved only the current footprint and denied a 10x expansion at a local facility.

G. Adjourn

Motion: Adjourn.

By: Alex Weinhagen

Second: Kirsten Sultan

Voting Board members

Janet Hurley, Chair - Aye

Sarah Hadd, Vice Chair - Aye

Brooke Dingleline - Absent

Kirsten Sultan - Aye

Alex Weinhagen - Aye

Result: **Motion approved, unanimous**

Meeting ended at 4:07 p.m.