Norwich PC Solar Siting Working Group
Special Meeting – October 29, 2025, 6:30 pm

To be held via Zoom only:
Topic: Solar Siting Working Group Special Meeting
Time: October 29, 2025 6:30PM PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
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Meeting ID: 833 3112 5539
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1. Approve Agenda
2. Public comment for items not on agenda
3. Review & Discuss Norwich Enhanced Energy Plan of October 27, 2025
4. Review Act 174 Mapping Constraints in context of Standard 12 – Map - *Potential areas for the development and siting of renewables*
5. Approve minutes
6. Public comment
7. Adjourn

Enclosures:

1. Minutes from 09-16-2025
2. Norwich Enhanced Energy Plan 102725.pdr
3. Act 174 Constraint Mapping.pdf

Norwich PC Solar Siting Subcommittee DRAFT
September 16, 2025 - Minutes

Subcommittee members present: Mary Gorman, Ernie Ciccotelli, Jaan Laaspere
Steven True, Norwich PD/ZA

Public attending: Linda Gray, Robert Gere, Jim Antal, John Cushman

Meeting started at 6:32

1. **Approved Agenda -** unanimous

2. **Public comment**
   Jim Antal and Jack Cushman commented on the importance of solar and high level of public support for renewable energy in Norwich.

3. **Review Enhanced Energy Plan project components**
   Gorman read the new subcommittee charge into the record.

   True gave an overview of the required sections of the EEP, which are usefully and prescriptively described in the state document included in the packet.

   One proposal discussed was to create a separate group composed of PC members, Energy Committee members and Harry Falconer to work on EEP sections relating to background data and perhaps other sections. The full Planning Commission would be responsible for planning topics such as land use policy as they impact energy topics.

   The breakdown of these EEP tasks, along with the possible creation of a joint group with the EC, will be on the agenda for the October PC meeting.

4. **Review and discuss EEP actions in Pathways #9**
   We reviewed Pathways Standard #9 of the state EEP guiding document relating to renewable energy siting. This section will be the focus of this solar siting group:

   9A - Existing renewable energy generation
   9B - Renewable generation potential => link to mapping
   9C - Identify sufficient land to meet 2050 target
   9D - Constraints related to meeting targets
   9E - Policies, objectives and siting guidelines
   9F - Maximize potential on preferred locations
   9G - Municipal projects
   9H - Other

   Wind was briefly discussed and determined to be a much lower priority for Norwich siting activity, given our topography and the realities of utility scale wind power in VT.

   <u>We decided to start with a first pass at the mapping exercise.</u>

5. **Review & Discuss Mapping Requirements**
   To guide the discussion on items #9 A – H this group will start with an initial mapping exercise.

   During this exercise we will clearly identify the assumptions and open questions, such as the particular value of steep slopes being mapped as a constraint layer or distance from 3-phase power where a PV project is still viable.

   This spectrum from the state document [pg. 42] for mapping siting areas ranging from preferred to unsuitable is a useful graphic. The specifics listed in each category are taken to be simply examples, not an inclusive list.

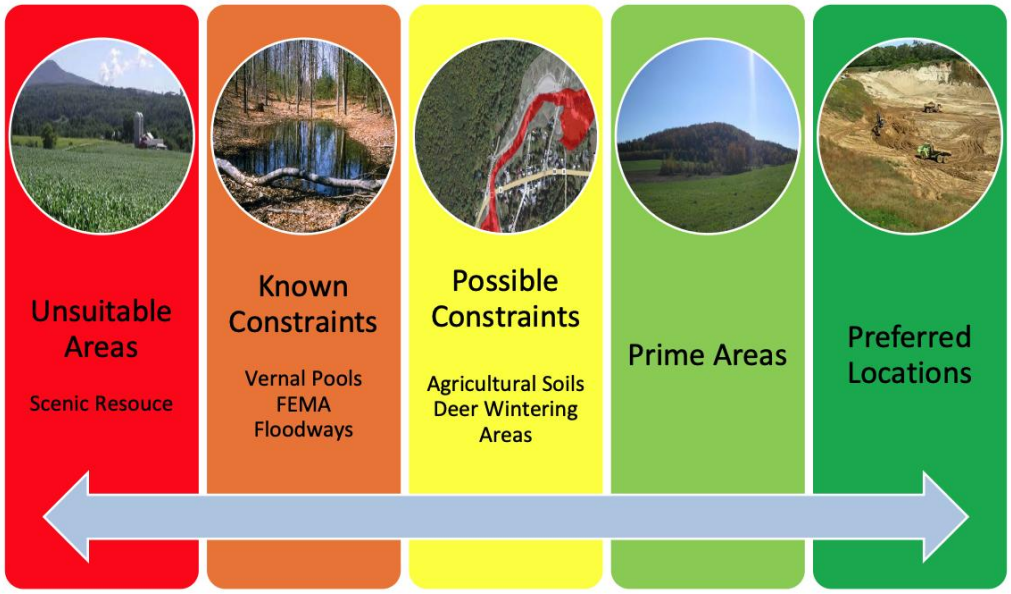


Figure 4: the Spectrum between Unsuitable Areas and Preferred Locations

   True will include preliminary mapping results into next meeting packet.

6. **Approved minutes of July 22, 2025 -** Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8:02

Next meeting scheduled for October 21, 2025 to review maps and related assumptions.

Minutes submitted by Jaan Laaspere

Norwich Enhanced Energy Plan October 27, 2025

A project of the Norwich Planning Commission to update the Energy chapter of Norwich Town Plan.

This chapter is intended to comply with standards outlined in Act 174 to receive a: "determination of energy compliance" and "be given 'substantial deference' in the Public Service Board's review of whether an energy project meets the orderly development criterion in the Section 248 process."

This activity will be guided by Act 174 documentation of Municipal Determinations Standards (2024) with details available in 2024 Guidance for Regional and Municipal Enhanced Energy Planning Standards.

As described in these documents, the Enhanced Energy Plan [EEP] must address specific standards. These standards are listed below with drafting responsibility proposed for each.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Norwich Planning Commission will lead the effort, provide overall guidance & coordination and make all policy decisions. This effort will, as always, include open public participation.

The PC will also lead the drafting of Standard 8 relating to patterns and densities of land use. And, as part of its overall charter, the PC will incorporate the findings of this energy plan into our capital planning activities.

The Solar Siting Subcommittee, an existing subcommittee of the Planning Commission, will be responsible for:

Standard 9 – Development and Siting of Renewable Energy Resources
- 9A - Existing renewable energy generation
- 9B - Generation potential - link to mapping
- 9C - Identify sufficient land to meet 2050 target
- 9D - Constraints related to meeting targets
- 9E - Policies, objectives and siting guidelines
- 9F - Maximize potential on preferred locations
- 9G - Municipal projects
- 9H - Other

Standard 10 - Mapping - overview
Standard 11 - Map - Existing electrical generation
Standard 12 – Map - Potential areas for the development and siting of renewables
- A - Raw potential
- B - Known constraints
- C - Possible constraints
- D - Transmission and distribution resources & constraints
- E - Preferred sites

Standard 13 – Map - Unsuitable areas for siting renewables or particular categories

An Energy Plan Working Group is proposed to collect data & draft Standards 4 – 7.

Membership:
- 1 from Planning Commission
- 1 - 2 from Energy Committee
- 1 from Conservation Commission
- Solicit input from Historic Preservation and public
- Staff: Harry F. and Steven T.

Standard 4 - Resources, needs, scarcities, costs, problems for all energy sectors (electric, thermal and transportation)

Standard 5
- A. Estimate current energy use, including 9A & 9G
- B. 2025, 2035 and 2050 targets for efficiency and renewables use
- C. Thermal sector conservation, efficiency and conversion to achieve target
- D. Transportation changes and land use strategies to meet targets
- E. Electricity conservation and efficiency to meet targets

Standard 6 - Conservation and efficiency
- A - E => Conservation, efficient buildings, decrease fossil fuels for heating, municipal buildings

Standard 7 - Transportation
- A - E => Public transportation, single occupancy trips, EV, bike/ped, municipal use and infrastructure

Schedule

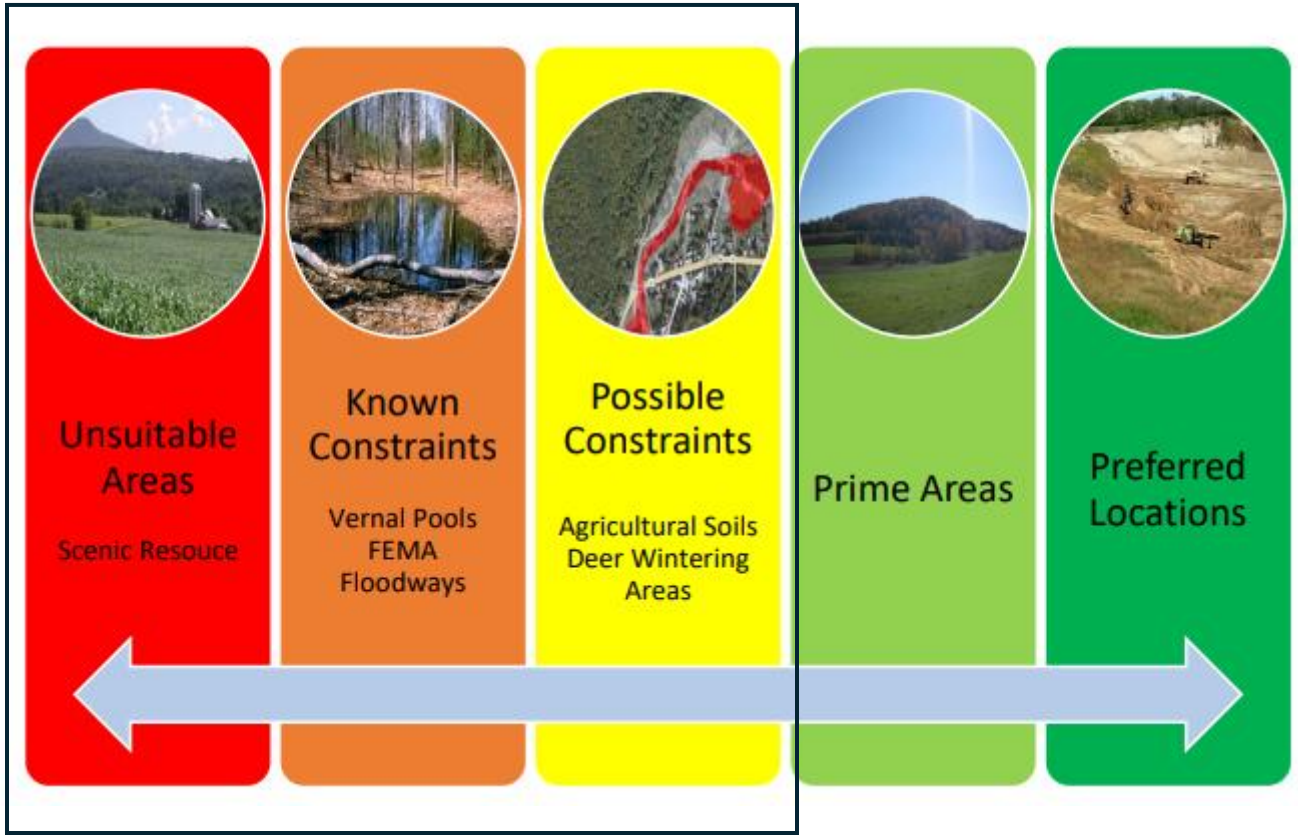
October '25 - Invitation to Norwich Energy Committee and Conservation Commission for participation in Energy Plan Working Group

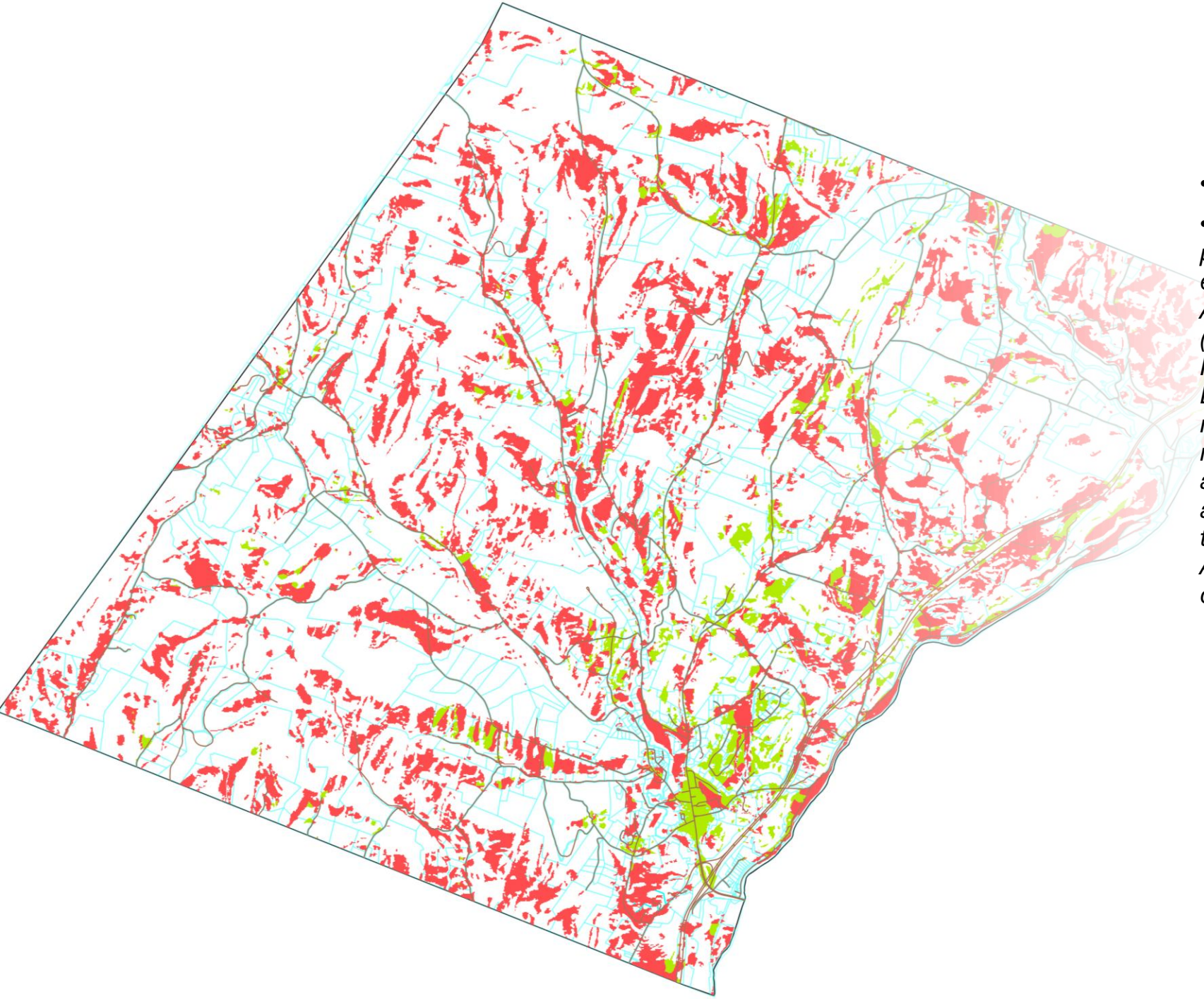
First drafts of new sections to Planning Commission – January '26

Review and comments from PC and public – February

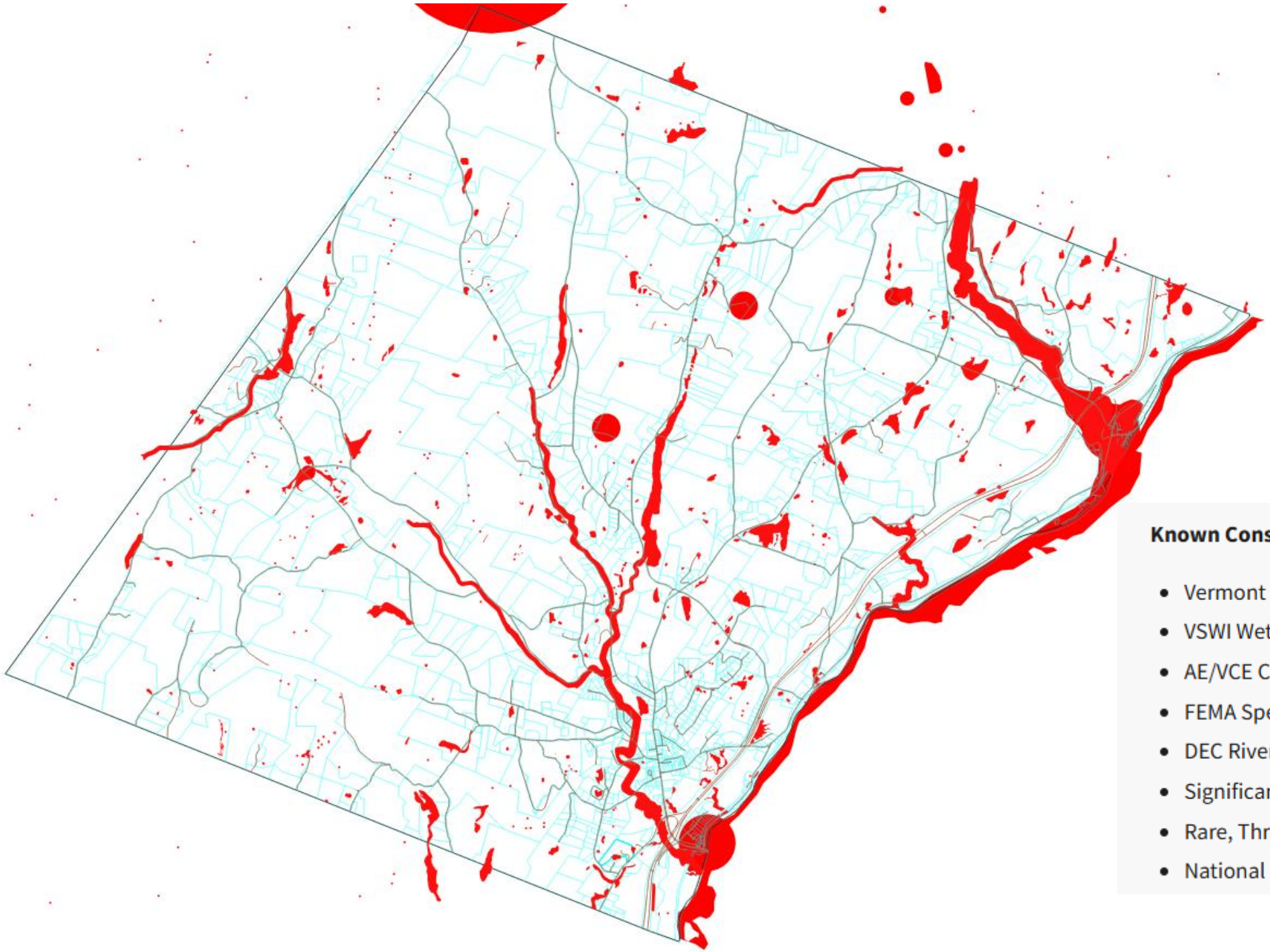
2nd round / refinement - March

Coordinate with PC work on capital planning and other potential town plan amendments to decide how to proceed with public hearing and Selectboard approval process.


Unsuitable Areas
Scenic Resouce
Known Constraints
Vernal Pools
FEMA Floodways
Possible Constraints
Agricultural Soils
Deer Wintering Areas
Prime Areas
Preferred Locations

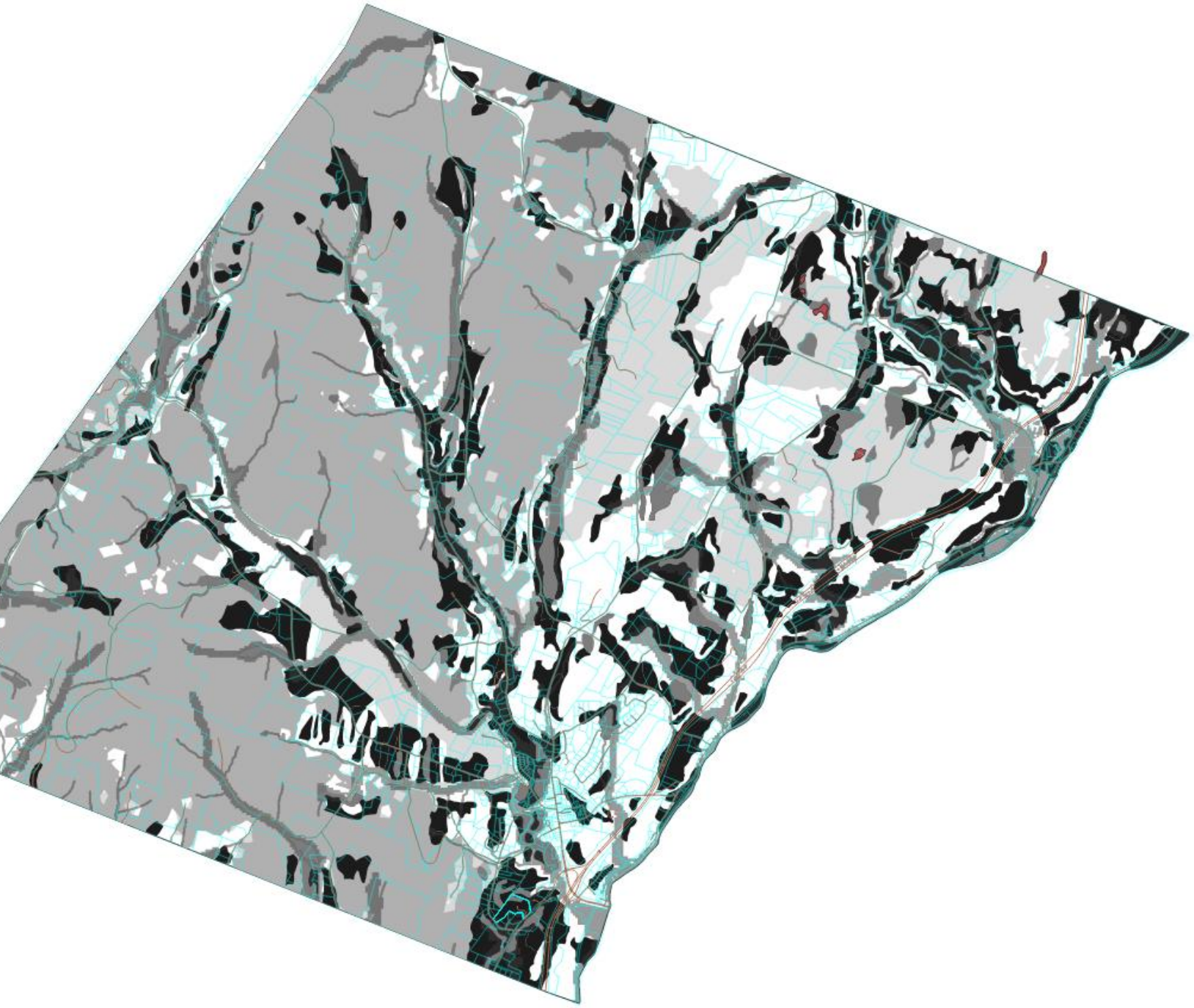


- **Ground Mounted Solar Potential**
- *2022 update. The only statewide solar potential layer available used in the Act 174 effort comes from the 2010 Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont (REAVT) effort (EnvironOther_Solar). This layer and the Renewable Energy Atlas are now hosted by the Energy Action Network (eanvt.org). This ground mount only resource was further processed to meet the requirements of Act 174 by removing areas with "known constraints" and to identify areas with "possible constraints" as outlined in the "Act 174 Energy Planning Standards" (see Act 174 municipal guidance link above). All constraint layers represent 2022 conditions.*



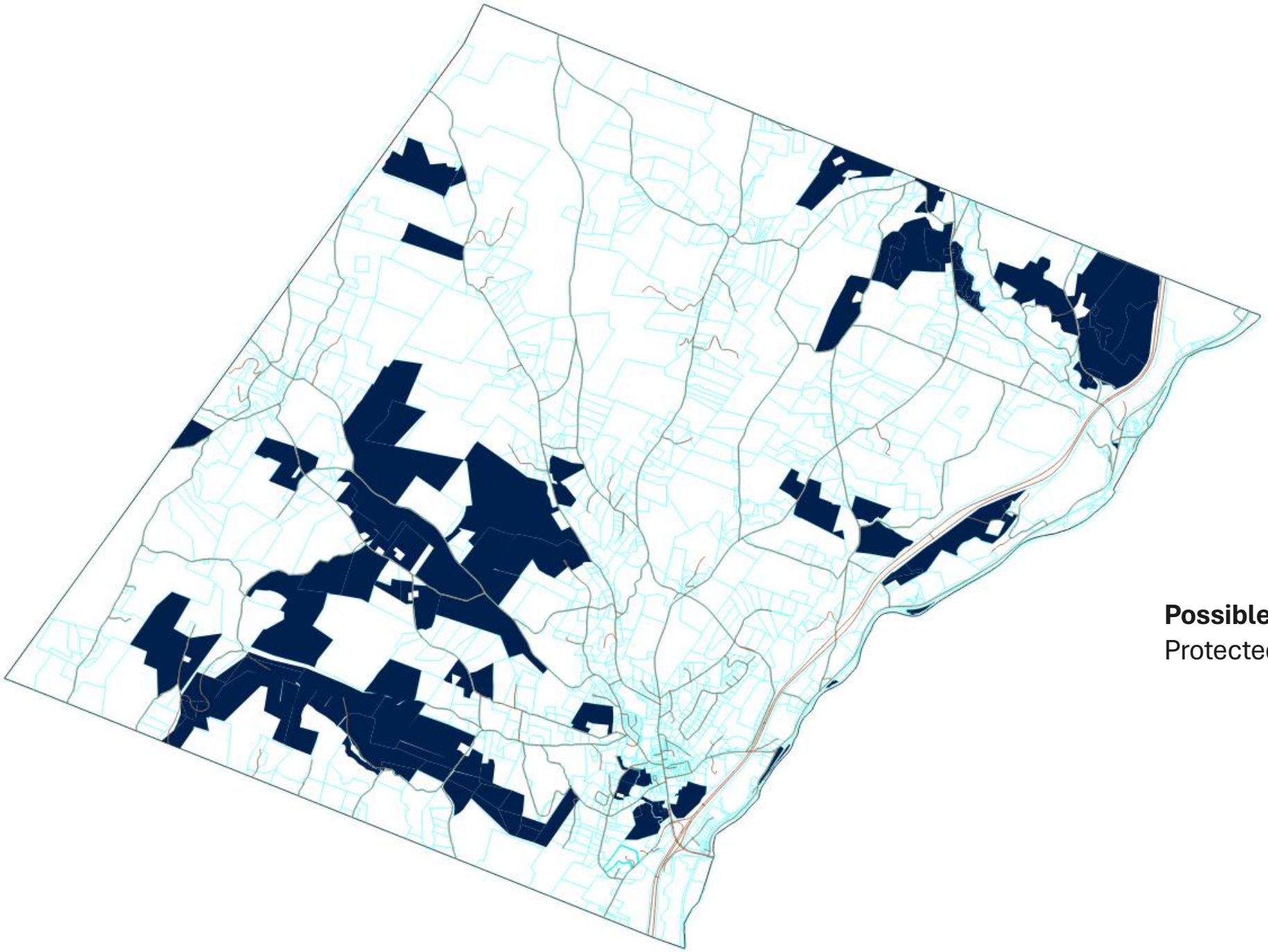
Known Constraints 2022 Layer Inputs:

- Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory
- VSWI Wetlands Advisory Layer
- AE/VCE Confirmed Vernal Pools
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas – Floodways Only
- DEC River Corridors
- Significant Natural Communities
- Rare, Threatened, Endangered Species
- National Wilderness Areas in VT

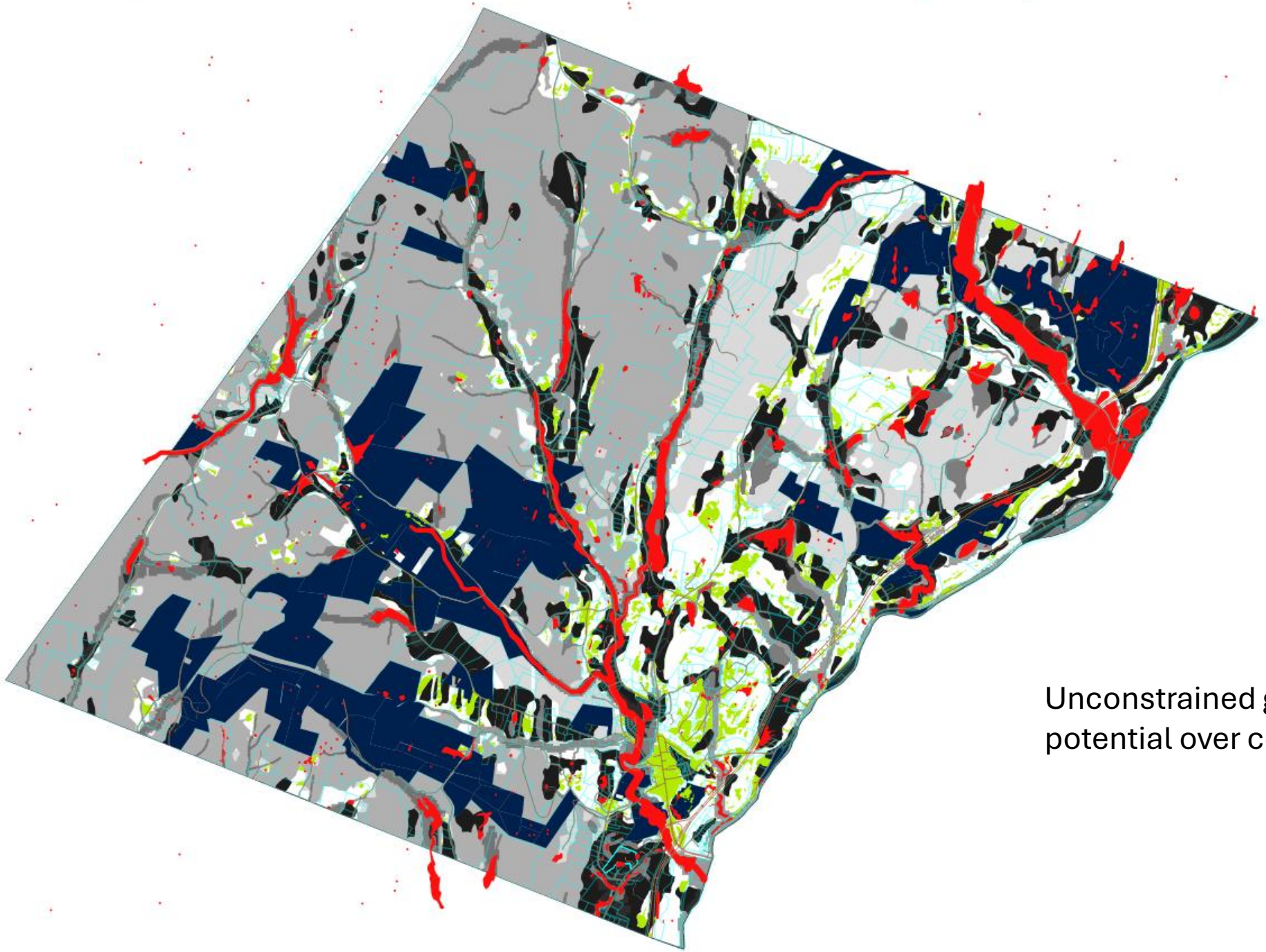


Possible Constraints 2022 Layer Inputs:

- AE/VCE Unconfirmed Vernal Pools
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Agriculturally Important Soils
- Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Hydric Soils
- Conservation Design Layers
    - Interior Forest Blocks - Highest Priority
    - Connectivity Blocks - Highest Priority
    - Physical Landscape Blocks - Highest Priority
    - Surface Water and Riparian Areas - Highest Priority



Possible Constraints 2022 Layer Inputs:
Protected Lands



Unconstrained ground mount solar potential over constrained lands