

Norwich Planning Commission
Regular meeting – January 13th, 2025 6:30pm

To be Held in person in the Tracy Hall Multipurpose Room and via Zoom
Zoom Information:

Topic: Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Time: January 13th, 2025, 6:30 PM

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81307504748>

Meeting ID: 813 0750 4748

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

AGENDA

1. Open Meeting; determine quorum
2. Approve Agenda
3. Public comment on items not on agenda
4. Correspondence
5. Capital Planning
 - a. Next steps
6. Short Term Rentals
 - a. Finalize draft interim by-laws
 - b. Next steps
7. Municipal Planning Grant Update
 - a. Review of work plan & project timeline
 - b. Discussion about Steering Committee
8. Future Land Use Map & Tier 1b Opt-in
 - a. Finalize discussion on ToNs Future Land Use Map
 - b. Discuss Tier 1b option
9. Approve minutes from December 9th, 2025
10. Adjourn

Enclosures:

Short Term Rental Interim Bylaw – DRAFT.pdf

Village Master Plan application workplan and budget.pdf

Correspondence from PC to TRORC re FLU.pdf

tier-1a-and-1b-presentation-10-21-2025final.pdf

Draft Minutes December 9th, 2025

TOWN OF NORWICH

INTERIM BYLAWS FOR SHORT TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS

DRAFT

- I. PURPOSE.** The purpose of these bylaws is to provide for regulation of short-term rentals in the Town. Regulating the operation of such facilities are necessary to protect residential neighborhoods, civic, commercial and educational institutions from any adverse secondary impacts associated with Short-Term Rentals and to ensure that such uses operate in a safe manner.
- II. ENACTMENT AND AUTHORITY.** The Town of Norwich has adopted these Interim Bylaws in accordance with and as authorized by the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act, 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, §4415, Interim Bylaws.
- III. DURATION.** These Interim Bylaws will be in effect for a period of two (2) years from the date of their adoption unless they are extended, as authorized by 24 V.S.A. § 4415, or replaced by amendments to the Town of Norwich Land Use Regulations.
- IV. DEFINITIONS.** Words, terms, and phrases specifically defined in the Town of Norwich Land Use Regulations shall have the same meaning in these Interim Bylaws unless another meaning is clearly indicated.
 - a. **Short-Term Rental** A furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year.
 - b. **Owner Occupied**
~~Owner Occupied shall mean occupancy of the premises by the property owner, where the subject property is the owner's primary Vermont residence.~~
Owner Occupied shall mean occupancy of the premises by the property owner, as a **sole** primary residence (domicile) where the owner resides, as declared annually by April 1 for tax purposes.
- V. Regulations**
Short-term rental on an owner-occupied lot are an allowed use in all zoning districts. Property owners shall obtain a permit whenever a dwelling unit is to be used as a short-term rental. Additionally:
 - a. The Zoning Administrator may inspect the short-term rental for compliance with Town and state **codes** regulations. The short-term rental shall not operate unless it is in full compliance with Town and state **codes** regulations.
 - b. A short-term rental permit shall be valid for one calendar year, shall expire on December 31 of the year it is in effect, and must be renewed upon expiration as long as the unit is to be continued to be used as a short-term rental.
 - c. The short-term rental permit is transferable to a new owner, so long as the new owner registers with the Town, updates the short-term rental permit application and agrees in writing to comply with the requirements of the short-term rental permit and these regulations within 30 days of sale

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Commented [ST1]: FROM CHRISTIAN SPALDING -
1. Under IV. B. I would recommend clarifying that is their "sole" primary residence. We might also want to highlight that we would use the Vermont Homestead Declaration as the source of determination.

Commented [ST2]: FROM JEFF LUBELL -
5. I found the policy difficult to interpret because the definitions of both short-term rentals and owner-occupancy are unclear. If I'm following correctly, the goal is to say that anyone can rent a unit on a short-term basis for up to 15 days during the year but if they rent it for more than that, and any other stays are less than 30 days, the unit has to be owner occupied. Is that the goal?

6. I'd suggest defining short-term rentals more simply, such as: "Short-Term Rental A furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days.

7. Then you could stay something like: "Unless a property is registered as a hotel or guest house, it may not be used for short-term rentals exceeding an aggregate total of 15 days in a calendar year unless the owner of the home occupies the home as its primary residence."

8. This would make it easier to understand what a short-term rental is and eliminate the confusion of what it means for a home to be the owner's "primary Vermont residence," which makes it sound like maybe their real principal residence is in Boston but when they're in Vermont, this is where they stay most of the time.

VI. Permit application requirement.

An application for (or renewal of) a short-term rental permit shall be submitted to the Town Zoning Administrator. The application/renewal must be completed on the form provided by the Town. It must be accompanied by payment of a permit fee, as determined by the Town Select Board. If relevant circumstances on the property change or for any reason the certification is or becomes inaccurate, a new certification shall be submitted. The application shall provide the following information:

- a. List of all the property owners of the short-term rental including names, residential addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses. Each property owner must also provide the address of their principal residence if it is different from that of the short-term rental. (In the event the property is owned by an entity such as a trust or LLC, the ultimate owners and/or beneficiaries of such entity shall provide the information required by this paragraph.)
- b. Completion of a signed affidavit by the property owners certifying the following:
 - The number of sleeping rooms within the short-term rental, as defined in this Section.
 - The number of parking spaces on the property that meet the standard set forth below.
 - The septic capacity of the STR property.
 - Compliance with the following standards:
 - A. The Short-Term Rental Safety, Health and Financial Obligations of the Vermont Departments of Health and Fire Safety [See the Vermont Division of Fire Safety at: Safety Consideration sort term rentals.pdf (vermont.gov)]
 - B. All exterior doors shall be operational and all passageways to exterior doors shall be clear and unobstructed.
 - C. Electrical systems shall be serviceable with no visual defects or unsafe conditions.
 - A property map showing the location of buildings, required parking and, if not served by a public sewer, the location of the septic system and leach field. An accurate, suitable plan need not be prepared by a professional.
 - The owner must designate a local (i.e., within 60 minutes by automobile) host and provide the name, address, telephone number and email address of the local host, who shall be responsible, and authorized, to act on the owner's behalf to promptly remedy any violation of these standards or the permit. The host may be the owner, or a local host or agent designated by the owner to serve as a contact person.
 - A declaration of insurance coverage specific to the renting of short-term vacation rentals is required
 - Payment of a fee which has been set by the Town Selectboard. **[\$250.00]**

VII. Standards.

All short-term rentals must meet the following standards:

- a. The maximum occupancy for each short-term rental unit shall be the number of people calculated based on two persons per sleeping room (unless the room size is below 100 square feet) plus an additional two persons. In all cases, maximum occupancy must be within the septic capacity of the short-term rental unit. For this purpose, a "sleeping room" is defined as fully enclosed habitable space of at least 70 square feet for one person and 100 square feet for two persons, with an emergency escape or rescue opening.
- b. The property must have sufficient off-street parking spaces to accommodate the maximum occupancy.
- c. Tenants and guests shall park in the off-street parking spaces.
- d. A house number visible from the street or road shall be maintained.
- e. Provisions shall be made for weekly garbage removal during rental periods. Garbage containers shall be animal proof and always secured with tight-fitting covers to prevent leakage, spilling or odors.

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- f. Advertisements for the short-term rental must conform to what is allowed under these regulations and the short-term rental permit.
- g. In the event of a federal, state or local disaster declaration, all owners and guests must comply with federal, state and/or local disaster orders.

VIII. Procedure upon filing application

- a. Upon the filing with the Town Zoning Administrator of the permit application, permit fee, and all documents and information required by this ordinance, the Town Zoning Administrator shall have **45** **30** days to review the application and then either issue the permit, with or without conditions, or notify the applicant in writing that the application has been denied along with the reason or reasons for denial.
- b. The Town Zoning Administrator may decline an application for any of the following reasons:
 - (1) If the application is incomplete, the documentation required by this ordinance was not included with the application or the application or the full permit fee, in payment form acceptable to the Town Treasurer, was not included with the application.
 - (2) If the Town of Norwich issued a short-term rental permit to any of the owners needing to sign the short-term rental permit application and any of such owners had a short-term rental permit revoked within the previous year.
- c. Short-term rental permits issued pursuant to this section shall state the following:
 - The names, addresses and phone numbers of every person or entity who has an ownership interest in the short-term rental property and the host who shall be available during the entire time the short-term rental property is being occupied.
 - The maximum occupancy and vehicle limits for the short-term rental unit.
 - Identification of the number of and location of parking spaces available.
 - A statement that no outdoor fires are allowed, except as permitted by local and state law. Outdoor barbecues and supervised fires in fire pits are permitted.
 - No tents will be allowed as overnight quarters.
 - Any animals which are pets of guests shall not leave the subject parcel except when under control by leash.
 - A statement that no noise beyond normal levels shall emanate between 10:00 p.m. and **9:00 a.m.** that the applicant is responsible for compliance with NULR Section 3.10 Performance Standards.
 - A statement that the short-term rental permit may be revoked for violations.

IX. Inspection

The Zoning Administrator may inspect any property before issuing a permit, or at any time thereafter. The Town reserves the right to validate via inspection or otherwise any information contained in the permit application

X. Recordkeeping Requirements

- a. Owners and operators of short-term rentals are required to keep written (including electronic) records of advertising information and rental activity (i.e., number of bookings, name of booking guest, number of people, length of stay, amount collected, amount of tax collected or remitted) for a minimum of three years.
- b. In the event of a dispute with the owner(s) of a short-term rental as to the need for a permit or as to compliance with this ordinance, the Zoning Administrator shall have the right to inspect the written records upon reasonable notice

XI. Expiration

This ordinance will expire in two years after its initial adoption to allow for a period of data gathering and analysis. Upon expiration of this ordinance, the Selectboard will revisit the issue of STRs and adopt a new ordinance to replace this one.

DRAFT

Summary and Narrative

Section 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1 Type of Application:

Is this an application from a group of municipalities (consortium) or an application from a single municipality?

Single Municipality Application

Consortium Application

1.2 Applicant Municipality:

Town of Norwich

1.3 Rural Town Status:

Is the municipality a rural town? ("Rural towns" with a population less than 2,500)

Yes

No

1.4 Agent Status:

Will the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) serve as agent for this rural town project?

Yes

No

Section 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LOCATION

2.1 Please identify the project type:

*Planning for Designated Area**

2.2 Project Title:

Name the project as concisely as possible.

The project title will be used in the grant agreement and program announcements if this grant is funded. (80 character limit)
(Examples: *Unified Bylaw Update, Village Revitalization Plan, Sewer Line Mapping*)

*2026 Norwich Village Master Plan**

2.3 Project Subtitle:

Provide a very brief summary of what the project will accomplish and produce.

This description will be used in MPG program marketing materials if this grant is funded. See the list of [FY24 Funded Projects](#) for examples.

(There will be opportunities to provide more detail later in the application)

*Norwich will create a new Village Master Plan in 2026, engaging the community to address growth, housing, infrastructure, and resilience, ensuring a vibrant, sustainable future for all residents.**

2.4 Project Description:

Provide an overall summary of the following:

1. Issue,
2. Approach to solving the problem,
3. Project Deliverables, and
4. Intended long-term outcomes.

(Consider writing this summary last, since it draws on more detailed responses below.)

The Town of Norwich faces a range of pressing challenges that threaten its long-term vitality and resilience. Norwich's existing planning documents are outdated and do not adequately address current issues such as affordable housing, climate resilience, transportation safety, and equitable access to community resources. Without a comprehensive, community-driven master plan, Norwich risks uncoordinated development and missed funding opportunities.

Approach to Solving the Problem:

Norwich will undertake a robust, inclusive planning process to develop a new Town Master Plan. The project will be led by the Norwich Planning Commission in partnership with the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission and conducted through the formation of a steering committee. A professional planning consultant will be hired to facilitate public engagement, analyze existing conditions, and draft the plan.

The process will include: a series of topic-based charettes (Growth, Housing & Infrastructure; Historic Preservation, Community Building, & Resilience) that will gather input from residents, businesses, and stakeholders to envision future developments.

Project Deliverables

A comprehensive Norwich Town Master Plan, including actionable strategies for land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, natural resource protection, and climate resilience.

Public Engagement Summary: Documenting Outreach Efforts and Community Input.

GIS-based maps illustrating current conditions and future scenarios.

Recommendations for zoning updates and capital improvements.

Identification of funding sources and implementation steps for priority projects.

Intended Long-Term Outcomes

The Master Plan will serve as a roadmap for Norwich's sustainable growth and resilience over the next decade. Long-term outcomes include:

Improved coordination of development and infrastructure investments.

Expanded affordable housing options.

Preservation of Norwich's historic village, rural character and natural resources.

Increased community engagement and capacity for future planning efforts.

Eligibility for state and federal funding to implement plan recommendations.

This project will position Norwich to proactively address its challenges and opportunities, ensuring a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient future for all residents.

*

2.5 Project Location:

Describe the geographic area(s) the project will address.

(Briefly describe the project's area of focus, such as: entire town, watershed, planning area, zoning district(s), a specific site, etc. For projects not defined by municipal or state designation boundaries, ATTACH any available images in the online Attachments Form to illustrate the project location, such as a map or photo that helps reviewers become familiar with the project's location and conditions.)

The historic village of Norwich, and approximately northwards to Huntley Meadow and Moore Lane Bridge, and outwards along Union Village Road, eastward to River Road and the Lewiston neighborhood, and south along US Route 5 to the Town line.*

Section 3: PLANNING STATUS ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Municipal Plan Status:

Does the municipality have an adopted Municipal Plan?

Yes (enter adoption date in box below)

No

03/07/2020 Please enter the adoption date. (mm/dd/yyyy)

3.2 Confirmation Status:

Does the municipality have a local planning process confirmed by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC)?

Yes

No

Section 4: PROJECT READINESS & NEED

4.1 Project Issue & Urgency:

What timely community issue(s), problem(s), challenge(s), or obstacle(s) will the project address?

Recently, Norwich's Planning Commission and Selectboard welcomed new members bringing fresh perspectives and expertise. Energized by this renewed commitment, the Commission has launched the Norwich Village Master Plan project—an ambitious effort to unite stalled initiatives and current priorities into a comprehensive vision for Norwich's future. This new energy will drive a collaborative planning process, engaging residents and stakeholders to address growth, infrastructure, housing, and climate resilience. Supported by the existing Town Plan and updated zoning standards, Norwich is poised to set a clear course for sustainable development and community well-being. The Master Plan will ensure that Norwich's values and needs are reflected in every step, guiding the town toward a vibrant, resilient future.*

4.2 Funding Need:

What other funding sources, if any, did you consider, and why is the MPG program the best source to fund this project?

The MPG funding is the appropriate source of grant funding for an initial planning project like the one proposed here. With outside assistance, in the form of professional consulting support, Norwich will be able to make significant progress in redefining its future vision.*

4.3(a) Municipal Plan Project Readiness:

If the application is for a municipal plan adoption or amendment project, how will the project address the issues described earlier and any recommendations made by the RPC to bring the municipal plan into compliance with statutory requirements?

Not a Municipal Plan project

4.3(b) Municipal Plan Implementation Project Readiness:

If the application is for a project that implements the municipal plan, how is the proposed project identified as an important implementation action in the adopted municipal plan?

Not an implementation project

The Town Plan of Norwich, adopted in 2020, identified numerous implementation plans in its implementation program that, to date, have not received sufficient planning attention. This proposal aims to close this knowledge gap, providing the Planning Commission with enough data to take action or incorporate new initiatives in our upcoming 2028 Town Plan. For example, the implementation program of 2020 identifies the following implementations of the plan:

Encourage broad-based participation in community conversations about housing, including low- and moderate-income households, as well as younger residents and renters.

Develop a comprehensive long-range plan for the construction and maintenance of sidewalks, bikeways, trails, and park-and-ride facilities.

Develop a plan to address any potential conflicts between existing and proposed development on the edge of the village and the mapped forest blocks.

Raise climate crisis and energy awareness.

Moreover, the implementation program includes completing a study on how to maintain a strong and vibrant village center and consider recommended actions to which this proposal is an end to this and other outstanding portions of the 2020 implementation program.

4.4 Other Background

Are there any additional community efforts or activities leading up to this application that would provide extra context for this project? (Optional)

4.5 Project Overlap

If a municipality received an MPG last year - or the project is a part of a larger or phased project, explain how the project relates and the capacity to complete the proposed project.

N/A (single project with no overlap)

4.6 Project Management

How will the project be managed and who will make decisions about the process and final products? Please identify 1 or 2 individuals in the community who will champion the project (such as a Planning Commission Chair).

The project will be led by the Norwich Planning Commission and conducted through the formation of a steering committee comprising members of the Town's commissions and the public. Final decisions regarding the planning process and deliverables will be made by the Planning Commission, with recommendations forwarded to the Selectboard for final approval.

Each regular monthly Planning Commission meeting will include updates and discussion on the Master Plan project. The steering committee will conduct routine check-ins with the planning consultant, and the Planning Commission Chair, the Norwich Town Planning Director, the Zoning Administrator, and the planning consultant will provide monthly updates.

Progress reports will be provided to the Selectboard at their monthly meetings to ensure transparency and accountability. The Planning Commission will champion the project, manage public engagement, and distribute information broadly once approved by the Selectboard. This management structure will ensure adequate oversight, broad community involvement, and successful completion of the Norwich Town Master Plan.

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Section 5: COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Public Outreach:

What participation methods will the project use to engage the participation of the broader public, especially commonly underserved and under-represented populations in the community?

Public participation is vital to the success of the Norwich Village Plan. Our goal is to inform and involve as many Norwich residents as possible throughout the planning process. In addition to traditional outreach methods—such as community surveys, press releases, articles in local newspapers and newsletters, updates on the Town website and social media—the Planning Commission will conduct a series of topical charettes on Growth, Housing and Infrastructure, Historic Preservation, Community Building and Historic Preservation using the Norwich Grange, Jones Circle, Tracy Hall, and the Norwich Farmers' market as thematic points of interest to guide discussions.

We will expand our engagement on these topics through small group conversations with full-time, long-time, and part-time residents, as well as targeted meetings with local businesses, organizations, and underrepresented groups. Recognizing the challenges some residents face with connectivity or transportation, we will offer multiple ways to participate, including virtual forums and in-person events at accessible locations.

To further strengthen outreach, Norwich will partner with regional organizations and planning experts to facilitate public engagement sessions, ensuring broad participation and meaningful input. This inclusive approach will help shape a Master Plan that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the entire Norwich community.*

5.2 Project Partnership & Support:

In addition to the Selectboard and Planning Commission's resolution of support, please explain and provide evidence of organizational partnership and community support for the project.

(Applicants may **attach** up to five pages as a single document in the Application Attachments Form, including: letters of support, meeting minutes, or other documents showing community support for the project.)

The Planning Commission has received statements of support from the Norwich Historical Society, who note in its letter: "that developing creative approaches to improving access to housing, transportation, and infrastructure while at the same time recognizing that the historic character of the village is a community asset is essential." In a statement of support from the Board of the Norwich Grange who note that "developing a new master plan for the village would be an important community building exercise ... and is excited to be involved in the future planning efforts to envision the future of the our village..."

*

Section 6: STATEWIDE PROPERTIES

6.1 Project Outcomes & Goals:

Beyond the project itself, what long-term outcomes would demonstrate the success of the project and further the statewide planning goals?

Long-term outcomes that would demonstrate the success of the Norwich Village Master Plan would include: Infill and infrastructure strategies that maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact towns/village centers separated by rural countryside. Derive strategy and goals to provide a strong and diverse economy, ensure the vitality of the village business district, and expand opportunities for lower and middle-income households, that is responsive to community needs, and that comply with the state planning goals as outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 4302.

*

6.2 Priority Project Categories:

Which of the following statewide priorities does this project address? (select all that apply)

Projects focused on the implementation of the Act 47 of 2023 and Act 181 of 2024

Projects related to climate resilience and flood recovery

Projects related to housing development

Capital programs and plans for municipal improvements

Physical improvement plans for a designated area, which may include pre-engineering water/wastewater visioning

Pre-requisite planning to prepare for a center or center 'step-up' designation application

Innovative and statewide projects that serve as a replicable model for other communities

Not Applicable(N/A) - Project is a Local Priority

6.3 Priority Project Explanation:

Explain how the project furthers the selected statewide priority(s).

6.4 Designated Areas:

Which of the following state designations are held by the municipality, select all that apply?

Village Center

Downtown

New Town Center

Neighborhood Development Area

Growth Center

N/A

6.5 Designated Area Projects:

If the project relates to any of the designated area(s) selected above, please explain.

This project incorporates the currently designated village center as a portion of the study area.

Section 7: PAST PERFORMANCE

7.1 Project History and Performance:

Please list any planning projects, or grants, from the past-5-years, with key actions identified and implemented. (will inform ongoing status of projects beyond grant closeout)

*While the Town has not conducted any state-funded planning projects in the last five years, this work will be a continuation of an MPG-funded project entitled 'Route 5 South - River Road Study' conducted in 2015. This project sought to understand the feasibility of developing this portion of town into a mixed-use district. This project area is incorporated into this project, and has recently been identified as a transitional area by the Two Rivers-Outtaquechee Regional Planning Commission as 'Transition Zone' in their future land use map.**

Section 8: MUNICIPAL RESOLUTION, GRANT ROLES, and GOOD STANDING CERTIFICATION

Please print and complete the [Municipal Resolution form offline](#). Click the embedded link for more information about the responsibilities and permissions of the [MPG Roles](#)

If this is a consortium application, each partner municipality must complete a resolution designating the same Municipal/Authorizing Official and Administrator. **You can upload the additional consortium resolutions in the Application Attachments form.**

***Please note that the Municipal / Authorizing Official (M/AO) role can only be attached to this application by program staff. Please contact DHCD staff at jennifer.lavoie@vermont.gov or 802.828.1948 for assistance.**

8.1 Please indicate the following roles that correspond to the roles identified in the Municipal Resolution Form.

Municipal/Authorizing Official (M/AO):

Brennan Duffy*

M/AO Title

Town Manager

Alternate Municipal/Authorizing Official (M/AO):**Alt M/AO Title****Grant Administrator:**

Steven True

Grant Admin Title

Director of Planning & Zoning

Upload Completed Municipal Resolution

*Norwich_Municipal_Resolution.pdf**

Mailed to DHCD

8.2 Good Standing Certification: *(click for form)* Municipal Planning Grants are a State-funded grant program. Applicant hereby represents: (1.) that it has signed and provided to the State the form prescribed by the Secretary of Administration for purposes of certifying that it is in good standing (as provided in Section 13(a)(2) of Act 154) with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, or otherwise explaining the circumstances surrounding the inability to so certify, and (2.) that it will comply with the requirements stated therein.

Upload Certification of Good Standing

*Norwich_Good_Standing_Certification.pdf**

Work Plan and Budget

Task Name	Description of Task	Paid Personnel	If Other, please specify	Hours	Hourly Rate	Personnel Cost	Material Description	Material Cost	Total Cost
Organizational Meetings	Nominally 4-6 Meetings between Steering Committee & Consultant over the course of the project (kick-off, organizational, strategy)	Consultant	Steering Committee/Staff	50	\$110.00	\$5,500			\$5,500
Growth, Housing & Infrastructure charette	Assembly of materials	Consultant	Steering Committee/Staff	32	\$80.00	\$2,560			\$2,560
Growth, Housing & Infrastructure charette	Meeting time and travel	Consultant	Steering Committee/Staff	8	\$90.00	\$720			\$720
Growth, Housing & Infrastructure charette	Data analysis and chapter drafting	Consultant	Steering Committee/Staff	32	\$110.00	\$3,520			\$3,520
Historic Preservation, Resilience & Community Building charette	Assembly of materials	Consultant		32	\$90.00	\$2,880			\$2,880
Historic Preservation, Resilience & Community Building charette	Meeting time and travel	Consultant		8	\$80.00	\$640			\$640
Historic Preservation, Resilience & Community Building charette	Data analysis and chapter drafting	Consultant		32	\$110.00	\$3,520			\$3,520
Village Master Plan Draft Review	Review of entire draft plan for clarity, readability to ensure that a broad swathe of the population can read and understand the document without prior planning knowledge.	Consultant		40	\$90.00	\$3,600	3		\$3,600
Communications	Materials	Consultant	Steering Committee/Staff			\$0	Postcard Mailing (1,350@0.62), Communications	\$837	\$837
Marketing	Materials	Consultant	Steering Committee/Staff			\$0	Presentation Materials Posters, Renditions, GIS	\$5,000	\$5,000

After entering the amount of STATE GRANT FUNDS being requested, click **SAVE** - all other fields will automatically calculate based on the information entered into the table above.

Total Project Cost:

\$28,777

State Grant Funds (Grant Amount Requested):

\$20,899.00 *

The required 10% match is based off the Total Project Cost.

Total Match Funds:

\$7,878.00

Minimum Required Cash Match Funds:

(10% of Total Project Cost)

\$2,878

Additional Cash Match Funds:

(Optional)

\$5,000

BUDGET DOCUMENTATION**Describe source(s) of match funds: ***

Contribution of municipal staff or volunteer's time cannot be offered as a match. Other contributions, while not required, may be documented here as well.

The Norwich Planning Department has set aside funds for match contributions, and planning services such as consultant & material fees in its annual budget.

Explain how you developed a realistic work plan and budget. *

I met with TRORC staff to brainstorm and qualify the spend for this project.

Upload or email supporting documents that show the work plan and budget is based on realistic information. Please provide a letter or other documentation from a consultant with cost estimates for tasks, including hourly rate.

Upload Budget Documents

Norwich Village Master Plan MPG budget.pdf

Emailed to DHCD

ACCOUNTING

Responses to the following questions are used for administrative purposes only and will not impact the competitiveness of your application.

Please remember that state funds cannot be awarded to municipalities who are (a) suspended or debarred by the Federal Government; (b) delinquent in submitting their subrecipient annual reports; and (c) delinquent in submitting their Single Audit Reports (if required).

What type of accounting system does your municipality use? *

automated

manual

combination of both

Does your organization have an accounting system that will allow you to completely and accurately track the receipt and disbursements of funds related to the award? *

Yes

No

Please be sure to return to the top of this page and click SAVE before moving on.

TO: Kyle Katz, Kevin Geiger, Peter Gregory, and Pete Fellows

CC: Jaan Laaspere

SUBJECT: Future Land Use Map for Norwich in TRORC Regional Plan

Sent: 12/30/2025

Dear Kyle, Peter:

During its discussions and review of the proposed Future Land Use (FLU) map for the Town of Norwich, the Planning Commission arrived at the following three recommendations to modify the Village Area designation as submitted.

1. Hawkpine Neighborhood - The commission feels that a portion of this neighborhood should be included in the Village Area, given its close proximity and trail connection to the Village Center, and the presence of soils suitable for community septic systems.
2. Transfer Station - In a 2021 review of publicly owned lands, the Affordable Housing Subcommittee strongly recommended developing a portion of the land where the transfer station is located (TaxMapID: 10-190.100). The planning commission recognizes that any future development projects in this location would benefit from a Village Area designation and, therefore, recommends that it and the connecting parcels be included in the FLU as a Village Area.
3. Hopson Street from Elm to Route 5 South - Members of the commission identify this portion of town as being central to and part of the village center and note in particular that this route is often used by walkers and runners. Because of this, the commission recommends including this area in the Village Area designation, with a 250' buffer running from the intersection of Elm and Hopson streets to Route 5 South.

On behalf of the Town of Norwich Planning Commission.

Thanks,

Kind regards,

Steven True

Discover Act 250's Secret Sauce:

Tier 1A and Tier 1B Status Areas

Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Planning and Zoning Conference

October 22, 2025

Act 181 of 2024 Established Purposes:

- Much of Act 250's new purpose statement and Act 181's changes can be distilled into the following theme that has guided Vermont's land use and planning laws since Act 250's inception:

Maintain Vermont's historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

- The Legislature's longstanding focus on this vision, a form of what is sometimes referred to as “smart growth,” helps to explain Act 181's tiered jurisdiction structure and other focus areas of the new law.

Goals:

To make it easier to build housing near existing centers and areas that are **planned** for growth.

- Establishes **Tier 1A** areas where development is exempt from Act 250.
- Establishes **Tier 1B** areas where housing projects up to 50 units are exempt from Act 250.



Goals:

To protect forests and connecting habitats from fragmentation.

- Creates **Criterion 8(C) - forest blocks and habitat connectors.**
- Establishes a **road construction jurisdictional trigger** to encouraging clustering of development.



A scenic landscape featuring a dense forest of evergreen trees in the background. In the middle ground, there is a body of water, possibly a lake or a large pond, with some greenery along its edge. The foreground is dominated by a bright, overexposed sunburst or lens flare effect, creating a soft, glowing light. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue with a few wispy white clouds.

Goals:

To protect **critical natural resources**.

- Establishes **Tier 3** where all “development” will trigger Act 250 review.



Act 181 of 2024:

- Interim Act 250 Housing Exemptions
- Consistent Regional Planning: Future Land Use Areas
- State Designation Programs: Steps
- Location Based Act 250 Jurisdiction: Tiers
- New Act 250 Governance: Land Use Review Board

State-level land use review increases ↑



Tier 3
Enhanced jurisdiction



Tier 2
Status quo + expanded road construction jurisdiction



Tier 1B
Jurisdiction over housing is limited



Tier 1A
No jurisdiction



Regional Plans

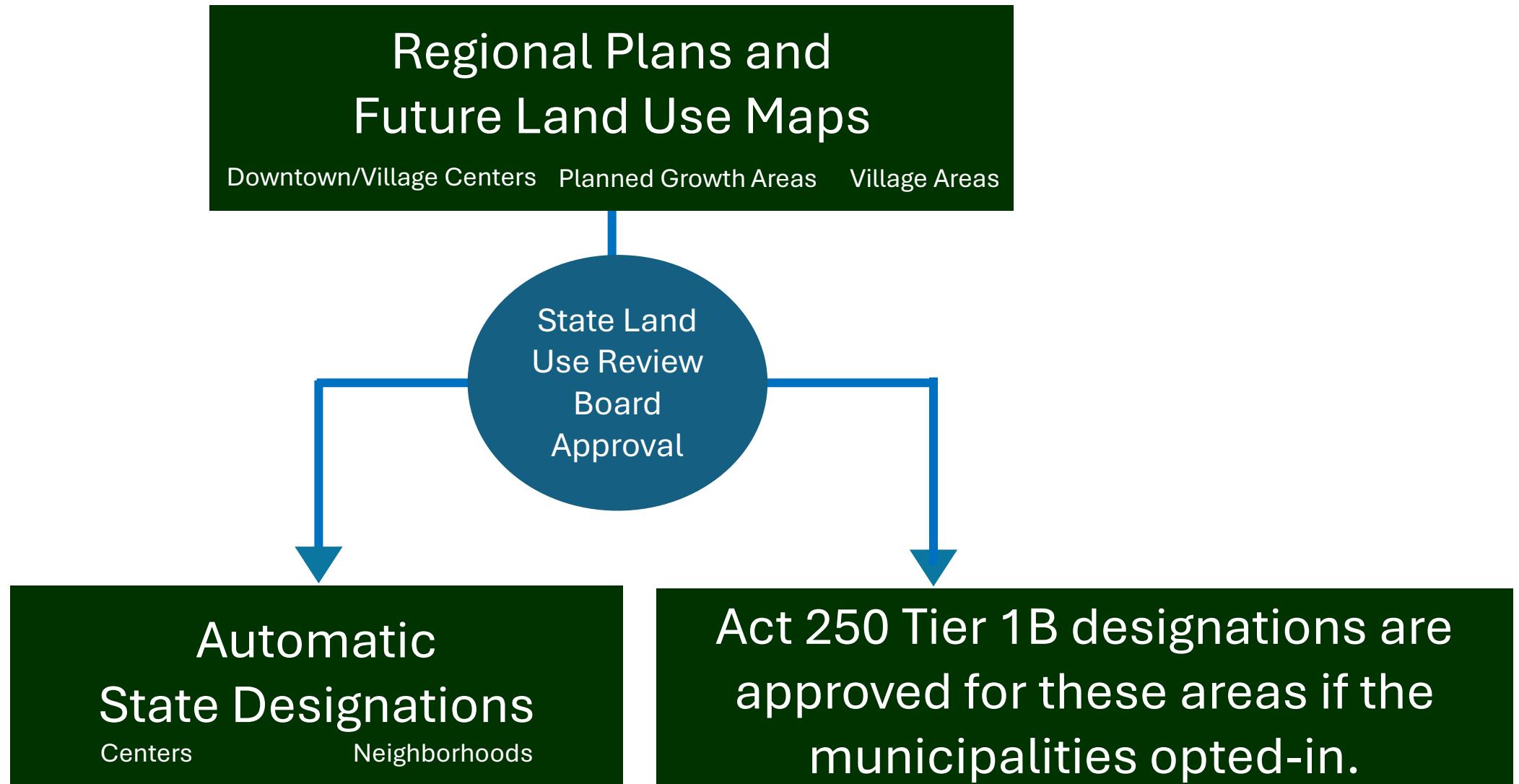
- The state's 11 **Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)** will apply to the **Land Use Review Board (LURB)** for affirmative determinations for **regional plans**.
- The **regional plans** will include new **future land use (FLU) maps** that include 10 consistent FLU areas, as mandated in Act 181. [24 V.S.A. § 4348a\(12\)](#)
 - Downtown/Village Centers
 - Planned Growth Areas
 - Village Areas
 - Transition/Infill Areas
 - Resource-Based Recreation Areas
 - Enterprise
 - Hamlet
 - Rural – General
 - Rural - Agricultural and Forestry
 - Rural - Conservation



Regional Plan Determinations

- When **LURB determines** a **regional plan compliant** it confers **state designations** for **centers** and **neighborhoods** and it determines whether **Tier 1B** areas meet requirements.
- **Downtown centers, village centers, planned growth areas, and village areas** shown on the regional **FLU maps** are the areas eligible for **state designation** as **centers** and **neighborhoods**. [24 V.S.A. §§ 5803 and 5804](#)
- **RPCs** will request **Tier 1B** status for these areas for municipalities that have opted-in.
- All 11 **RPCs** must adopt Act 181-compliant **regional plans** by the **end of 2026** and have them **confirmed** by the **LURB** or **legacy state designations** within the region **expire**.

Regional Plan Approvals confer state designations



Starting 12/31/26

How regional plan maps will confer new state designations:

Starting in 2027:

Legacy state designations:

New state designations:

Village Centers	Centers
Downtowns	
New Town Centers	
Neighborhood Development Areas	Neighborhoods
Growth Centers	

The **Community Investment Board** will implement the new system of smart growth incentives based on **2 state designations consistent with future land uses mapped in the new regional plans**.

Four of the 10 **Regional Plan** Land Use Categories:



When **LURB** approves **regional plans**, they approve the following **state designations** for the above categories:



What are Tier 1B & Tier 1A?

Tier 1B

- Area of Act 250 exemption for up to 50 units of housing (including mixed-use) on tract(s) of land involving 10 acres or less
- RPC applies with Regional Plan or later as a separate application
- Continues until modified or Board revokes

Tier 1A

- Area of Act 250 exemption for any subdivision, development, or change to an existing project
- Municipality administers and enforces transferred Act 250 permits within Tier 1A area
- Municipality applies after Board issues affirmative determination on Regional Plan
- Continues until modified or Board revokes

Tier 1B & Tier 1A Requirements

Tier 1B	Tier 1A
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be qualifying future land use map category.• Municipality must have a confirmed plan, zoning, and subdivision bylaws.• If the area has floodplain and river corridors, the municipality must have flood hazard and river corridor bylaws.• Municipality must have water or wastewater infrastructure or soils to accommodate compact housing.• Municipality must “opt-in” with resolution affirming capacity to support development review and zoning administration in Tier 1B area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the requirements of Tier 1B.• Required review of determinations at least every four years.• Preapplication and application meetings.• Fee (\$295).• Application guidance in development with requirements for map data layers and narrative.• Municipal resolution must include an explanation of its capacity to administer and enforce previously permitted Act 250 permits.

Tier 1A Application Narrative Highlights

- Form & Scale
- Historic & Cultural Resources
- Natural Communities & Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species
- Water & Wastewater



Form & Scale

Detail how the proposed Tier 1A area will create a compact settlement oriented toward pedestrian activity including an identifiable center with higher density than the surrounding area. For those proposed Tier 1A areas that extend to a municipal boundary, surrounding area density may instead be addressed by describing how the Tier 1A area relates to the development trends and plans for the adjacent municipality.

Explain regulatory provisions for public buildings, open spaces, and other visual features that act as landmarks, symbols, and focal points for community identity within the Tier 1A area.



Describe how the Tier 1A area will enable a variety of housing types, businesses, services, and facilities all within close proximity and interwoven within the area.



Describe how the regulations for the Tier 1A area govern the arrangement, building bulk, form, design, character, and landscaping of sites to ensure compatibility of buildings and other improvements.



Provide an overview of the transportation system serving the Tier 1A area and how it provides or will provide a hierarchy of appropriately designed facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, automotive vehicles, and public transit, if present.



Provide an overview of the historic settlement pattern and street pattern within the Tier 1A area noting existing edges. Explain how the regulations provide for public and private buildings that are oriented toward streets and further maintaining or creating a defined edge around the Tier 1A area.



Describe how the regulations provide for open spaces within the Tier 1A area that incorporate natural features and undisturbed areas as well as historically compatible squares, greens, landscaped streets, greenways, and parks woven into the pattern of the center.



If the Tier 1A area is served by sewer and water, detail how regulations provide for a minimum of four-story buildings within a portion of the Tier 1A area. A story may be a below ground story or a story within the roofline so long as the majority of the floor area is occupiable.

Historic & Cultural Resources

If the Tier 1A area is adjacent to or inclusive of a National Register Historic District, National or State Register Historic Place or significant resource as identified by the municipality or State Historic Preservation Office, the applicant must provide a narrative noting historic, cultural resources in or adjacent to the proposed Tier 1A area and submit proof of one of the following:

Designation of the municipality as a Certified Local Government community.

Municipality adoption of a local historic district for the Tier 1A area in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4414(1)(F).

Municipal adoption of a design review district for the Tier 1A area in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4414(1)(E) or comparable design regulations (including form-based code) that sustains the historic character of the Tier 1A area.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the municipality and the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation to provide binding recommendations for development applications seeking to alter significant historic resources within the Tier 1A area.

Natural Communities & Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species

If a proposed Tier 1A area contains a significant natural resource as defined by the Vermont Natural Heritage Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species list and classified as a conservation rank of S1, S2, S3, or contains a significant natural community shown on the *Vermont Natural Resources Atlas*, the municipality should consult with the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife and submit proof of one of the following:

A determination from a qualified professional or from the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife that the Tier 1A area does not include the identified significant natural resource.

A *Natural Resources Atlas Map* depicting mapped RTE species and significant natural community occurrences within and adjacent to the proposed Tier1A and municipal regulations for the Tier 1A and adjacent areas that:

Ensure no jeopardy to rare species or adverse modification to significant natural communities and compliance with State and Federal Threatened and Endangered species regulations.

Require project-specific natural resource inventories and assessments conducted by a qualified professional when occurrences of RTE species and/or significant natural communities are predicted or otherwise known to occur in a project vicinity. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife must be provided a copy of the application and the opportunity to provide the municipality with technical input if an undue adverse impact on RTE species or significant natural communities is proposed.

Water & Wastewater

The municipality shall demonstrate capacity by providing available water and wastewater allocations in the proposed Tier 1A area or planned capacity noting any existing or proposed water/sewer infrastructure in the Tier 1A area and the status of any planned improvements, noting status of engineering and financing, ownership of infrastructure or planned improvements, and possible timeline to implement. Decentralized infrastructure shall be acceptable improvements.



Tier 1A Administration

24 V.S.A Section 4460(g) provide municipalities may amend Act 250 permits through municipal permit process. The DRB's decision must include conditions contained within the Act 250 permit unless the panel determines the condition relates to:

the construction phase
of an already
constructed project;

compliance with
another State permit
that has independent
jurisdiction;

federal or State law that
is no longer in effect or
applicable;

an issue that is
addressed by municipal
regulation and the
project will meet the
standard; or

a physical or use
condition that is no
longer in effect or
applicable to the new
project.

The DRB must issue a
decision in accordance
with 24 V.S.A. § 4464(b)
and include specific
findings.

Tier 1A Enforcement

- Municipalities will need local regulations to amend existing Act 250 permits.
- 24 V.S.A Section 4460(h) provides for municipal enforcement of Act 250 permits.
- A listing of all amended and enforced Act 250 permits must be provided to the Board annually.
- The Board is working on FAQ for municipalities to address Act 250 permit administration and enforcement.



Tier 1A

- Board begins receiving applications from Cities and Towns in **2026**.
- Process starts with a **preapplication meeting**
- Upon **final application** submission, a **hearing** will be held. The RPC and the municipality will be responsible for providing **notice of the hearing**.
- Law requires Board to issue a **decision** on each Tier 1A application within **45 days** of receiving a complete application from a municipality.





2034

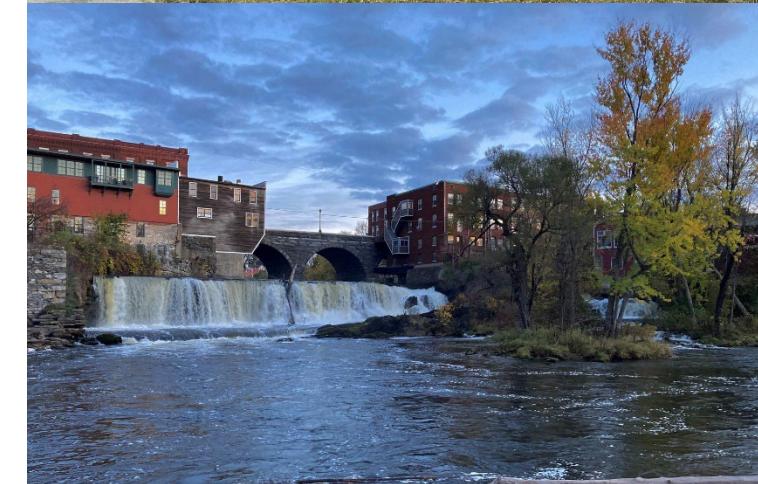
- **24 V.S.A., Chapter 76A** (Historic Downtown Development) expires on July 1, 2034.
- This law governs **the current state smart growth designation incentives program**, which is being phased out.
- By this date, all **benefits** for state **designated centers** and **neighborhoods** that received their designation by virtue of their legacy status being transitioned into the new system via a LURB-approved regional plan shall **sunset**, and the then-current benefits for centers and neighborhoods shall apply.

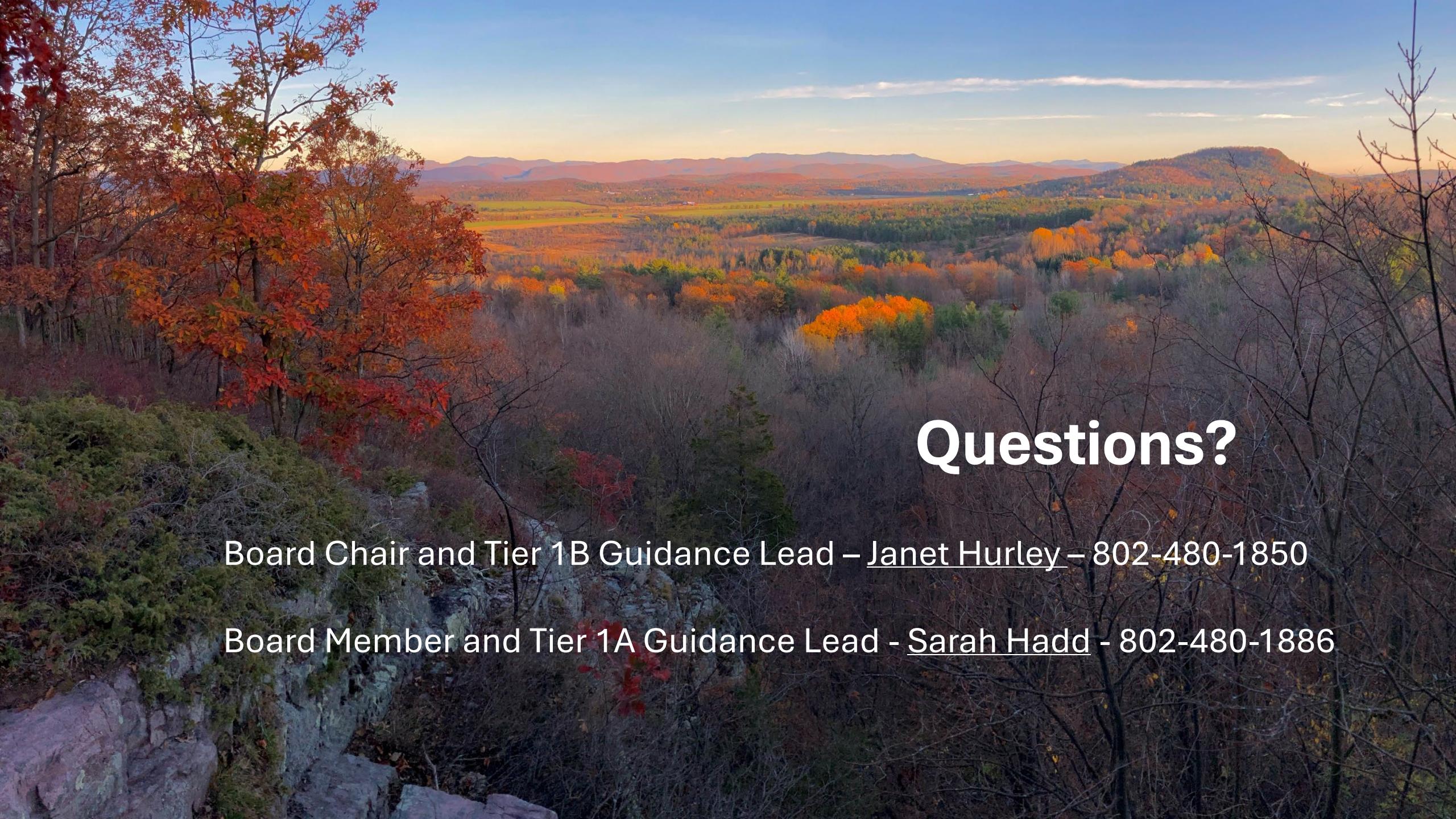
2034

In less than a decade, the way that the State of Vermont regulates land use and incentivizes growth and development will be comprehensively revised.

- Integration of local, regional, & state planning.
- Simplification of State Designation Programs.
- Tiered location-based Act 250 jurisdiction.

The State will continue to incentivize growth close to existing centers to protect the state's historic development pattern while minimizing impacts on natural resources and resource-based industries.





Questions?

Board Chair and Tier 1B Guidance Lead – Janet Hurley – 802-480-1850

Board Member and Tier 1A Guidance Lead - Sarah Hadd - 802-480-1886

Norwich PC Minutes 12/9/2025

Members Present: Jaan Laaspere, Christian Spalding, Ernie Ciccotelli, Vince Crow, Mary Gorman

Public Present: Miller Nuttle, Lynnwood Andrews, Brad Wible, Rob Gere, Andy Torkelson

Meeting Opened: 6:31 pm

1. Open Regular Meeting

2. Approve Agenda

Ciccotelli moved, seconded by Crow, to approve the agenda

Motion passed 5-0

3. Public comment on items not on agenda

Miller Nuttle discussed the letter included in the correspondence, stating a group of residents requested the town to consider applying for the VTrans Bike Ped Grant in order to conduct a scoping study to identify potential projects that would improve pedestrian and biking safety. (*Future Agenda Item*)

4. Correspondence

The chair acknowledged receipt of the bike/ped support letter

5. Enhanced Energy Plan

The Planning Commission, Solar Siting Subcommittee, Energy Committee, and Conservation Commission are working to create a town Enhanced Energy Plan.

The Planning Commission will provide overall guidance, coordination and policy decisions. The Solar Siting Subcommittee will focus on process, specifics and mapping. The Energy Plan Working Group will be responsible for identifying needs and scarcities, estimating current energy usage and ways to meet future targets, conservation and efficiency, and transportation related issues. Crow volunteered to join the Energy Plan Working Group as the PC representative.

6. Short Term Rentals

The group discussed the proposed Short Term Rental interim by-law. This would designate owner occupied short term rentals as an allowed use. The chair encouraged members to send edits to Steven True and will send a copy to the AHSC for feedback.

7. Capital Planning

The group discussed the PC's role in the town's Capital Planning project. One option would be developing a capital budget, which would list and describe projects needed in the next 5 years, including the cost and method of finance, ordered by priority.

8. Approve minutes

Ciccotelli moved, seconded by Spalding, to approve the minutes from 11/18/25

Motion passed 4-0 (Gorman abstained)

9. Adjourn

Ciccotelli moved, seconded by Gorman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 pm

Motion passed 5-0

Future Regular Meeting –1/13/25 at 6:30 pm at Tracy Hall (also accessible via Zoom)

Minutes by Vince Crow on 12/11/25