

# TOWN PLANS

---

## A Basic Introduction



**Allison Hopkins, AICP**  
Planning Director

P.O. Box 320  
[38 Ascutney Park Road](mailto:ahopkins@marcvt.org)  
[Ascutney, Vermont 05030](mailto:ahopkins@marcvt.org)  
[ahopkins@marcvt.org](mailto:ahopkins@marcvt.org)

**Kellen Appleton**  
Planner

[my pronouns](mailto:kappleton@marcvt.org): she or they  
P.O. Box 320  
[38 Ascutney Park Road](mailto:kappleton@marcvt.org)  
[Ascutney, Vermont 05030](mailto:kappleton@marcvt.org)  
[kappleton@marcvt.org](mailto:kappleton@marcvt.org)

# A Municipal Plan describes your community:

## As it is

- Population
- Assets (public buildings, roads, utilities, farm & forest lands, recreational opportunities, etc.)
- Liabilities (abandoned factory, flood-prone intersection)

## As you would like it to be

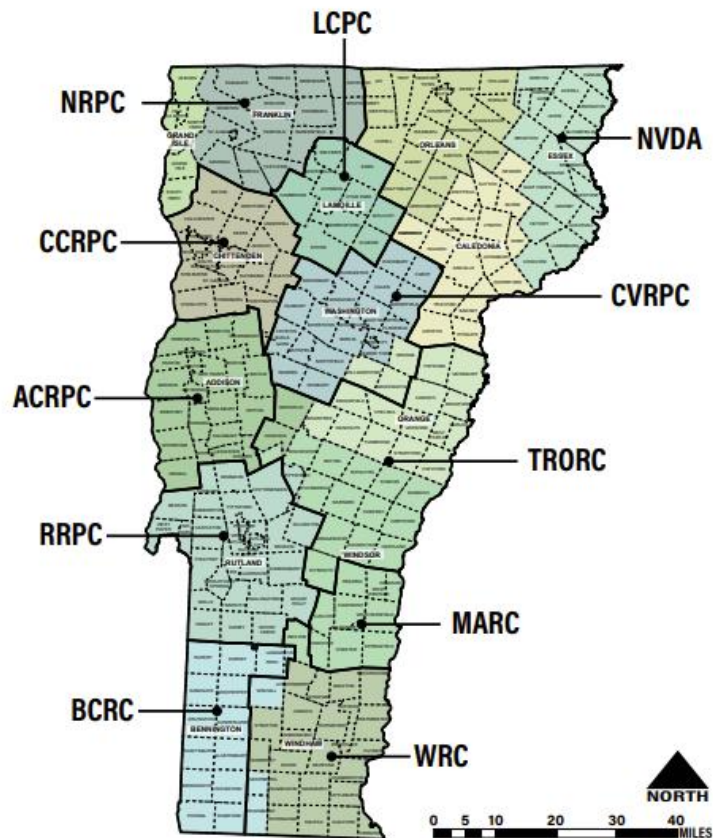
- Bike lanes
- Sidewalks
- Childcare
- Community Center
- Public Pool
- Outdoor concerts
- Solar Array
- Affordable housing

# Benefits of a Municipal Plan

- Adopt Regulations
- Capital Budget & Program
- Act 250 Applications must conform to Town Plan
- Town Plan is considered in Section 248 Certificate of Public Good Applications
- More competitive grant applications



# Planning in Vermont - 24 VSA Chapter 117



**STATE OF VERMONT  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS**

Process §4302(b)

Goals §4302(c)

Elements §4382



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

## Planning Process, §4302(b)

- A Continuing, Coordinated, Comprehensive process
- A policy framework to guide decisions
- Citizen participation
- Consider how growth and development affect community resources, including natural resources, infrastructure, and long-term sustainability.
- Work creatively with other towns to develop & implement plans

*The process is as important as the product!*

# VERMONT PLANNING GOALS

§ 4302(c)



# Municipal Plan Elements, §4382

1. Objectives, Policies and Programs
2. **Land Use** (Map and Statement), including any state designation
3. Transportation (Map and Statement)
4. Utilities and Facilities (Map and Statement)
5. Rare Natural Areas, Scenic & Historic Features (Policy)
6. Education (Map and Statement)
7. Energy (Option for Enhanced Energy Plan)
8. Economic Development
9. **Housing** (including targets)
10. Flood Resilience
11. Compatibility with Adjacent Municipalities and Region
12. Implementation Program

# Where to Start?



# Community Assessment – Data & Maps

**Demographics** – population trends, local & regional

**Economic Conditions** – employers, workforce, wages

**Transportation** – vehicles, miles traveled, traffic counts

**Public Safety** – personnel, facilities, equipment, 911 calls

**Energy** – generation, transmission, use

**Housing** – number, type, size, age, condition, median price

**Mapped natural resources:** water bodies, wildlife habitat, forest blocks, prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, scenic views, SFHA, current & future land uses

**Mapped infrastructure:** highways, railways, bus stops, sidewalks, trail networks, public buildings (schools, hospitals, libraries), power plants, water & sewer systems, historic structures

“When it comes to planning, if you’re not doing it with people – they think you are doing it to them.”

Roger Millar, AICP  
National Complete Streets Coalition

# Types of Citizen Participation

**INFORM:** Newsletter, Website, flyer, postcard, FPF

**CONSULT:** Survey, Public Meetings, Focus Group

**ENGAGE:** Workshop, Photo contest, SWOT

**COLLABORATE:** Advisory Committee, Charrette

# Engage People in Creating a Shared Vision



**Talk to people**

**Food, fun and  
celebration**



**Meet people  
where they are**


**A culture of  
communication**



# Welcome Everyone!

The Future is Reading  
*presents*

## Food, Fun, & the Future of Reading



### A Community Conversation

Join us for a community wide discussion on the potential of our Village. Share a meal and your hopes for Felchville. Your input will build on the feedback FIR has obtained so far and help direct what projects we take on first. **All are welcome! Doors open at 4:30pm. The conversation will begin at 5:00pm.** We hope to see you there!  
*If you have questions or need any accommodations, please contact [Board@readingcommunitytrust.org](mailto:Board@readingcommunitytrust.org).*

Please join your neighbors at **Reading Elementary School:**

**Friday, May 16th, 4:30-7:30PM**  
**Childcare and Dinner Provided**



*Event made possible by: The Future is Reading - Reading Community Trust - the Town of Reading - The Village Trust Initiative - a partnership between Preservation Trust of Vermont, Vermont Council on Rural Development, and Vermont Community Foundation supported by a Congressionally Directed Spending award from former Senator Leahy*

- Food
- Childcare
- Accessibility
- Contact information

# Identify Goals & Objectives that:

- **Align with the 15 state planning goals in 24 VSA §4302(c)**
- **Address the 12 required elements in §4382(a)**
- **Reflect your community's Shared Vision**

# Identify Priority Action Items

- **SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound**
- **Identify the people who will need to be involved**
- **Estimate anticipated cost (if applicable)**
- **Invite the public to help prioritize actions**
- **Remember: Having a few focused relevant actions is better than having a long list of vague aspirations**

# Regional Plan Approval & Confirmation

- **Municipalities may request RPC approval of the municipal plan.**
- **RPCs will confirm the municipal planning process if:**
  - If the municipal plan has been approved by RPC
  - The municipality is engaged in a process to implement the plan
  - Is maintaining efforts to provide funds for planning
- **A confirmed Planning Process allows municipalities to:**
  - Adopt regulations & Capital Plans
  - Apply for Municipal Planning Grants
  - Have plan considered by state agencies in their planning

# MPG Timeline

- **Grant End Date:** December 31, 2027
- **Primary focus areas:**  
Housing • Land Use • Flood Resilience • Economic Development • Natural Resources
- **Community Engagement:**  
Open House & “up to” 4 pop-up engagement events throughout the process
- **Project Phases**
- **Phase 1 – Launch & Foundation (Spring–Summer 2026)**  
Kickoff, data & demographics review, SWOT analysis, early visioning.
- **Phase 2 – Policy Framework (Summer–Fall 2026)**  
Update required plan elements and align with state planning goals.
- **Phase 3 – Growth Strategy (Winter 2026 – Summer 2027)**  
Land Use, Housing, and Future Land Use Map development.
- **Phase 4 – Final Plan & Adoption (Fall–Winter 2027)**  
Implementation strategy, public hearings, and plan adoption.

# Role of the PC / Next Steps

- **The Planning Commission serves as the primary working group for developing the Town Plan.**
- **Throughout the process the PC will:**
  - Review and discuss draft chapters
  - Help guide policy direction
  - Participate in engagement activities
  - Identify priority implementation actions
- **Key milestones**
  - Data & Demographics
  - SWOT / Visioning
  - Review of drafts
  - Engagement
  - Public hearing and recommendation to Selectboard
- **Adoption process (brief overview)**
  - Planning Commission public hearing
  - Recommendation to Selectboard
  - Selectboard adoption

# QUESTIONS?

---



## **Chester Town Plan Update: *Toward 2036* Campaign**

### **Community Amenities to Attract Young Adults and Families (in addition to HOUSING and SCHOOLS)**

#### **List for discussion at 3.17.26 Planning Commission meeting**

- Dog Park
- Microtransit
- Uber/Lyft
- Robotaxi
- Train Depot
- Walkability
- Sidewalks
- Pocket Parks
- Walking Trails
- Bicycle Trails
- Museums (Yosemite Firehouse?)
- Children's Museum
- Indoor Play Area
- Indoor Gym
- Community Center
- Cultural Center
- Co-Working Space
- Concert Shell
- Skate Park
- Climbing Wall
- Bowling Alley
- Hang-Out Spaces (pub, bar, brewery, winery, library open in evening, music venues)