

Ch 12: IMPLEMENTATION

Background

Implementation of the goals and policies outlined in this document depends upon the cooperative efforts of the Region's member communities, along with the efforts of the numerous local, regional, state and federal agencies, and private interests involved in land use planning activities. The MARC must work with all of these groups to successfully implement this Plan, and the Plan has been written with this idea as its foundation.

At the federal level, the Regional Plan can be used to justify and prioritize the use of federal funds for community development, transportation improvements, natural resource protection and management, and other investments. Careful planning and clear statements of regional goals and priorities help to ensure that federal money is spent usefully and fairly. State funding can be secured through the same process, and state government can use the Regional Plan in several other ways, as well. One of the goals of Act 250 is to include local and regional planning concerns in the state regulatory process. These concerns are addressed by requiring developers to show that projects will conform to local and regional plans. Regional plans are used in the certification of solid waste facilities and in the granting of certificates of public good for electric generation and transmission facilities; they may also have an effect on state policy through the statutory requirement for review of state agency plans (24 V.S.A. §4305(d)).

At the local and regional levels, the Regional Plan interacts with plans of surrounding regions, municipal plans adopted by member towns, and with the activities of developers and other private groups. Implementation of this plan can only proceed if its goals and policies are compatible with those of adjoining regions and member towns. It is the responsibility of the MARC to provide assistance to its members in the development of their town plans and to help ensure that those plans are in the best interest of not only an individual town, but for all towns in the Region. This Plan sets forth guidelines for the most effective implementation measures to be developed by local governmental bodies with assistance from the MARC. Finally, it is the duty of the MARC, through the adoption of this Plan, to provide general advisory guidance for managing the growth and development of the Region. Additionally, the Plan should provide guidance to developers to help ensure the orderly, efficient, and healthful use of land and resources.

A. Determination of Substantial Regional Impact

The MARC should act as a review agency for any proposed development of substantial regional impact. The MARC is required under Vermont law (24 VSA §4345(a)) to define “substantial regional impact as that term may be used with respect to its region.” As such, the MARC defines “substantial regional impact” as:

Any proposed development of such size, scale, character or intensity of use that it has a sustained influence upon: the growth and development in adjacent towns; the regional economy; affordable housing stock; or regionally important cultural and natural resources or infrastructure; and meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. It may affect the Region’s economy by:

- a) Generating new employment equal to or greater than 1 percent (1%) of the Region’s existing employment as measured by the Department of Employment and Training; or
- b) Increasing the cost or availability of affordable housing in the town in which the project is located or in adjacent towns;

2. It may affect the infrastructure capacity by:

- a) Substantially affecting the safety of the traveling public on highways and other transportation facilities within other towns;
- b) Generating peak hour traffic equal or greater than five percent (5%) of the peak hour capacity of the transportation network serving the project site;
- c) Contributing to a reduction in the peak hour Level of Service (LOS) from D to E or from E to F;
- d) Substantially changing the service area or capacity of utility services, including but not limited to, public water and sewer systems, demand for energy, and/or solid waste services;
- e) Generating student populations that will adversely affect school capacities in one or more neighboring communities and/or union high school districts; or,
- f) Creating capital improvements such as the extension, upgrading or enlargement of electrical transmission lines.

3. It may change the existing settlement patterns in the Region by:

- a) Requiring the alteration, degradation or destruction of designated regionally significant historic, cultural, natural, aesthetic or scenic features; or,

- b) Locating in geographic areas that have not supported the type, scale or intensity of proposed development in the past, and is not supported by local or regional Future Land Use Maps.

4. It may affect the natural resources of the Region by:

- a) Producing excessive pollutants or substantially degrading air or water quality;
- b) Altering, degrading or destroying the animal and/or plant habitat as identified in this Plan as worthy of protection; or,
- c) Substantially fragmenting or reducing the area or productive capacity of regionally significant forested and agricultural lands;

The definition of substantial regional impact shall include both individual project proposals as well as cumulative impacts of multi-phased projects as described in this Chapter. Proposed developments that have substantial regional impacts may have positive as well as negative impacts.

An impact analysis should be provided for any project of substantial regional impact. The analysis should include such effects as population growth in other towns, impact on infrastructure capacity (roads, traffic congestion, public water and wastewater facilities, schools, etc.), and impacts on cultural and natural resources (critical wildlife habitat, water quality, scenic resources, etc.).

1. CUMULATIVE DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

When certain development occurs incrementally, there is concern for the impacts resulting from that cumulative growth. Development or a series of developments, when located within a limited geographic area, under the control of a single applicant, and planned incrementally over a relatively short period of time, can produce environmental, social, and economic impacts that are contrary to sound and coordinated comprehensive planning, which is the goal of this Plan and Vermont law. Incremental development review methods have the potential of failing to adequately evaluate the cumulative impacts of growth within an area. (Examples of this kind of development could include a large multi-phased subdivision or recreational area such as a ski resort.)

In these situations, the MARC may request cumulative impact review by requesting, coordinating and reviewing cumulative impact studies. The scope of each cumulative impact study or master plan should address impacts to both the natural and human environment and offer measures to avoid and/or mitigate adverse impacts. The costs of such studies shall be borne by the applicant.

B. Implementation

The Regional Plan will be implemented in a number of ways. Most implementation measures rely on coordination with municipal planning and regulation efforts, as well as collaborating with the efforts of other municipal, regional, state, federal and private entities. Implementation of the Regional Plan consists of the following measures:

MUNICIPAL PLANNING. The MARC's efforts to assist with local planning and implementation will include the following activities:

- The MARC shall consult with its municipalities before town plans are set to expire or at other times as needed or requested. In accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4350(a), this consultation will involve ascertaining the municipality's planning needs and identifying assistance that the MARC can provide. This consultation process will also involve a review of the town plan with respect to the required elements under §4382 and consistency with State planning goals under §4302.
- After adoption of a town plan, the MARC will evaluate and confirm local planning efforts and approve town plans per 24 V.S.A. §4350. Currently, all towns have plans approved and planning processes confirmed by the RPC, which makes them eligible for the state municipal planning grant program.
- The MARC will maintain an on-going status listing of municipal planning and regulatory documents, and annually report the findings to municipalities and the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- The MARC will offer technical assistance to municipalities as they prepare new or updated plans, bylaws, ordinances, and other implementation tools. MARC staff will help local planning commissions assemble and analyze data, conduct research and surveys, and prepare text and maps.

TRAINING. The MARC will organize, sponsor, and conduct workshops and training seminars for local officials as well as hosting workshops with state agencies and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. MARC staff frequently meets with local boards to address specific issues and/or concerns and is often the most effective means of outreach to its member towns. The GIS Planner often assists towns with specific mapping needs and training of local officials.

SPECIAL PROJECTS. Member towns often want to undertake special planning studies to address a particular issue in their community, e.g. resource mapping, transportation studies, emergency response plans. The MARC is available to assist towns either as a principal consultant or with technical and data support services.

MAPPING. Every effort will be made to ensure that GIS activities are supported and accessible to municipalities in the Region. The MARC has a full complement of GIS hardware and software and a GIS Planner (as well as other staff) trained in the operation of such

systems. The MARC has undertaken many mapping projects for its towns in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

GRANT ASSISTANCE. The MARC will continue to assist municipalities in the preparation of applications for grants to support planning initiatives, housing or economic development projects, and other programs of public benefit (e.g. Municipal Planning Grants, Municipal Education Grants, EPA Brownfields Grants, and Town Highway Structures Program). The MARC will also continue to assist towns and agencies with project management services.

COLLABORATION. MARC's goals can also be achieved by close collaboration with other state, private and/or public organizations as well as other regional planning commissions. Combining resources can be an effective means of achieving a common interest and reinforce the commission's goals and programs. It also provides an opportunity to aggregate resources that might not otherwise be available.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS. The MARC established special focus committees to address particular issues of importance to the Region. These committees include: Executive, Budget, Personnel, Permit Review and Town Plan Review Committees. The MARC also appoints members and staff to serve on the boards or committees of other organizations, such as the Connecticut River Joint Commission's Vermont Watershed Advisory Commission. The MARC also established two advisory committees to guide two of the organization's bigger programs: the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Brownfields Steering Committee. The MARC staffs the Regional Emergency Management Committee. The MARC needs to evaluate the work of its committees and assignments annually.

REVIEWS OF STATE AGENCY PLANS. It is important for the MARC to coordinate with state agencies and evaluate the impacts of state agency plans and programs on municipalities and the region, and to provide responses accordingly.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS. Under state law the MARC is enabled to participate in various regulatory and non-regulatory proceedings. The MARC takes a very active role in reviewing every Act 250 application that it receives to determine conformance with the Regional Plan. The MARC is active in other proceedings that have a bearing on the Region: Department of Public Service (Section 248), Water Resources Board, and Rules put forward by state agencies.

RECOMMENDED INFRASTRUCTURE. In accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4348a, the Regional Plan includes recommended infrastructure needs in order to meet future demands or to facilitate desired future land use conditions:

- Volume 2 of the Regional Plan includes programmed transportation projects and identified future needs to address the future needs of the regional transportation system.

- The following implementation matrix includes identified priority investments in public facilities and utilities to further the goals of this Regional Plan. However, this list is not all inclusive. Recommendations from each chapter are also intended to implement this Regional Plan. In addition, the MARC will assist municipal efforts to address town plan implementation strategies, and local efforts to develop capital budgets and programs, and other implementation tools.

Additional implementation measures rely on coordination with municipal planning and regulation efforts, as well as the efforts of other municipal, regional, state, federal and private entities.

Implementation Matrix for the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission Regional Plan

Recommendation	Municipality	Responsible Party	Expected Timing				Priority of Need (Low, Medium, High)	Generalized Cost Estimate	Method of Financing
			Ongoing	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	5-10+ Years			
Seek funding to upgrade water and sewer lines needed to further goals of regional and town plans as needed.	All	Selectboards/ Fire Districts	X				High	High	Grant/Loan/Bond
Assist towns in the development or update of capital budget and improvement programs	All	MARC, Selectboards			X		Medium	Low	Grants
Acquire equipment/invest in solid waste collection facilities to implement requirements of Act 148	All	Selectboards		X			High	Unknown	Unknown
Replace water storage tanks and increase capacity	Cavendish	Selectboard				X	High	\$350,000	Grant/Loan
Seek funding to implement wastewater system improvements (Cavendish Capital Budget & Program)	Cavendish	Selectboard			X	X	High (See CBP)	Variable	Grant/Loan/Bond
Repairs or removal of water supply dam in Town Forest	Chester	Water Dept.				X	Low	\$500,000	Grant/Loan
Assist town officials to implement recommendations	Chester	Town Manager, Selectboard,	X				High	Variable	Grant/Loan

in the Village Center Master Plan		Planning Commission							
Seek funding to implement water and sewer system projects identified in Chester's system improvements plan).	Chester	Water Dept. / Sewer Dept.			X		High	High	Grant/Loan/Bond
Apply for funding for engineering analysis to address wastewater issues in the villages of Felchville and further village revitalization efforts	Reading	Selectboard		X			High	\$30,000	DEC planning advance funding (Revolving Loan Funds)
Extend sewer service to Hartness State Airport	Springfield	Public Works				X	Medium	\$500,000	Grant/Loan/Bond
Seek funding to implement priority needs listed in Springfield's Water and Wastewater Capital Plan as most recently amended.	Springfield	Public Works	X				High	High	Grant/Loan/Bond
Seek funding to implement the Weathersfield Reservoir dam removal.	Springfield	Selectboard, Public Works, MARC	X				High	\$800,000	Grant
Implement water system improvements noted in the Ascutney Fire District #2 Water System Feasibility Study	Weathersfield	Ascutney Fire District #2		X			High	High	Vermont Bond Bank

Develop regional outdoor recreation trails plans	All	Consortium, MARC to facilitate		X			High	Low-Medium	Grants
Work with towns and partners to continue developing a trail around Mt. Ascutney and implement other recommendations from the Mt. Ascutney Outdoor Recreation Plan	West Windsor, Windsor, Weathersfield	Consortium, MARC to facilitate	X				High	Variable	Grants
Coordinate with Chambers of Commerce, SRDC, towns and other partners to explore marketing the region for outdoor recreation through app development, websites, and other promotional materials	All	MARC, Conservation Commissions, Recreation groups, SRDC, Chambers of Commerce		X			Medium	Medium	Grants
Maintain an up-to-date Ride Windsor County bike route map and guide, and make printed maps available in bike shops and other locations throughout the region.	All	MARC	X				Medium	Low	Transportation Planning Initiative
Assist Weathersfield to seek funding for a wastewater/water feasibility study to further Perkinsville	Weathersfield	Selectboard		X			High	\$30,000	DEC Planning advance funding (revolving loan funds)

Village Center revitalization efforts.									
Assist Weathersfield to seek funding for a wastewater feasibility study to further Ascutney Village Center revitalization efforts.	Weathersfield	Selectboard		X			High	\$30,000	DEC Planning advance funding (revolving loan funds)
Continue to assist Springfield with implementation of the recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan.	Springfield	MARC, Selectboard	X				High	Variable	Grants/financing
Explore options to provide regional or intermunicipal services, such as a regional floodplain and/or zoning administrator, or intermunicipal fire or ambulance services.	All	MARC, Selectboards			X		Medium	Variable	Municipal capital budgets
Support local energy committees and assist towns to implement energy goals set out in town plans.	All	MARC, Selectboards, Energy Committees	X				Medium	Variable	Grants, municipal capital budgets, bonding
Seek grant funding for a feasibility study to develop a regional housing utility that would provide technical support and financing for the development and conversion of homes that are	All	MARC		X			High	\$50,000	Grant

affordable for residents, such as accessory dwelling units.									
Expand broadband access to all households in all communities	All	MARC, Selectboards, CUD, Providers	X				High	High	Grants/Financing
Assist Ludlow with implementation of the Village Center Master Plan	Ludlow	MARC, Selectboard, Village Trustees	X				Medium	Variable	Grants/Financing
Implement recommendations from the Active Transportation Plan	All	MARC, Selectboard, VTrans	X				Medium-High	Variable	Grants/Financing/ VTrans capital program/municipal capital budget
Implement recommendations from the Ludlow Microtransit Feasibility Study	Ludlow	MARC, Selectboard, Village Trustees			X		Medium	\$40,000	Grants/Financing/ municipal capital budget
Implement recommendations from the Springfield and Windsor Microtransit Feasibility Studies	Springfield, Windsor	SEVT, VTrans		X			Medium	Springfield: \$190,000- \$250,000 Windsor: \$190,000- \$250,000	Grants

Develop a regional forest fragmentation study	All	MARC		X			High	Medium	Grants, ACCD Funding
Ensure all of MARC's actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion	MARC	MARC		X			High	N/A	N/A
Shift away from the use of fossil fuels by developing the infrastructure of electric charging stations and other fuels that help to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions.	All	Towns, MARC, VTrans, PSD, ACCD	X				Medium	Variable	Grants

C. Plan Relationship

1. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with 24 V.S.A. §§ 4345a(5) and 4348a(8), the purpose of this section is to indicate how this Regional Plan relates to:

1. Development trends and needs;
2. Plans for adjacent municipalities and regions;
3. Compatibility with approved municipal plans; and,
4. Consistency with State Planning Goals under 24 V.S.A. §4302.

2. REGIONAL PLAN IN CONTEXT

For this Plan to be effective, the plans of adjacent regions and member towns must be considered and efforts made to ensure that all plans are coordinated and consistent with one another. It is therefore advisable to review the appropriate plans to determine if conflicts exist and resolve any differences cooperatively. As of the adoption of this Plan, all towns in the Region have duly adopted municipal plans approved by the MARC pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4350. Upon request by member towns, the MARC works with local planning commissions to draft or amend municipal plans; if a town wishes to have an MARC-approved plan, this process includes helping the local planning commission to incorporate the required elements and planning goals into the plan. It is equally important to respect the wishes and planning goals of towns without approved plans. The MARC strives to include the perspectives of these towns in its deliberations through local representation on the Board of Commissioners.

Should conflicts between the Regional Plan and plans of adjacent regions or member towns arise, the MARC will attempt to resolve them to the benefit of all affected parties, so that the future visions of all affected parties can be realized. MARC staff can assist municipal planning commissions in updating town plans at their request. In doing so, the update process will strive to: encourage compatibility with neighboring town plans, lead to more effective management of the Region's lands, and attain both the state planning goals and the goals and policies of the Regional Plan.

3. HOW THE REGIONAL PLAN RELATES TO DEVELOPMENT TRENDS & NEEDS

According to recent trends, the Region is not experiencing significant levels of growth. Since 2000, the Region has experienced a population change of -4.7%, with a recent change of -6.2% from 2010 to 2020. In addition to these Region-wide changes, between 2010 and 2020, 80% of member towns experienced a decline in their respective populations, with just Baltimore and West Windsor experiencing population growth.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, housing sales increased dramatically. At this point, it is not clear how many of those people buying houses in the area during the pandemic will be year-round residents or second home owners. A potential scenario is that the region may experience significant future growth as a result of climate migration.

A few communities, especially Ludlow, have experienced significant levels of growth in housing units over the last 20 years; most of that growth represents the production of additional seasonal housing units related to the Okemo Mountain Resort. Affecting regional development trends in recent years have been the closing of Ascutney Mountain Resort and the generally poor economic conditions since 2008. In addition, the Region has experienced a shift from a once vibrant local manufacturing sector, to a significant proportion of workers commuting to work locations outside of the Region. However, the Region is experiencing modest levels of investment in recent years, particularly with respect to energy generation facilities, broadband/communications infrastructure, small-scale businesses in village centers and industrial parks, and incremental residential development. Generally speaking, residential development in the last two decades has occurred in rural locations outside of the village centers and surrounding dense neighborhoods.

As a result of these trends, this Regional Plan attempts to improve a focus of future investment in or around village centers in accordance with State Planning Goals. This Plan acknowledges the needs for water and sewer infrastructure investments and village revitalization initiatives, such as the Downtown Program, in order to accomplish this focused development in villages. This Plan also strives to implement economic development strategies identified in stand-alone documents for the Region.

4. COMPATIBILITY WITH PLANS OF MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES

Each town plan in the Region uses different future land use designations or terminology; however, many of these proposed designations are similar in nature or effect. In so far as most town plans designate areas of concentrated development to be surrounded by rural areas, the Regional Plan is compatible with all of the town plans in the Region. In the winter of 2014, plans for all member municipalities have been approved by the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission.

ANDOVER TOWN PLAN 2018: Andover is a rural community with two historic hamlets. There are currently no village centers, and the entire Town functions as the “rural countryside” per the first State Planning Goal [24 V.S.A. §4302(c)(1)]. The Town Plan generally calls for future growth to maintain this rural character in low-density development patterns, which is compatible with the Regional Plan.

BALTIMORE TOWN PLAN 2016: Baltimore is a small rural town of 312 residents. Similar to Andover, the entire Town functions as the “rural countryside,” and possesses and values a similar rural character whose preservation is reflected thoroughly in the 2016 Town Plan. The 2016 plan calls for preservation of natural resources and the environment through careful implementation of utilities and land use, as well as a focus on encouraging residential use of renewable energy. Additionally, the plan encourages the development of quality housing that meets the needs of

residents of various income levels, as well as encouraging more economic opportunities within the town, such as small home businesses to reduce need for commuting and businesses that promote Baltimore's rural character, such as agricultural and forestry services. This is compatible with the Regional Plan.

CAVENDISH TOWN PLAN 2020: The Cavendish Town Plan was adopted in 2020. Both the Regional Plan and Cavendish Town Plan call for dense, mixed-uses to concentrate in the two villages of Cavendish and Proctorsville, surrounded by a low-density, rural working landscape.

CHESTER TOWN PLAN 2020: The historic village of Chester is largely surrounded by rural areas, which it aims to preserve and maintain through careful implementation of various aspects of the town plan, including promoting environmentally-friendly business practices, as well as discouraging development and land use patterns that will negatively impact the town's natural resources. Additionally, the 2020 Town Plan calls for the development and maintenance of quality housing that is affordable and accessible for diverse groups of people within Chester and their individual needs, as well as encouraging development that allows for public transportation and other modes of transport that are environmentally- friendly and convenient for residents. The Chester Town Plan is compatible with the Regional Plan in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4302(f)(2).

LUDLOW MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019: This Plan serves both the Town and Village of Ludlow. The plan was adopted in 2019, with key themes for improvement, including growth and maintenance of a diverse population of residents of different ages, income levels, etc., with a focus on attracting more year-round residents, particularly families with children. Additionally, the plan calls for improvements to the streetscape of Ludlow, such as filling empty storefronts, bringing in more high-tech businesses, and better traffic control to ensure safety and enjoyment for those walking around town, improving the experience of both those visiting and permanent residents of Ludlow to increase tourism and satisfaction of those living there. Ludlow's plan is compatible with the Regional Plan as both call for intensive development to be concentrated in and around the Village, and in the resort areas and industrial park/areas.

READING TOWN PLAN 2022: The Town of Reading has the newest adopted plan in the Region, with their Town Plan being adopted in February 2022. A large portion of Reading's land area is limited from future development by public ownership, conservation easement or enrollment in the Current Use program. Intensive development is encouraged in the village and hamlet areas to the extent it is appropriate without water or sewer infrastructure. The Plan also identifies the need to evaluate wastewater solutions for Felchville as a way to facilitate village revitalization. Reading's plan also articulates a desire for a rural landscape in the remainder of town. This town plan is compatible with the Regional Plan.

SPRINGFIELD TOWN PLAN 2017: As the largest town in this Region, Springfield maintains a large network of infrastructure and is a center of economic activity for much of the Region. The most recent Springfield Town Plan was adopted in 2017 and amended in 2019. Although it does not expire soon, the Town is currently preparing updates to the Plan. The 2019 Town Plan encourages the revitalization of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. The Plan also calls for working landscape activities, outdoor recreation, and other appropriate low-intensity uses in the more rural countryside. The 2019 Plan more closely align with State planning goals and it is compatible with the Regional Plan.

WEATHERSFIELD TOWN PLAN 2017: Weathersfield adopted their most recent town plan in 2017. Weathersfield calls for intensive development to focus in the villages of Ascutney and Perkinsville, and with smaller concentrations at Downer’s Corners, and generally promotes rural character in the remainder of the community. The Plan includes detailed information on environmental conservation and historic and scenic resource protections. This plan is compatible with the Regional Plan.

WEST WINDSOR TOWN PLAN 2020: The town of West Windsor updated their town plan most recently in 2020. The 2020 Town Plan includes an overarching list of Strategic Goals for 2020 and future years, highlighting a wide range of specific topics most relevant to improving West Windsor and its various components. These goals include aims to revitalize vacant and underused buildings, emphasis on fighting climate change through the creation of a Sustainability Committee, more development of Ascutney Outdoors and other recreational opportunities, further development of aging in place programs and an overall goal to bring more families into West Windsor to increase school attendance in the newly formed Mt. Ascutney School District. The plan calls for concentrating intensive development within the village/primary growth and resort base areas. A residential/secondary growth area is identified to allow moderately-dense housing to locate around the village. A small commercial/light industrial area is located where there is a small, existing cluster of non-residential uses (i.e. veterinary services, humane society and wood pellet facility). The remainder of Town is designated for rural, low-density uses. The 2020 town plan is compatible with the Regional Plan.

WINDSOR TOWN PLAN 2019: Windsor exhibits a very dense village area that is surrounded by rural areas. The community was once a manufacturing center, but now functions largely as a bedroom community for the Upper Valley. The 2019 Town Plan encourages a vibrant downtown surrounded by a rural countryside. It also calls for maintenance of existing infrastructure and systems, such as public safety and resources, as well as improvements that will help to revitalize Windsor’s downtown and attract more business and employment opportunities. The Plan is compatible with the Regional Plan.

5. COMPATIBILITY WITH PLANS OF ADJOINING REGIONS

The three Vermont regional planning commissions that adjoin southern Windsor County are Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee, Windham and Rutland Regional Commissions. A fourth adjoins the Region to the east in New Hampshire: the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. Each has adopted a regional plan. The MARC has reviewed each of them, and taken care to ensure that the goals, policies, and recommendations of the Regional Plan are compatible with those of plans adopted by adjacent commissions. A review of plans for each adjoining region is summarized below:

2018 RUTLAND REGIONAL PLAN: The most current Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) Regional Plan was adopted in 2018. Towns in this region include Benson, Brandon, Castleton, Chittenden, Clarendon, Danby, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Ira, Killington, Middletown Springs, Mendon, Mount Holly, Mount Tabor, Pawlet, Pittsford, Poultney, Proctor, Rutland City, Rutland Town, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, Tinmouth, Wallingford, Wells, West Haven, and West Rutland.

The 2018 plan outlines the vision of the RRPC Region, including three main goals surrounding the 1) economy, 2) quality of life for residents and 3) the environment. Firstly, the Region aims to have a strong and diverse economy, in order to allow for opportunities across various industries, from agriculture to healthcare and create high-value goods within the Region. The second goal outlines quality of life for the Region's residents, aiming to provide residents with high levels of health, wellbeing and community belonging, as well as educational, cultural, employment and recreational opportunities. The third and final goal discusses quality of care for the Region's environment, emphasizing sustainable and responsible use of natural resources and maintenance of historical resources to preserve the Region's past. The RRPC plan is compatible with the adjacent designations in the MARC Regional Plan.

2002 TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL PLAN: The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission last updated their Regional Plan in 2020. Towns in this region include Barnard, Bethel, Bradford, Braintree, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Chelsea, Corinth, Fairlee, Granville, Hancock, Hartford, Hartland, Newbury, Norwich, Pittsfield, Plymouth, Pomfret, Randolph, Rochester, Royalton, Sharon, Stockbridge, Strafford, Thetford, Topsham, Tunbridge, Vershire, West Fairlee, and Woodstock.

Similar to the MARC Regional Plan, the plan for TRORC designates areas for future development to concentrate in village, town or regional centers, which are to be surrounded by a rural countryside primarily consisting of rural and conservation/resource areas. Much of the areas surrounding this boundary between the two regions are rural in existing character and desired future conditions. The 2020 TRORC Regional Plan outlines an extensive list of goals,

encompassing everything from increasing access to important healthcare services, to focusing on land use and development that minimizes negative impacts and instead is beneficial to the Region and its residents, to transportation system developments that have minimal negative environmental impact. Overall, the plan presents a multi-faceted approach to maintaining and improving a wide variety of issues and areas in the TRORC Region, many of these goals directly overlapping with those of the MARC Regional and town plans. The TRORC plan is compatible with the adjacent designations in the MARC Regional Plan.

2015 UPPER VALLEY LAKE SUNAPEE REGIONAL PLAN: The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) is located in New Hampshire. Towns in this region include Acworth, Charlestown, Claremont, Cornish, Croydon, Dorchester, Enfield, Goshen, Grantham, Hanover, Lebanon, Lempster, Lyme, New London, Newbury, Newport, Orange, Orford, Piermont, Plainfield, Springfield, Sunapee, Unity, Washington, and Wilmot.

The Connecticut River forms the boundary between their region and southern Windsor County. The UVLSRPC Regional Plan was last updated in 2015, outlining three major themes composing the vision for the Region: 1) Opportunity, 2) Resiliency, and 3) Resources. The first theme, Opportunity, outlines access to a wide variety of resources (housing, health, education, economic development, etc.) and how those resources impact the region's current and future success. The second theme, Resiliency, discusses more about the Region's preparedness for different events and their ability to bounce back in order to maintain the Region's strengths despite adversity and better benefit the community in the long run. The third and final overarching theme, Resources, encompasses the UVLSRPC's wide variety of natural, economic and cultural resources and explains the importance of preservation and sustainable use of these resources in order to foster and maintain continued success in the Region. The UVLSRPC plan is compatible with the adjacent designations in the MARC Regional Plan.

2014 WINDHAM REGIONAL PLAN: The Windham Regional Commission (WRPC) last updated their regional plan in 2014. Towns in this region include Athens, Brattleboro, Brookline, Dover, Dummerston, Grafton, Guilford, Halifax, Jamaica, Londonderry, Marlboro, Newfane, Putney, Readsboro, Rockingham, Searsburg, Somerset, Stratton, Townshend, Vernon, Wardsboro, Westminster, Weston, Whitingham, Wilmington, Windham, and Winhall.

Windham's plan is for the area that borders southern Windsor County to the south, which is primarily a rural area in both existing conditions and desired future conditions. The 2014 Regional Plan includes an extensive list of regional goals, including general goals also included in the town plans within the MARC Region. Some of these goals include preservation and improvement of natural resources and quality of air, water, etc., as well as provision of safe and effective transportation systems, promotion of thriving economies that provide valuable employment opportunities, encouragement of renewable energy and energy efficiency,

development that is compatible with past land use and settlement patterns and more, offering a multi-faceted approach to sustaining and improving the Region's infrastructure. The WRC plan is compatible with the adjacent designations in the MARC Regional Plan.

Due to the developmental nature of the local, regional, and state agency plans, the MARC provides elements of its plan for review and continually reviews elements of adjoining regions and member communities for consistency. The MARC is working with the various local, private and state entities to ensure planning consistency at all levels. As such, the MARC has provided each town in the Region; the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs; the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; the Southern Windsor/Windham Solid Waste Management District; Conservation Commissions; Chambers of Commerce; regional development corporations; and abutting towns and regional commissions with copies of the draft of the Regional Plan and an invitation to comment.

6. CONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLANNING GOALS

The Regional Plan was reviewed for consistency with the State planning goals under 24 V.S.A. §4303. Under state law, "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" [24 V.S.A. § 4302]. The proposed plan was found to be consistent with the State planning goals which are summarized below.

24 V.S.A. § 4302(b) Engage in a continuing planning process that will further the following 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.

24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) To further the following specific goals:

(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 areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.

(B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter 76A of this title.

(C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and 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.

(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.

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

(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 cyclists.

(A) Highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.

(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.

(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.

(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 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.

(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.

(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.

(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.

(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.

(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 conventional dwellings.

(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.

(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.