

1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1. Introduction to the Regional Plan

A. What Is a Regional Plan and a Regional Planning Commission?

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

In 1967, the Vermont Legislature passed measures enabling municipalities to join together to form regional commissions. Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) is composed of delegates and alternates that are appointed by each municipality's legislative body (town selectboards or city aldermen). ACRPC has 38 municipal delegates, assuming all municipalities fill all available positions. Municipal representation reflects population; so larger municipalities have more representatives. All municipalities have at least one delegate. Alternates represent the municipality when the delegates cannot. Twenty towns and one city presently comprise ACRPC's members. The Commission also makes space available for six citizen interest group representatives.

The Regional Plan

This Regional Plan charts a course for the Region through the year 2021 and supersedes any prior plans. ACRPC will work to implement the Plan's goals, policies and programs.

B. The History of the Regional Plan

The foundational work for this plan was done between 1990-1994, resulting in adoption of the Regional Plan on April 13, 1994. The commission agreed that five years should not lapse before the elements in the plan were revised. Plan sections are edited and revised when needed within the five year planning cycling rather than editing and revising the entire plan at the same time. The Plan re-adoption timeline depicts how ACRPC has updated its plan since its original 1994 plan.

C. How Is the Plan Used, When Does It Apply and Who Uses It?

The Commission drafted the Plan to serve as a useful source of information and data for municipal officials and citizens. Citizens and municipalities may use the Plan to support grant applications, infrastructure or conservation projects. The Plan has regulatory effect in a limited number of areas including: Act 250/Environmental Board Hearings, Solid Waste (facility certification 10 V.S.A. § 6605) and Public Good Determination Hearings (related to siting of electric generation or transmission facilities 30 V.S.A. § 248). Lastly, the Plan contains an Implementation Section that prioritizes recommended actions drawn from each section of the plan to help citizens or municipalities prioritize work in the Region.

Relationship to Municipal Plans

ACRPC intends that municipalities and citizens will use this plan as a guide and data resource in their planning work and will call their delegates or the commission office when they need additional assistance.



D. How Do I Read the Plan?

The plan is generally advisory in nature, purpose and effect. However, as previously noted, it does have a limited regulatory purpose. The plan is intended to strengthen local governments by providing regional information and planning guidance. It recognizes the independent tradition of local government and seeks to encourage and facilitate cooperation among these governments, regional agencies and state government.

Because of the natural association of all aspects of the Regional Plan, the policies in any section are not to be considered in isolation, but rather in conjunction with all sections and chapters in this Regional Plan. Statements designed to guide the growth and development of the region preface each section. The use of these guiding statements is defined here to help the reader understand the context in which they are used.

Goal(s)

Definition: Broad statements of what the region ultimately wants to achieve.

Comment: These are “timeless” overarching concepts, and as stated are not placed in any kind of schedule.

Objective(s)

Definition: Objectives constitute the steps necessary to reach the stated goals, expressed in a specific time frame in which an action should be completed.

Comment: Objective statements must be realistically feasible to achieve given the resources available within a specific time period. Individual goals could have multiple objectives associated with them.

Policy(s)

Definition: Enduring rules or standards that guide the implementation of the goals and objectives.

Comment: Policies contain the principles or standards that guide the choices concerning the implementation measures used to reach the plan's goals.

Recommended Actions

Definition: Specific actions to be taken to reach the stated goals and objectives.

Comment: Recommended actions spell out the individual steps necessary to accomplish goals (The who, what, when, where and how).

Structure of the Sections

Plan sections are organized as follows:

1. Introduction and Summary

This portion includes a brief explanation of the section and a “quick read” summary of the most salient points in the documentation and analysis section.

2. Goals, Policies and Recommendations

This portion lists the goals, policies and recommendations associated with each section of the plan. The plan also includes all of these goals, policies and recommendations at the beginning of the regional plan document so they can be found easily.

3. Documentation, Analysis and Appendixes

The documentation and analysis portion of each plan section provides regional statistics, history and analysis of the section topic. An appendix may accompany the topic discussion.

E. How Does the Plan Get Adopted and Revised?

The plan is adopted by a vote of the commissioners representing municipalities in the Regional Commission (24 VSA § 4348(f)). At least sixty percent of the municipal representatives must vote for adoption. ACRPC then submits the plan to the legislative bodies of the region's municipalities (town selectboards or the city mayor and alderman). The legislative bodies have a 35 day period of opportunity to veto the plan. If the commission receives certification from a majority of the municipalities in the region vetoing the proposed plan it is considered rejected. Unless a plan is rejected, it takes affect after the 35-day waiting period.

Regional Plans expire every five years after they are adopted. Each new Plan adopted by the commission includes updated information.

F. Acknowledgements

Since 1990 numerous committees, delegates, alternates, citizens, technical advisors and staff have spent hours working on the Regional Plan. Without their effort, the plan could not have been produced nor could it continue to be updated; many thanks to all.

Adam Lougee, *Executive Director*

1.2. Vision Statement

In the future, the Addison Region will be a place where...

1. You will find a diverse business economy, and in particular, a flourishing farm and forest economy with both local and out-of-region markets.
2. Residents find employment locally.
3. Natural resources (e.g., timber and agricultural resources) are exported as manufactured products rather than raw materials to the extent feasible (e.g., table versus raw lumber; ice cream versus fluid milk).
4. You will find small village and town clusters interspersed with economically viable open, forested and farmed working lands.
5. Growth is sustainable, monitored, and guided.
6. The economy is healthy, diverse and technologically varied.
7. The economy provides attractive job opportunities for the next generation.
8. Businesses are often locally owned and operated.
9. Educational opportunities keep pace with demands of society and the economy.
10. There continues to be substantial private ownership of resources so that people are independent and self-reliant and free to make their own decisions.
11. Cultural, recreational and civic opportunities are abundant, varied, and inspired.
12. Small-town sense of community is maintained, where people feel a sense of belonging and responsibility.
13. We continue to rank high in the quality of our air, water and soil.
14. Tourism continues to strengthen the local economy and provide employment opportunities.
15. The land base continues to reflect varying degrees of human impact, with portions of the region in wilderness, managed use and settlement.
16. The people have a strong understanding of, and support for, stewardship of land and other natural resources.
17. People continue to be attracted by the aesthetic qualities of both the natural and built environment.

1.3. Regional Plan Overall Goals

- A. Support development patterns that will maintain the historic character of the region; namely urban centers and villages separated by rural countryside.
- B. Encourage a strong and diverse economy that provides economic opportunity, satisfying and rewarding employment, improved income and economic growth.
- C. Assist in providing access to educational and vocational training opportunities that will foster full realization of the abilities of the population in the region.
- D. Facilitate a transportation system that balances the goals of safety, convenience, cost, energy efficiency, environmental protection, economic growth and recreation.
- E. Protect important natural and historic features of the region's landscape.
- F. Protect, and where conditions are substandard, enhance the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources, as they exist independently and in relation to one another.
- G. Encourage conservation and efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.
- H. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.
- I. Strengthen diversified sustainable agricultural and forest industries.
- J. Support the economic vitality of the region's downtowns.
- K. Encourage the efficient use of the region's natural resources and the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration of the aesthetic qualities of the area.
- L. Encourage the availability of safe and affordable housing.
- M. Support an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.