

## Memo

TO: TRORC Board  
FROM: Steven Bauer, Senior Planner  
DATE: February 23, 2022  
RE: Case #22-2: Tunbridge Determination of Energy Compliance

### **Re: Staff Review of the Tunbridge Town Plan adopted December 14, 2021, for Determination of Energy Compliance (Case #22-2)**

On December 14, 2021, the Town of Tunbridge adopted a municipal plan. Town Plans must be regionally approved prior to receiving a determination of energy compliance. That regional approval review has been completed and a staff recommendation on regional approval is separate from this review.

This is a review to determine whether the plan complies with the state standards for energy compliance.

The TRORC Regional Plan that was adopted on July 15, 2020 and was approved for energy compliance by the Vermont Department of Public Service (PSD) on October 30, 2020. With this state approval, municipal plans within the Region can receive a ‘determination of energy compliance’ from TRORC when requested by the town. A determination of energy compliance means local plans receive substantial deference during the state’s permitting of energy projects (Act 248 proceedings).

To receive a regional determination of energy compliance, municipal plans must meet the standards of 24 V.S.A. § 4352(c). These are broken out as thirteen criteria in Part II of the PSD-made Energy Planning Standards Checklist. Staff have received the Plan, and the Energy Planning Standards Checklist as filled out by the town, and attached to this memo. Based on this review, we offer the following comments to the Board and the Town of Tunbridge, and a draft recommendation to the TRORC Board on a determination of energy compliance.

**Conclusion: Tunbridge’s Plan and maps adopted on December 14, 2021 meet the standards for energy compliance and should receive a ‘determination of energy compliance’ from TRORC.**

### **Basis of Determination of Energy Compliance**

#### **II.1. Adoption and Regional Approval**

The Plan was adopted on December 14, 2021. The Plan was reviewed for approval and is scheduled for regional approval on February 23, 2022. The Plan meets this criterion.

Gerald Fredrickson, Chair ~ Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director  
128 King Farm Rd. Woodstock, VT 05091 ~ 802-457-3188 ~ [trorc.org](http://trorc.org)

## **II.2. Attachment**

The Plan (text and maps) seeking determination of energy compliance was submitted along with the checklist.

## **II.3. 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3)**

The Plan must contain components of 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3). Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement in the Energy Chapter.

24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3) reads, “An energy element, which may include an analysis of resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems within the Region across all energy sections, including electric, thermal, and transportation; a statement of policy on the conservation and efficient use of energy and the development of siting of renewable energy resources; a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy; and an identification of potential areas for the development and siting of renewable energy resources and areas that are unsuitable for siting those resources or particular categories or sizes of those resources.”

This criterion is an overarching one and is based on later parts of the checklist. Based on these, we find the Plan meets this criterion.

## **II.4. Resources, Needs, Scarcities, Costs and Problems**

This criterion is essentially the first part of 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3). Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that pages 87 to 91, 96, and Appendix D meet this requirement.

We find that the Plan contains an ***analysis of energy resources*** on pages 86 to 87 and Appendix D.

We find that the Plan contains an ***analysis of energy needs*** on pages 85, 91 to 92, 96, and Appendix D.

We find that the Plan contains an ***analysis of energy scarcities, costs, and problems*** on pages 87 to 91, 96, and Appendix D.

## **II.5 Energy Use and Targets**

Towns may meet the five parts of this criterion by including the energy data sheets developed by TRORC, including the data in the Plan itself, or developing their own data. Tunbridge stated in the checklist that the regional supplied data is included as Appendix D. We find that it is. Therefore, we find the Plan meets the five parts of this criterion.

## **II.6 Policy on Conservation and Efficiency**

Towns must meet four parts of this criterion, a fifth is optional.

- Conservation by individuals/organizations: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 97, under Recommendation 1. We find that it does.
- Efficient buildings: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on pages 96 to 97, under Policy 1 and Recommendations 3 and 6. We find that it does.
- Decreased fossil fuels for heating: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on Page 96, under Goal 3. We find that it does.
- Efficiency in municipal buildings: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on pages 96 to 97, under Policy 1 and Recommendation 3. We find that it does.
- Other: N/A

## **II.7 Transportation Policy**

Towns must meet five parts of this criterion that focuses on reducing overall energy used in transportation and using lower emissions sources. A sixth is optional.

- Increased public transit: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 97, under Recommendation 8. We find that it does.
- Shift away from single occupancy vehicles: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 97, under Policy 4. We find that it does.
- Decreased fossil fuels for transportation: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 96, under Goal 3. We find that it does.
- Facilitate walking/biking: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 44, under Recreation. We find that it does.
- Efficiency of municipal transportation: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 93. We find that it does.
- Other: N/A

## **II.8 Patterns and Density of Land Use**

Density of land use is integrated with total energy used for transportation. Towns must meet two parts of this criterion. A third is optional.

- Reducing sprawl: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 63, under Land Use Policy 1. We find that it does.
- Compact settlement: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on pages 104 to 105, under the Plan's implementation chapter. We find that it does.
- Other: N/A

Gerald Fredrickson, Chair ~ Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director  
128 King Farm Rd. Woodstock, VT 05091 ~ 802-457-3188 ~ [trorc.org](http://trorc.org)

## **II.9 Policy on Siting and Development of Renewable Energy**

State and regional energy policy is largely focused on fuel switching to electricity and in setting targets for energy use and production. To achieve this will require siting of facilities in towns. Towns can use siting maps supplied by TRORC, and can also designate preferred and unsuitable areas in maps or by text. Towns must meet seven parts of this criterion. An eighth is optional.

- Existing renewable generation: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement in Appendix D. We find that it does.
- Renewable generation potential areas: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement in Appendix D. We find that it does.
- Sufficient land for renewable generation: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement in Appendix D. We find that it does.
- Local constraints: Tunbridge stated that the Plan meets this requirement in Appendix D. We find that it does.
- Siting policy: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on pages 94 to 95. We find that it does. We recommend that in future versions of this Plan, Tunbridge include language and maps that identify statewide preferred locations, such as rooftops, parking lots, previously developed sites, brownfields, gravel pits, quarries, and Superfund sites.
- Maximize generation on preferred sites: Tunbridge has stated that the Plan meets this requirement on page 94. Tunbridge has identified two specific preferred sites (Larkin Hill and Welch's Hill) and has mapped areas of prime location. We recommend that Tunbridge's Planning Commission continue to identify specific areas that are appropriate for commercial, community, and residential scale energy production.
- Municipal leadership: Tunbridge has stated in the checklist that the Plan meets this requirement on page 97, under Recommendation 2. We find that it does.
- Other: N/A

## **II.10-13 Maps**

Towns may meet the parts of this criterion by including the energy maps developed by TRORC, or developing their own maps under criteria 11-13. Tunbridge has met this criterion by using regionally supplied maps.