

XIV. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A. Determination of Substantial Regional Impact

State statute requires that the Regional Commission define in this Plan what kinds of development would constitute ‘substantial regional impact’, as this then is a threshold for review under Act 250 and precedence of this Regional Plan as the primary planning document to consider, since such developments by their nature are regional in scope. Larger developments that meet this definition, although perhaps only involving lands in one town, are likely to may affect the character of growth and development or impact infrastructure in adjacent towns. Depending upon the characteristics of the development, the impact on neighboring towns can be so significant that it constitutes a “substantial regional impact”. The ‘substantial regional impact’ threshold does not mean that a project is not desirable; it simply acknowledges that a proposed development may have an effect that will be felt in a wider area.

For example, an industrial park or commercial complex located in one town will may result in increased employment opportunities for the area, thus stimulating the demand for housing in neighboring towns. A resort complex which draws tourists from outside of the region may impact the capacity of existing highways beyond the border of the town where the resort is located. The type, location, scale, and timing of the development are factors which determine the relative impact of growth in an area. Furthermore, the relative capacity of an area to reasonably accommodate new development and the relationship of that development to existing and proposed development plans and policies for an area are determinates of substantial regional impact. Projects of such magnitude may be very beneficial, and this process is simply meant to ensure that they are thoughtfully reviewed with the impacts to the wider region fully considered.

The eight specific criteria that qualify a development as resulting in substantial regional impact are outlined below:

1. A development which modifies existing regional settlement patterns by:
 - a. shifting activity away from an existing “regional growth area” (as defined in the Land Use Chapter of this Plan) to a major new area of regional growth; or
 - b. locating in an area which does not presently contain development of similar type or scale; or
 - c. resulting in activities currently served or planned for by development elsewhere in the region.
2. A development that significantly affects existing capacity of regional public facilities by:
 - a. contributing to a reduction in the peak hour Level of Service (LOS) from D to E or from E to F; or

- b. contributing five percent or more traffic volume to the peak hour Level of Service (LOS) D on a regionally significant local or State highway in or immediately adjacent to regional growth areas or LOS C on regionally significant local or State highways in rural areas; or
 - c. contributing five percent or more to the annual volume or tonnage of solid waste for disposal at a regional disposal facility; or
 - d. necessitating substantive capital improvements, such as widening or signalization of regionally significant (Class II) local or State highways; or
 - e. demanding five percent or more electrical energy during peak hours from facilities serving the immediate area; or
 - f. necessitating substantive capital improvements such as the extension, upgrading or enlargement to regional electrical transmission lines; or
 - g. utilizing five percent or more unallocated student reserve capacity for any given year from any regional school facility serving the project.
3. A development which may place substantial demands on the region's economy, or on a major sector of the economy by:
 - a. increasing the cost or availability of affordable housing in municipalities immediate to the project site; or
 - b. increasing the cost or availability of energy for users in the region immediate to the project site; or
 - c. having an impact on the tax rates of major employment centers or growth centers in the region; or
 - d. generating new employment equal to or greater than 1% of the region's existing employment level; or
 - e. drawing employees from towns outside the town in which the development is proposed.
4. A development which endangers the perpetuation or appreciation of regionally significant natural or cultural features, including, but not limited to: necessary wildlife habitats, fragile areas, public water supply watersheds, aquifer protection areas, historic and scenic resources, and national landmarks.
5. A development which impairs the continued function of significant regional facilities, including, but not limited to, Interstate highway systems, waterways, educational institutions, hospitals, recreational facilities, bridges, dams, airports and trails.

6. A development exceeding the following thresholds:
 - a. residential construction where the total proposed housing units exceeds five percent of the total housing count of the host town; or
 - b. commercial or industrial construction involving a proposed project, whether phased or not, of 20,000 square feet or more of gross floor area; or
 - c. construction of large regional public, private or non-profit facilities or utilities within one mile of a municipal boundary.
7. A development which by reason of size, type, timing, or location affects the existing or potential capacity to provide essential or required public services by one or more municipalities adjacent to the municipality where the proposed development is located due to direct and indirect impacts.
8. A development or series of developments:
 - a. located within a limited geographic area;
 - b. under the control of a single applicant; and
 - c. developed and planned incrementally over a relatively short period of time, the impacts of which may result in environmental, economic or social conditions substantially different than their respective parts.
9. A new or expanded generating or transmission facility, electrical or other, located within one or more municipalities or requiring Public Service Board approval under 30 V.S.A. § 248.

B. Cumulative Development Impacts - Findings

The cumulative impacts of growth from development within a geographic area can result in overall conditions that are more detrimental than the sum of their incremental parts. That is, they have a synergistic effect, rather than an additive effect. ~~Traditional approaches to planning and development review processes are often weak or ineffective in controlling or evaluating cumulative development impacts.~~ The cumulative effects of development tend to be different than other forms of development. This is principally because implementation of large development plans or projects in increments precludes evaluation of the total impact of all development when completed.

For example, a large scale, 200 lot residential subdivision may be presented for review in ten 20-lot increments. The entire subdivision may have a significant impact on ground water supplies in the area. However, as presented, each piece of the total has no identifiable impact. Regardless, as the development segments are completed over time, it becomes increasingly difficult to remedy the problems identified.

Large scale development which occurs in increments may result in an inability of a municipality or region to adequately provide facilities or services when they are needed. Take the example of

a major recreational facility, (i.e. ski area) announcing plans for expansion. The project is reviewed and granted permits. Over the next several years related satellite developments, including vacation homes, and commercial establishments are built. Eventually, the municipality or region finds that its roads and schools or other infrastructure services are strained. Traffic congestion occurs on local or state highways, necessitating substantial capital improvements to relieve the problem. Because of an inability or failure to anticipate the relationships of one project to another as each part of the plan was presented, the burden for the costs to upgrade these facilities or services becomes heavy.

In sum, development which proceeds incrementally has a high potential for ultimately failing to meet the goals of this Plan, the Vermont Municipal Planning and Development Act (24 VSA Chapter 117), and Act 250 (10 VSA Chapter 151). It is not in the interest of the region, therefore, to endorse or promote methods of incremental development review that inadequately evaluate the cumulative impacts of growth within an area.

C. Implementation of Cumulative Development Impact Assessment

The Regional Commission has found that cumulative development can produce environmental, social, and economic impacts that are contrary to purposes of sound and coordinated comprehensive planning and the goals of this Plan. Furthermore, review of developments on an incremental basis may present applicants with problems, such as uncertainty about assessments on later stages of related projects or the imposition of conditions to correct situations only partially caused by the actions of a particular applicant.

The Regional Commission firmly supports and recognizes use of cumulative development assessment techniques or processes for the following purposes:

1. to enable orderly growth within the context of the total development in an area;
2. to enable development contributing to an adverse or unreasonable condition to be assessed in accordance with its respective contribution to the problem; and
3. to remove uncertainty in the outcome of the planning and review process for both the applicant and the affected parties.

To utilize the beneficial effect of cumulative development impact assessment as provided for in the Act 250 review process, the Regional Commission supports the following approaches to the extent authorized by administrative or statutory law:

1. Master Plans and Umbrella Permits - a permit procedure requiring receipt of an application for a complex or extended project in its entirety to enable comprehensive review of its overall impacts. This permit procedure would allow the District Commission or Environmental Court to grant limited authority to the applicant to undertake certain phases of the project in the context of the overall project (Land Use Panel Rule 21); and
2. Uniform Conditions on Permits - a process where a District Environmental Commission establishes special review procedures and conditions for any and all projects proposed

within a limited geographic area to enable monitoring of permit conditions where more than one developer is involved. Such a procedure provides for more equitable development of solutions to problems (i.e. apportionment of costs of infrastructure improvements by applying them to more than one developer).

D. Implementation Mechanisms

Adoption of this Plan will be most valuable if accompanied by a program of implementation. This Section provides guidelines from which both public and private action can be taken to implement the goals and policies of the Plan. Implementation of the Plan consists of the following mechanisms:

1. regional planning;
2. municipal planning;
3. state agency plans and capital programs;
4. coordination with regional entities;
5. state and national legislative policy processes; and
6. public participation and coordination.

Regional Planning

There are many issues that pass beyond the borders of an individual community, which require a broader level of consideration. Recognizing this, state statute enables Regional Planning as a way to acknowledge the need for planning and implementation beyond the municipal level. The Regional Plan is, by law, required to uphold Vermont's state planning goals (V.S.A. Title 24, Chapter 117, §4302). Through this plan, those goals are implemented on a regional level.

While the Regional Plan does not have the same regulatory effect as municipal land use regulations, the policies and recommendations within this Plan do guide decision making at the state, regional and local level. Under Act 250, the Regional Plan has a regulatory effect.

Municipal Planning

The Planning and Development Act enables towns to establish planning programs to meet local needs (24 VSA Chapter 117). If a municipality chooses to conduct a planning program, it must follow the statutory requirements in the Act. Section 4302 of the Act sets forth an intent to establish a planning process that will further specific goals. All thirty member towns in the region have planning programs and planning commissions appointed by the Selectboard. Most towns have plans in existence which address most or all of the goals in the Act. Although the planning goals set forth in the Act may not be relevant locally, the Regional Commission believes that all towns should carefully evaluate each of the goals in the Act prior to determining whether or not the goal is appropriate.

Regulatory and non-regulatory implementation tools can be used by municipalities to achieve planning goals. Regulatory approaches include such actions as adopting zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, impact fees, curb cut permits, health ordinances, noise ordinances and junkyard ordinances. Non-regulatory approaches can include public facility projects, purchase of development rights to conserve land, or adopting a capital budget to direct local funding and plan ahead for public improvements. Some of these tools are described below.

- **Bylaws** Implementation of the goals expressed as part of the municipal plan can be accomplished through a variety of ways, including bylaws adopted by the towns. Vermont law enables several kinds of bylaws, including zoning, site plan, subdivision regulations, unified development, official map, impact fees, phasing, transfer of development rights, and special or freestanding bylaws (24 VSA Subchapter 7). However, prior to having any land use bylaw, the municipality must have a municipal plan. Also, any bylaw in effect must have the purpose of implementing the Plan and must be in accord with the policies of the Plan (24 VSA Chapter 117 §4401). Since municipal plans are updated every five years, municipalities are required to update their bylaws in a timely manner to reflect those changes.
- **Capital Budgeting and Programming** - Capital budgeting and programming is also a means of directing local public investments over a five year period to implement community needs as expressed in the Plan. The capital budget and program establishes an order of priority for major capital expenditures and sets forth a means of financing the investments. By having a capital budget and program, municipalities can:
 - a. encourage growth and development at a pace which is consistent with its ability to provide services; and
 - b. direct change or improvements to public infrastructure and utilities in accordance with the goals and policies set forth in the municipal plan.
- **Impact Fees** -Vermont enacted impact fee legislation to enable towns to require the beneficiaries of new development to pay their proportionate share of the costs for capital projects incidental to the impact of the development (24 VSA Chapter 131). The impact fee would require payment by the developer to the town a sum of money to cover the costs of the capital project attributable to the expenses.
- While a few towns in Vermont have established impact fees, no community in the region has advanced its local planning and has the development activity to enable it to clearly establish the cost of facilities and the relative impact development places on public services. Nevertheless, the Regional Commission believes that the larger towns in the region will soon begin to evaluate their options for impact fees, particularly when the rate of development in these towns begin to exceed average levels.

Private Sector Conservation and Development

While optional, the existence of local planning bylaws enables municipalities to regulate land use within their borders. The land developer or conservationist is primary to the implementation of the Plan. The scale, size, type, and timing of growth on the landscape stands as tangible

evidence of Plan implementation. Non-regulatory implementation tools for land conservation include purchase of development rights and coordinated purchase of properties to preserve land that has a clear value to the community. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board maintains funding for farmland preservation, historic property projects and land conservation efforts.

State Agency Plans and Capital Programs

State Agency planning processes and capital expenditure programs provides an excellent opportunity for the region's member governments to exercise more control over their future and to improve coordination between various State agencies and local government.

As the quality of planning continues to increase at all levels, the ability to promote consistency and coordination will increase concurrently.

Coordination with Regional Entities

The Regional Commission recognizes the function and purpose of regional entities existing in the region. Vermont law enables the creation of inter-municipal cooperative agreements, compacts, districts, and contracts by municipalities (24 VSA Chapter 121). Under the provision of this law, towns cooperatively organize to undertake a particular kind of project or service with other towns of similar or like needs. Given the complexity and economic costs associated with the provision of a required public service by municipalities, such as solid waste disposal and public education, the creation of special purpose units of government within the region is likely to continue.

The Regional Commission recognizes these regional entities and seeks to work cooperatively with such organizations to ensure that the goals and policies of the Plan are fairly addressed and applied in the long-range planning operations of these entities. Regional entities currently formed in the region include union school districts, fire and water districts, solid waste districts, and natural resources conservation districts.

Several state and regional non-profit corporations or organizations exist or operate to provide services or programs within the region. Activities of these public service organizations are generally complementary and supportive of the general work of this Commission and specific Plan policies. The Regional Commission intends to coordinate with these corporations, to the extent practical, to promote the implementation of this Plan.

State Legislative Policy Processes

In order to improve coordination and management of future growth and development in the region, planning and decision-making processes between local and State jurisdictions needs to be enhanced.

The Regional Commission is available and will, to the extent practical, provide the expertise necessary to inform policy makers of possible deficiencies or inadequacies in existing State laws on programs affecting land use and development in this region.

Public Participation and Coordination

In order to implement the Plan through any or all of the above mechanisms, local officials, Agency administrators, policy makers, other governmental organizations, and the private sector, must understand the purpose and effect of this Plan on growth and development in the region. Education of not only those entities which coordinate daily with the Regional Commission but the general public as to the Plan policies and its implementation is essential. Plan implementation without public input is destined to fail. A deliberate effort to involve the public in all aspects of the Plan implementation process is essential. Education of the public on the overall values of multiple town planning for an area will continue to be an on-going function of the Regional Commission as it seeks to implement this Plan with others. Specific means of assessing public input will include:

1. newsletters and press releases;
2. Regional Commission website;
3. social media;
4. public forums;
5. opinion surveys and questionnaires;
6. media announcements and coordination; and
7. Regional Commission education.

Investment in efforts to improve the planning process by involving the public as an integral part of it will build greater consensus for the policies of this Plan and thus improve its implementation.

E. Implementation of this Plan

This Regional Plan contains extensive goals, policies and recommendations for action. While the goals and policies frame a state which the Plan seeks to achieve and how to reach that state, the recommendations for action are intended to actually implement the policies to reach the goals for the Region. To ensure that the Plan is implemented, an Implementation Matrix has been developed.

The Implementation Matrix (see appendix _____) collects a majority of the recommendations for action in this Plan and assigns a party (or parties) responsible for implementation. In addition, a rough timeframe for implementation is established, which is broken out into five groups:

- **ASAP** – The recommendation for action should be implemented as soon as feasibly possible by the responsible party. These recommendations usually reflect an urgent need.
- **Short Term** – The responsible party should implement the recommendation for action within 1-3 years of the adoption of this Plan.
- **Mid-Term** – Mid-term recommendations for action should be implemented within 4-8 years of the adoption of this Plan. Recommendations of this nature often require specific

funding that will need to be acquired before implementation, have multiple steps that must be taken to reach implementation, or require substantial public process.

- **Long-Term** – Recommendations for action that are important to this plan, but may take extensive effort and substantial shifts in policy at multiple levels of Government are viewed as long-term. Implementation of these action items may take longer than the eight-year life of this Plan.
- **Ongoing** – A substantial amount of the recommendations for actions contained in this Plan represent the day-to-day work of TRORC and our municipalities. By designating these action items as ongoing, the Regional Plan is acknowledging that these items are always being acted upon to further the goals of the Plan and the State of Vermont.

Tracking Progress

An implementation plan is of no use if no action is taken to move forward. Because this is the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Plan, it falls to TRORC to monitor progress throughout the Plan's eight year life.

Appendix #: Implementation Matrix		
Task	Responsibility	Timeline
Land Use		
Within five years of adoption, the Regional Commission will, in consultation with member municipalities, neighboring regional commissions, the State of Vermont, public interest groups and property owners, re-evaluate the Land Use section of this Plan. The Regional Commission should give consideration to existing land use settlement patterns, municipal plan goals and policies, agency plans, and projected trends and needs for the region's citizens and businesses. Following completion of the study, the Regional Commission should offer amendments to this section for adoption.	TRORC	Mid-term
The Regional Commission should continue its efforts to provide professional planning services to its member municipalities and advise public officials on the various options available to manage growth and development at the local level.	TRORC	Ongoing
The Regional Commission will work with member towns to determine appropriate location and size for growth centers within the region.	TRORC	Mid-term
Natural Resources		
The Regional Commission should work with the Agency of Natural Resources and with towns to identify and map aquifers and aquifer protection areas.	TRORC/ANR	Mid-term
Towns are encouraged to develop Source Protection Plans for public water supplies or aquifers that have been identified. Such programs may include limiting or prohibiting development and other land uses within Wellhead or Aquifer Protection Areas.	Towns	Mid-term
The Legislature must keep the Petroleum Cleanup Fund at a level sufficient to meet all cleanup needs.	Legislature	Ongoing
The Regional Commission should work with the Agency of Natural Resources, town officials, and others on educational outreach about the proper use of floor drains, local spill response capacity, and proper administration of septic regulations. The Regional Commission will coordinate with the Agency of Natural Resources, other state agencies, and local officials in the assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated (brownfield) sites.	TRORC/ANR	Ongoing

Natural Resources		
Municipalities should review existing and proposed water quality classifications of surface waters within town boundaries, or within basins, to determine if classifications meet the uses and needs. Both the Regional Commission and the Agency of Natural Resources are available to provide support.	Towns	Ongoing
Municipalities are encouraged to play an active role in the basin planning process and to prepare water resources elements in municipal plans that are in compliance with state and federal laws.	Towns	Ongoing
The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's listing of threatened and impaired waters should be targeted for immediate attention.	ANR	ASAP
Towns in the region are encouraged to cooperate on a watershed-wide basis when planning for surface water quality and use.	Towns	ASAP
The Regional Commission, in cooperation with the Agency of Natural Resources - Water Quality Division, Vermont Local Roads Program, and Agency of Transportation, should advise town officials on cost-effective backroad erosion and sediment control.	TRORC/ANR	Ongoing
The Regional Commission should be involved in watershed and basin planning efforts and encourage municipal involvement.	TRORC	Ongoing
Unless there are overriding concerns in the local and Regional Plans, the Agency of Natural Resources shall adopt the highest possible classification and type for water bodies based on their actual condition and use.	TRORC	ASAP
Public and private sectors should refrain from activities that spread invasive plants such as: ill-timed roadside mowing, transporting invasive plants in ditch spoil, and the cleaning of mowing and earthmoving equipment after working in an infested area. Road maintenance personnel should be trained to recognize the invasive plants on the Vermont Noxious Weed Quarantine List and Watchlist.	Towns/Vtrans	ASAP
The Agency of Natural Resources and local groups are encouraged to monitor water quality, and when monitoring indicates a water quality violation, to promptly locate the source of degradation when possible.	ANR	Ongoing
In preparation for writing any basin plans, the Agency of Natural Resources should conduct a comprehensive assessment of water quality in such basins and identify the source of any known water quality problems.	ANR	Ongoing

Natural Resources		
The State of Vermont should identify and map significant wetland areas not currently classified as Class 1 or 2 wetlands and petition the Water Resources Panel of the Natural Resources Board (formerly Water Resources Board) to have such areas reclassified at a higher level.	State	Mid-term
Encourage municipalities in the region to enhance zoning bylaws to protect wetlands that may not be protected under state or federal law.	TRORC	Ongoing
Work with towns to establish a priority list of wetlands for protection and/or acquisition.	TRORC	Ongoing
Encourage more accurate and thorough identification of wetlands areas through the use of best available data and the adoption of local wetlands regulations and updated maps by the municipalities in the region.	TRORC	Ongoing
Encourage property tax relief to provide an incentive for the protection of designated wetlands.	Towns	Ongoing
With the help of specialists from the Department of Fish and Wildlife or the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, towns in the region should work to inventory wildlife species; sensitive areas including wetland, vernal pools, bogs and fens, mature oak trees; and critical habitats for birds, deer, bear, bobcat, heron, and threatened or endangered plant species.	Towns	Mid-term
Towns are encouraged to use mechanisms such as cluster zoning, conservation districts, transferring or purchasing of development rights, or purchasing of land containing critical habitat areas in order to maintain the integrity of large forest blocks and preserve critical habitat.	Towns	Ongoing
Towns should work cooperatively and seek assistance from land trusts to maintain large tracts of undeveloped habitat that cross political boundaries.	Towns	Ongoing
Town plans and zoning regulations should protect significant natural features and sensitive habitat areas by using setbacks and buffers, particularly for wetlands and vernal pools, before threats to these areas develop. Local officials are encouraged to work with staff from regional offices of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and wildlife biologists from VINS to assist in identifying and creating inventories of the critical habitat areas and significant natural communities in their municipalities.	Towns	Ongoing
Towns should attempt to identify critical bear habitat areas within the broader areas identified on Vermont bear habitat maps.	Towns	Mid-term

Natural Resources

Towns should adopt zoning regulations that would discourage development near wetlands and vernal pools, and prevent development within 300 feet in conservation districts, in order to protect their functions and native biological diversity and to prevent additional loss of habitat.	Towns	Mid-term
Protection of wetlands, riparian areas, vernal pools, the most critical deer wintering areas, and natural grasslands should be considered in revisions to local subdivision regulations.	Towns	Ongoing
To protect high-quality forested riparian (river bank, stream bank or lake shore) habitat, towns should prohibit development near these areas and regulate the disturbance of vegetation in riparian zones through general, conditional use, and/or site plan standards.	Towns	ASAP
Air quality should be monitored in the region as part of broader statewide effort so as to determine current and potential threats to air quality. Potential impact areas include village centers or other areas of traffic congestion and high elevations, where pollutants and acidic levels are potentially greater and more harmful to fragile vegetation.	ANR	ASAP
Municipalities and state agencies should educate communities about the impacts of trash burning and develop more effective mechanisms to enforce laws prohibiting backyard burning of trash, including the adoption of civil ordinances.	TRORC	Ongoing
The Regional Commission should be prepared to comment upon projects outside the region which may potentially impact upon air quality within the region.	TRORC	Ongoing

Historic, Cultural, Archeological

The Regional Commission should continue to support efforts to designate National Historic Register Districts and Sites. In so doing, the Regional Commission should coordinate with the State and affected municipalities. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Regional Commission must review all federally funded projects in the region which affect register properties or places to assure that such publicly assisted projects are planned with due consideration to the resource.	TRORC	Ongoing
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Historic, Cultural, Archeological

<p>The Regional Commission, as part of its Transportation Planning Program, should continue its work with the Agency of Transportation, town officials, its Transportation Advisory Committee and other groups and organizations to ensure that design standards and plans for proposed transportation projects are reasonably compatible with historic resource needs and values. (See Transportation chapter.)</p>	TRORC	Ongoing
<p>Towns are encouraged to clearly outline in their plans those resources deemed worthy of protection. Town officials can participate in the Act 250 process, thus influencing decisions affecting historic sites in their community.</p>	Towns	ASAP
<p>To increase public awareness of archeological resources, the Regional Commission encourages archeologists, local and regional groups, towns, and landowners to organize educational programs focused on Vermont. Such a program could be made a part of an overall cultural heritage program through public schools.</p>	TRORC	Mid-term
<p>Local planning commissions, conservation commissions, historical societies, and other interest groups are encouraged to develop an archeological plan for their community as part of the overall master planning program. Such a plan could contribute to an important step in planning for future development in identified areas or areas most likely to contain sites. Assistance and guidance are available from the State Archeologist within the Division for Historic Preservation.</p>	Towns	Ongoing
<p>Public interest in outdoor lighting issues and opportunities is growing. The Regional Commission should assist local and state policymakers in evaluating lighting options. The Regional Commission should consider sponsorship of educational workshops for planning commissions, design professionals, and others to acquaint them to the principles of good lighting design.</p>	TRORC	Mid-term
<p>Towns interested in planning for outdoor lighting in their communities should consider using their Municipal Plans to establish goals and objectives for lighting. Additionally, consideration should be given to incorporating a lighting section into a town's Zoning Ordinance to cover lighting installations in all or parts of the Town.</p>	Towns	Ongoing
<p>Regional Commission staff should continue to work with the Vermont's public utilities and design professionals to evaluate lighting technologies and efficiencies.</p>	TRORC	Ongoing

Housing		
The Regional Commission will continue to assist non-profit housing organizations in the development of affordable housing projects when such efforts are consistent with the policies of the Regional Plan.	TRORC	Ongoing
The Regional Commission will continue to provide professional assistance to member municipalities in the identification of need and implementation of local housing assistance programs.	TRORC	Ongoing
Community leaders within the region will work with state housing agencies, non-profit organizations, and lending institutions to ensure the availability of loan or grant funds for Vermonters to purchase, acquire, or improve their primary homes.	TRORC/Others	Short-term
Towns within the region should actively cooperate with local and regional non-profit housing trusts to develop and preserve new and existing housing, with mechanisms to assure the perpetual affordability of that housing.	TRORC/Others	Ongoing
Community leaders, housing advocates and the Regional Commission must work to retain Vermont’s innovative publicly financed home mortgage lending and housing assistance programs. The region’s low and moderate income families, disabled individuals, and the elderly are enabled to secure affordable housing through these programs.	TRORC	Ongoing
The Regional Commission will assist towns in writing strong housing components in town plans that are based on current data that address proven needs as opposed to only updating highlighted topics from years past to better address highest current needs.	TRORC	Short-term
The Regional Commission will actively help identify land that is suitable for development so that towns may work with developers and existing property owners to promote mutually beneficial partnership opportunities.	TRORC	Mid-term
The Regional Commission will educate communities on density allowances in towns, encourage communities to allow for ADU approval at the municipal staff level, and enhance local awareness of the need for workforce housing in the region through community forums.	TRORC	Short-term
The Regional Commission will facilitate discussions with local land developers, bankers, and community leaders to better understand the structural and institutional impediments to providing new housing throughout the region.	TRORC	Short-term

Utilities and Facilities		
Municipal plans, per Vermont statutes, shall identify and prioritize future capital improvements/repairs and estimate costs and means of financing for maintenance and future capacity.	Towns	ASAP
TRORC shall assist communities with the identification and prioritization of future capital improvements/repairs.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall offer capital budgeting workshops throughout the region.	TRORC	Ongoing
Water efficiency programs and codes should be adopted at the state or local level to reduce demand on municipal water systems.	State/Town	ASAP
TRORC shall seek grant opportunities to map water and wastewater systems throughout the region.	TRORC	Mid-term
When funding is available, municipal plans should inventory water and wastewater systems to identify current and projected capacity gaps.	Towns	Long-term
Municipalities shall conduct periodic auditing of all water and wastewater distribution systems for calculation of infiltration and losses.	Towns	Ongoing
TRORC shall continue to assist member towns, alliances, and the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District in the update and implementation of municipal and regional solid waste plans.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall support and participate in any future discussions regarding the development of regional waste management services.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall further Universal Recycling Law requirements for parallel solid waste collection services through outreach and education with assistance from the Agency of Natural Resources.	TRORC	Short-term
TRORC shall support the creation of municipal composting facilities for organic wastes where appropriate.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC should identify areas of the region where medical or elderly care facilities would be beneficial.	TRORC	Short-term
Support efforts to create regional services and infrastructure that enable residents to age in place.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC should review local zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that they do not have the effect of prohibiting health or elderly care facilities from appropriate areas and to assist with revisions as needed.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC should work with state partners to clarify or revise Act 250 rules to allow permitting flexibility when a proposed development is consistent with this Plan and has a clearly defined public good.	TRORC	Short-term

Utilities and Facilities

TRORC should work with partners to further identify and document gaps or needs within the regional health care system, particularly for vulnerable populations.	TRORC	Mid-term
Continue to participate actively in the Section 248a permitting process.	TRORC	Ongoing
Seek out funding for our communities to implement new or sustain existing Wi-Fi Zones in villages and downtowns.	TRORC	Short-term
To further support outdoor recreation, TRORC will assist communities with the establishment of Conservation Commissions and will support existing Conservation Commissions when possible. According to state law, a conservation commission can assist the planning commission with natural resources issues, inventory the town's natural, historic, and cultural resources; receive gifts of land for conservation purposes, and encourage public understanding of local natural resources. The following towns in the region have active conservation commissions: Barnard, Bethel, Bradford, Braintree, Corinth, Hartford, Hartland, Newbury, Norwich, Pomfret, Randolph, Royalton, Sharon, Strafford, Thetford, Vershire, West Fairlee, and Woodstock.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will help towns develop highway policies that address recreation needs, and encourage the adoption of a walkable communities programs within the Region.	TRORC	Mid-term
TRORC will assist communities with the development of interlocal agreements, union municipal districts and other cooperative agreements whenever possible.	TRORC	Long-term
TRORC will foster a partnerships between public investment planning and implementation activities and the private sector, in a manner which advances the goals and policies set forth in this Plan.	TRORC	Ongoing

Emergency Management

State and Federal government must continue funding and operation of warning systems, including the National Weather Service's Emergency Alert System, NOAA weather radio and USGS river and precipitation gages.	State/Federal	Ongoing
Individuals should have disaster kits ready in their homes and vehicles. They should have a plan as to what to do and where to go during foreseeable emergencies and know their local emergency shelter.	Individuals	Ongoing

Emergency Management		
Towns should pursue the use of capital programs and reserve accounts to properly budget for emergency vehicles and other large capital costs, as well as coordinate and share services to achieve overall efficiencies.	Towns/TRORC	Ongoing
Towns should encourage sprinkling in residential structures to reduce life and property loss from fire.	Towns	Ongoing
TRORC will work with all communities to annually update Local Emergency Operations Plans, ensuring that these plans take into account the varied needs of people with disabilities, pets, and those without access to transportation.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will continue to work with all communities on hazard mitigation planning efforts.	Towns	Ongoing
TRORC will continue to work cooperatively with local emergency response organizations, DEMHS, LEPC #12, social service agencies, long term recovery organizations, community resilience organizations, and others to help improve emergency planning, response, and recovery.	TRORC	Ongoing
The federal and state governments should increase funding for preparedness and mitigation planning and actions at the local level in order to reduce escalating response and recovery costs.	Federal	ASAP
FEMA must modernize flood maps, especially in Orange County, and incorporate newer flood frequency predictions into new maps.	FEMA	ASAP
TRORC will assist towns and ANR in refining river corridor maps, within budgetary constraints.	TRORC	Mid-term
TRORC will work to ensure that new hazard assessment data from the state and federal levels is disseminated to the public and local officials so that capacity is risk-based.	TRORC	Ongoing
Communities should work to ensure that important local facilities that provide emergency services, water, food, gas or act as an emergency shelter are able to function in power outages.	Towns	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns and other organizations to coordinate land use, transportation and energy policies and actions to result in more resilient communities.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will assist towns in response and recovery stages through damage documentation assistance and navigating federal and state grants.	Towns	Ongoing
Energy		
The Regional Planning Commission should contribute to the creation of a statewide inventory of areas that would be suitable for renewable energy generation.	TRORC	Mid-term

Energy		
The Regional Commission should work with state legislators to craft new language in Act 250 that will require Act 250 to consider greenhouse gas emissions as a waste that must be minimized, that private utility services be required to make reasonable efforts to incorporate onsite generation from renewable resources and that the location of development must also be determined to minimize transportation energy use through location adjacent to employment or housing, downtowns or village centers or along transit lines.	TRORC	Mid-term
The Regional Commission should continue to provide support and outreach to municipal energy committees.	TRORC	Ongoing
Local planning commissions, Selectboards, citizens, and members of the energy industry should work cooperatively to identify ways to reduce the cost of energy to consumers, and to promote efficiency in energy use and conservation.	Towns	Ongoing
Local planning commissions should employ, as part of the review and approval process, all practical energy conservation measures to maximize energy efficiency in siting, design, and construction. Standards recommended by the Department of Public Service may serve as a basis for the development of such conservation measures.	Towns	Ongoing
Continuing support should be given to wind and solar energy research and development in the region, as sustainable and emission-free sources of energy.	TRORC/Towns	Ongoing
Flood Resilience		
The Regional Commission should work with towns to strengthen their Flood Hazard Bylaws in order to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments from inundation and erosion.	TRORC	ASAP
TRORC should work with VTrans on advocating for and improving the flood capabilities of state or town-owned transportation infrastructure.	TRORC	ASAP
TRORC should continue working with the Emergency Coordinators and Selectboards from each town to develop mitigation plans, and emergency preparedness and recovery procedures from flooding.	TRORC/Towns	Ongoing
Existing homes and businesses at serious risk of flood damage should be identified and prioritized by towns in concert with the ANR River Management Section and the Regional Commission for mitigation actions such as elevation/relocation or purchase and demolition.	Towns/ANR	ASAP

Flood Resilience

Areas not designated in either FEMA's maps or in VT ANR's maps, but which are flooded during a weather event should be added to local flood regulations.	Towns	Mid-term
Watershed-level planning should be done by towns with assistance from the Regional Commission to evaluate natural and constructed flood storage options upstream of existing areas of concentrated development that are at risk of flooding.	TRORC/Towns	Mid-term
TRORC will work with the Granville, Stockbridge, Hancock, Rochester, and the U.S. Forest Service to address flooding on a watershed basis for the Hancock Branch, Upper White, West Branch and Tweed River.	TRORC	Mid-term
TRORC will work with ANR, towns and landowners to lessen flood risk by restoring natural channel functions through berm or dam removal or intentional lowering of streambanks.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns to understand the impact stormwater runoff has on the region and on specific towns, and then work to address impacts from impervious surfaces through increased retention and infiltration.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC encourages more consistent, accurate and thorough identification of wetlands areas through the use of best available data and the adoption of local wetlands regulations and updated maps by the municipalities in the region.	TRORC	Ongoing

Education

Support local efforts to assess capacity issues in our Region's schools, and, conversely, that explore opportunities to consolidate where appropriate. This is of particular importance with respect to facilities that currently do—or in the future may—serve multiple jurisdictions, due to inherent land use implications of such decisions.	TRORC	Ongoing
In assisting towns with capital plan and budget formulation, ensure that member towns anticipate and plan for improvements to public school facilities.	TRORC	Ongoing
Coordinate with the supervisory unions and the Agency of Education to create a regional approach to planning that considers the need for new school facilities and programs.	TRORC, State, SU's	Ongoing
Work with local communities to determine which locations are most desirable for and best suited to the growth of new or relocated educational facilities throughout the region.	TRORC/Towns	Ongoing
Encourage the development of school-business partnerships that promote valuable and sustainable employment opportunities in the Region through vocational and workforce training experiential learning.	TRORC, Businesses, SU's	Ongoing

Education

Facilitate coordination between town and school authorities to create and maintain safe pedestrian access and transit opportunities to educational facilities, in line with Safe Routes to School efforts.	TRORC, Towns, SU's	Ongoing
Ensure towns assess and incorporate the needs of disabled children into educational facility and budgetary planning efforts to ensure the provision of free and appropriate education for all children.	TRORC, Towns	Ongoing

Transportation

TRORC will assist towns to develop capital improvement plans that addresses paved and gravel road maintenance costs.	TRORC	Ongoing
Towns and the State should maintain roads and bridges in good condition and must design new transportation facilities to be flood resilient.	Towns/State	Ongoing
Towns should consider options to reduce winter maintenance costs, including, but not limited to, downgrading winter road maintenance policies, combined with a public information campaign to alter traveler expectation of snow removal.	Towns	Ongoing
Towns should identify dead end Class 3 town roads that serve few structures and consider reclassification to Class 4 to reduce town expenses.	Towns	Ongoing
Towns should identify any local bridges that are redundant and can be abandoned, removed or need not to be rebuilt if destroyed.	Towns	Short-term
TRORC will work with others to better estimate the full cost of the transportation system.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work with housing providers and developers to ensure that new multi-family housing, assisted living facilities and health and human service facilities be located in close proximity to services in village and urban centers or along public transportation fixed routes.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work with member towns during plan and bylaw revisions to further connect housing needs to transportation system efficiency, reducing the need to travel solely by car and increasing access to goods and services.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will advocate for increased funding for more robust transit services that encourage increased ridership.	TRORC/transit	Ongoing
TRORC will support funding increases to meet demand in Elderly and Disabled transportation services.	TRORC/transit	Ongoing
TRORC will advocate for increased capital investments for commuter and human service public transportation.	TRORC/transit	Ongoing

Transportation

TRORC will continue coordination with agencies in providing transportation services for elders and persons with disabilities.	TRORC/transit	Ongoing
TRORC will support the start of the Upper Valley US Route 4 commuter bus service.	TRORC	Ongoing
State investments in park and ride lot improvements shall be as identified in the East Central Vermont Park and Ride Needs Analysis (Appendix X). Specifically, the two highest priority Park and Ride sites in the region that currently do not exist but are in high demand include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royalton I-89 Exit 3 off VT107 (CMG PARK(27)S) • Hartford I-89/I-91 Interchange (CMG PARK(12)SC) 	TRORC/State	Ongoing
Towns should apply to the Municipal Park and Ride Program and expand the regional park and ride network.	Towns	Ongoing
TRORC and towns should continue to support public transportation and ride-share programs to reduce the region's dependency on single-occupancy vehicle trips.	TRORC/Towns	Ongoing
Towns should consider shared parking lots with other properties that may become formal or informal park and ride lots.	Towns	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns and Vermont Agency of Transportation to institutionalize pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in all of its planning, engineering, and construction related activities – implement “Complete Streets”. In addition to the existing local land use regulations, develop free-standing Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans for interested towns.	TRORC/State	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns to support land use regulations that increase the density and mixed use development pattern that improves walking and bicycling conditions by shortening trips between where people live, work, and recreate.	TRORC/Towns	Ongoing
TRORC will cooperate with private and public initiatives that seek to market walking and bicycling in towns and the region and participate in state and local initiatives that promote bicycling and walking.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will use of objective measures to gauge the potential for walking and bicycling could be one element to assess priorities for investments in these modes. These measures could include population density, employment density, and block sizes or intersection density.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will continue to support the Safe Routes to School program and encourage more schools to participate in the program – especially those schools within densely settled villages or town centers.	TRORC	Ongoing

Transportation

TRORC will advocate that commercial developments invest in transportation infrastructure and services to increase bicycling, walking or transit, or provide necessary rights-of-way to allow later investment in those facilities.	TRORC	Mid-term
TRORC should provide education and training to large employers the benefits of providing showers and bike lockers for employees that commute by biking.	TRORC	Short-term
Towns, the state, telecommunications providers, and TRORC should map existing cellular and broadband services in the region, identify gaps, and work to provide coverage in those gap areas.	TRORC/State/ Town	Mid-term
Private businesses should support telecommuting options where practical for employees.	Private Sector	Ongoing
TRORC should provide education to employers on benefits of allowing some telecommuting for employees.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will support the implementation of the Northern New England Rail Initiative final recommendations for a Boston to Montreal high speed rail service.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will support improved rail service along I-91 corridor.	TRORC	Ongoing
Continue to conduct road safety audit projects through Vermont Agency of Transportation High Risk Rural Roads program. Focus safety audits on roads that have development proposals and/or are expected to support increased development. If the state declares a road or intersection a high accident location, then conduct a road safety audit and advocate for those improvements to be implemented.	TRORC/State/ Town	Ongoing
Continue speed studies as requested by Towns.	TRORC	Ongoing
Work with towns to develop road standards that promote traffic calming in private development.	TRORC	Ongoing
Continue collaborating with Vermont Agency of Transportation on paving projects and district leveling prioritization.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will continue to work with towns to conduct road safety audit projects through Vermont Agency of Transportation.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns to promote traffic calming.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns and Vermont Agency of Transportation to identify poor pavement conditions for improvement.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will offer town support as needed as liaisons for Vermont Agency of Transportation projects.	TRORC	Ongoing

<h1>Transportation</h1>		
TRORC shall assist interested communities with studies and planning designed to improve pedestrian and multi-modal networks in Regional Growth Areas.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall support efforts to develop municipal parking facilities in Regional Growth Areas.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall support efforts to promote complete streets projects in village and downtown centers that improve access and walkability and support connectivity with transit opportunities.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall support efforts to develop and improve park and ride lots in village areas.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC shall support development projects in hamlet areas that encourage traditional hamlet design and promote access and walkability.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will encourage communities to develop land use regulations that promote reduced density in rural areas.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will seek out new ways its municipalities can approach issues of density in rural areas.	TRORC	Mid-term
TRORC shall encourage agricultural and silvicultural businesses to use best management practices that minimize damage to roadways, land, and waterways.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will continue to review and participate in Act 250 permit proceedings.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will continue to work with Towns to have town plans consistent with regional and state policy.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will update the Transportation Land Use (Interchange Area) section of this chapter to coincide with any future changes in the Land Use chapter update.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work with towns and Vermont Agency of Transportation to achieve context sensitive solutions that enhances historic, scenic, agricultural properties of roadway consistent with public safety through transparent public process and project development.	TRORC/State/ Town	Ongoing
Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Transportation Advisory Committee will work to reduce wildlife crossing collisions through improved signage and wildlife passage facilities.	TRORC/State	Ongoing
TRORC will work with local highway departments as requested to minimize stormwater runoff and road/river conflicts.	TRORC	Ongoing

Transportation

Towns should consider parking requirements and minimize the use of impervious surfaces for parking through shared parking, allow reduced parking requirements when supported by data or encourage phased parking development when demand arises.	Towns	Ongoing
Vermont Agency of Transportation, FEMA, ANR, the Vermont Department of Public Safety and others involved in flood recovery should incorporate wildlife and aquatic passage needs into rebuilt bridges and culverts when feasible.	State/Federal	ASAP
The Natural Resources Board must revise Act 250 rules regarding Master Plans to make Master Plans a mandatory requirement for large-scale, multi-phase developments that have the potential for substantial regional impacts.	State	ASAP

Economic Development

TRORC will provide grant management, Act 250 support, and local regulatory reform assistance to further the development of job growth and workforce housing in areas close to employment and service opportunities.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will participate in discussions to improve the regulatory system at the state level and improve permitting coordination between local and state levels of government.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will assist towns with village and downtown designation in order to provide incentives in these areas.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will work in concert with towns and development organizations to provide technical support (such as support with permitting, funding, brownfield assistance, etc.) to businesses wishing to stay in or relocate to core areas.	TRORC, Non-profits	Ongoing
TRORC will work with the Vermont state agencies, regional and local development groups, trade associations, Chambers of Commerce, planning commissions and other groups to integrate land use planning with economic planning and development programs based on our Region's assets.	TRORC, State, Towns, Non-profits	ASAP
TRORC will review and recommend revisions to zoning bylaws and other land-use guidelines to ensure they actively support vitality in town centers, including infill, adaptive reuse of structures, increased height limits, and density bonuses.	TRORC	Short-term
TRORC will offer assistance to towns in asset management, capital budgeting, and shared services/purchasing in order to lower costs and stabilize taxes.	TRORC	Ongoing
TRORC will assist towns to apply for and manage grants and loans for infrastructure repairs and/or upgrades that bolster the livability of core areas.	TRORC	Ongoing

Economic Development

Public agencies, schools, and private businesses must expand workforce training and education that aligns with the strategic needs of our Region's current and future employers; and expand linkages that allow the Region's youth to learn about local career opportunities and gain exposure to the workplace.	State, Towns, School Boards, Businesses	Short-term
TRORC and child care providers must work with member towns to address identified needs for child care facilities or services, including identifying publicly-owned buildings throughout the Region suitable to serve as child care facilities.	TRORC, Towns, Businesses	Short-term
Towns, the state, telecommunications providers, and TRORC should map existing cellular and broadband services in the Region, identify gaps, and work to provide coverage in those gap areas, ensuring that all areas have particularly good service that supports both current and future businesses and residents.	TRORC, State, Towns, Utilities	Short-term
State, regional, and local economic development agencies should develop stronger financing/funding mechanisms for business expansion and entrepreneurship.	State, Non-profits	Mid-term
The Small Business Development Center, Chambers of Commerce and development corporations should develop a coordinated network of resources for businesses—including business coaching, financing, permitting assistance, and peer-to-peer networking—to equip current and would-be business owners with the skills needed to brand, promote, and effectively operate businesses.	Non-profits, Businesses	Mid-term
TRORC will work with towns and development organizations in the Region to identify and inventory vacant and under-utilized sites/buildings most suitable for near-term commercial and residential development in existing downtowns and villages where water, sewer, power, internet, and roadways have capacity.	TRORC, Towns, Non-profits	Short-term
TRORC will support efforts to recognize businesses for excellence in creating better downtowns and villages, exemplary buildings, energy efficiency, and other activities that further regional goals.	TRORC, Businesses	Mid-term
TRORC should support and assist efforts that focus on how best to utilize our rivers as economic drivers while improving water quality and protecting the rivers' natural beauty, native animal and plant species, health, and unique character.	TRORC	Ongoing

Economic Development		
<p>TRORC should work with local producers, development corporations, educational programs, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and other organizations to identify and create needed processing, storage, and distribution capacity for locally-made food and forestry products.</p>	<p>TRORC, State, Non-profits, Businesses</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>TRORC should work with land trusts and local conservation commissions to inventory farm and forest lands to understand where parcels are available that could provide opportunities for new farm and forest businesses, and assist towns in crafting regulations to reduce fragmentation and leave land available for farming, forestry, and other land-based businesses.</p>	<p>TRORC, Non-profits</p>	<p>Short-term</p>