

Memo

To: TRORC Board

Date: March 15, 2020

From: Kevin Geiger, AICP, Senior Planner

Re: Staff Review of Hartford Town Plan adopted June 4, 2019 for Determination of Energy Compliance

Hartford adopted a municipal plan for the town, dated June 4, 2019. Town plans must be regionally approved prior to receiving a determination of energy compliance. That regional approval review has been done and a staff recommendation on regional approval is separate from this review.

This review is for compliance with the state standards for energy compliance. The TRORC Regional Plan that was adopted on July 26, 2017 was approved for energy compliance by the Vermont Department of Public Service (PSD) on September 27, 2017. With this state approval, municipal plans within the region now get the 'determination of energy compliance' from TRORC, when so requested by the town. A determination of energy compliance means local plans have more weight in state permitting of energy projects (248 proceedings).

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

Conclusion: Hartford's plan and maps adopted on June 4, 2019 meet the standards for 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 June 4, 2019. The plan was reviewed for approval and received approval in August 2019. The plan meets this criterion.

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 the components of 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3). Hartford has stated in the checklist that pages 42-47, 229-231, 235, 241, 244, and 248 meet this requirement.

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 sectors, including electric, thermal, and transportation; a statement of policy on the conservation and efficient use of energy and the development and siting of renewable energy resources; a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely

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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). Hartford has stated in the checklist that pages 229, 231, 236, 243 and Appendix B meet this requirement.

We find that the plan contains an analysis of energy resources on page 244 and in Appendix B.

We find that the plan contains an analysis of energy needs on pages 231, 234, 236 and in Appendix B.

We find that the plan contains an analysis of energy scarcities, costs, and problems on pages 229-245.

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. Hartford has stated in the checklist the regionally supplied data is included as Appendix B. 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: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on pages 234 and 238. We find that the plan meets this part on pages 234, 237 and 241.
- Efficient buildings: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on pages 238 and 243. We find that the plan meets this part there.
- Decreased fossil fuels for heating: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets on page 240. We find that the plan meets this part on pages 239-240.
- Efficiency in municipal buildings: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on pages 239-240. We find that the plan meets this part there.
- Other: N/A

II.7 Transportation policy

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

- Increased transit: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on page 233, 235, and 236. We find that the plan meets this part on pages 192, 195, 234, and 235.
- Shift away from single occupancy vehicles: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on pages 234 and 235. We find that the plan meets this part on those pages.
- Decreased fossil fuels for transportation: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on page

236. We find that the plan meets this part on those pages.

- Facilitate walking/biking: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on page 235. We find that the plan meets this part there and also on pages 192-3 in the Transportation chapter.
- Efficiency of municipal transportation: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on pages 235-6. We find that the plan meets this part on those pages.
- 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: Hartford has stated in the checklist it meets this on page 232. We find that the plan meets this on that page.
- Compact settlement: Yes, see above and pages 42-47.
- Other: Not applicable.

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: Hartford meets this part in Appendix B.
- Renewable generation potential areas: Hartford meets this part in Appendix B.
- Sufficient land for renewable generation: Hartford meets this part in Appendix B.
- Local constraints: Hartford meets this part in Appendix B, which shows there is over 20 times the land needed to meet the energy goals, and on pages 248-9. We find that the plan meets this part.
- Siting policy: Hartford has detailed standards on pages 248-9, but like most towns has not taken those through a mapping exercise beyond the state-supplied constraint maps, as that would be very time-consuming. They also have not created custom maps of preferred areas. We find that the plan meets this part, but we encourage the town to actually map locally preferred and unsuitable sites in future updates.
- Maximize generation on preferred sites: Hartford has not created any new preferred sites beyond those in statute. As in many towns, we suggest that future planning efforts identify community supported preferred sites through mapping or by standards. On page 246 they do promote using municipal land for solar sites. We find that the plan meets this part.
- Municipal leadership: Hartford does note on page 246 that they have exceeded the state's per customer cap on net metering with over 900 kw of net metered solar power. We find that the plan meets this part.
- Other: Not applicable.

II.10 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. Hartford has met this criterion by using regionally supplied maps.

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