

**RE: TOWN OF PITTSFIELD, VERMONT
PLAN REVIEW
CASE # FY 23-1**

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A., Section 4350, the Town of Pittsfield, Vermont requested TRORC to review and approve the 2023 Town Plan adopted on May 4, 2023. The Plan encompasses all land in the Town of Pittsfield and is referred to hereinafter as the Plan.

Section 4350 provides that prior to approving a Plan, the Regional Commission finds that the Plan meets four tests. These tests are that the Plan is:

- A. Consistent (as defined in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302(f)(1)) with the planning goals in Section 4302 of Chapter 117;
- B. Compatible (as defined in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302(f)(2)) with the Regional Plan;
- C. Compatible (as defined in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302(f)(2)) with the approved plans of other municipalities within the Region; and
- D. Inclusive of all elements required of a plan as set forth in 24 V.S.A., Section 4382.

This review is based upon the Town Plan as adopted.

FINDINGS

A. Is the Plan consistent with the planning goals?

General Goals

1. Is a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework established to guide decisions?

Yes, pg. 118.

2. Is citizen participation encouraged at all levels of the planning process?

Yes, pg. 118:

“Planning for change is a continual process for Pittsfield and will require the involvement of the Planning Commission and the public to ensure that the goals and policies of the Plan are integrated into the decisions affecting land use, taxation, and public investments in Pittsfield.

The quality of a town plan is reflected in the amount of public involvement in its creation. Community meetings, held by the Planning Commission, that discuss important issues relevant to the Town plan will ensure that the document truly reflects the vision of the

residents of Pittsfield.”

3. Is consideration being given to the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development to the municipality, region, and state?

Yes, pg. 106, goal 2:

Provide a location for thoughtful residential and commercial development at a size and scale consistent with the existing village center that does not negatively impact Pittsfield’s ability to provide services or the rural and natural character of the area.

4. Is the municipality working creatively together with other municipalities to develop and implement plans?

Yes, Ch. 13: Relationship to Other Plans.

Specific Goals

A plan for a municipality may be consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302, but must be found to be consistent for regional approval.

1. Is development planned to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside?

Yes, pg. 106, goal 1 & 2; policy 1, 3, and 5.

a. Is intensive residential development being encouraged primarily in areas that are identified as community centers, and is strip development along highways being discouraged?

Yes, pg. 106-108 goals and policies.

b. Is economic growth being encouraged in locally designated and any state-designated growth areas, and/or employed to revitalize existing urban or village centers?

Yes, pg. 106 goals and policies.

c. Do plans for public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area?

Yes, pg. 106-108 goals and policies.

d. Does the plan support development be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles (as defined in 24 V.S.A. Section 2791(13))?

Yes, Ch. 12 goals and policies.

2. Does the Plan support providing for a strong and diverse economy with satisfying and rewarding job opportunities that maintain high environmental standards; and

expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes?

Yes, pg. 84, goals 1 & 3.

3. Does the Plan support broadened access to education and vocational training opportunities sufficient to realize the full potential of residents?

Yes, pg. 27, section C.

4. Does the Plan support the provision of a safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation system that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.

a. Does the Plan provide that highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation be mutually supportive, balanced and integrated?

Yes, pg. 57, Goals 1 & 3.

5. Does the Plan identify and support the protection and preservation of important natural and historic features of the community's landscape, including: significant natural and fragile areas; outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands and wetlands; significant scenic roads, waterways, and views; and important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites and archaeologically sensitive areas?

Yes, Ch. 11.

Pg. 88: White River Corridor Management Plan.

Map #3

Pg. 99. Section N.

Pg. 100. Section P.

6. Does the Plan seek to maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources?

a. Are air, water, wildlife, mineral and land resources being planned for development and use under the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A section 6086(a) (Act 250)?

Yes, Ch. 11.

b. Is the maintenance and improvement of water quality supported in accordance with the policies and actions set forth in the basin plans?

Yes, pg. 93: goals, policies, and recommendations.

c. Are forestlands proposed to be managed to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors?

Yes, pg. 112: goals, policies, and procedures in the Wildlife Area.

FLU Map

7. **Does the Plan support the development of renewable energy resources, efficient use of energy, and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases?**
- a. **Does the plan list any general strategies for achieving these goals, such as: 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?**
 Yes. Throughout Chapter 9.
 Pg. 70, Preferred/Prohibited/Significant Areas.
- b. **Does the plan list any specific strategies and recommendations for achieving these goals, such as those identified in the State energy plan?**
 Yes, pg. 76, Goals 1, 2, 4-7. Policies 1, 3, 5, 8, & 9. Recommendations.
8. **Does the Plan seek to maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors?**
- a. **Is growth being planned so as not to significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities?**
 Yes, pg. 105, goal 2. Pg. 106, goal 2.
- b. **Has public access to non-commercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, been identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate?**
 Yes, pg. 34, Section C. Pg. 51, policy 3. Pg. 58, policy 8. Pg. 84, policy 1. Pg. 94, Recommendation 2. Pg. 113, goal 5.
9. **Does the Plan encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries?**
- a. **Does the Plan encourage strategies to protect long-term viability of agriculture and forestlands, including maintaining low overall density?**
 Yes, FLU Map and policies. Pg. 110, goal 1, policy 2.
- b. **Has the manufacture and marketing of value added agricultural and forest products been encouraged?**
 Yes, pg. 110, goal 1, policy 2.
- c. **Is the use of locally grown food products encouraged?**
 Yes, pg. 86.

- d. **Are sound forest and agricultural management practices encouraged?**
Yes, pg. 91 policy 6. Pg. 102, policy 3.
- e. **Are public investments planned to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land?**
Yes. FLU Map and policies.
10. **Does the Plan provide for the wise and efficient use of natural resources and facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetics of the area?**
Yes. Pg. 99, policies 1 & 2.
11. **Does the Plan ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing?**
- a. **Is housing encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income?**
Yes. Chapter 3. Pg. 23, goal 5; policy 2, 3, 5, & 7; recommendation 2
- b. **Does the plan provide for new and rehabilitated housing to be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities?**
Yes, pg. 23, goal 1 & 2; policy 1, 4; recommendation 1.
- c. **Does the Plan support sites for multi-family and manufactured housing that are readily available in similar locations to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings?**
Yes, pg. 23, policy 5.
- d. **Does the plan allow for accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences allowing close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives or disabled or elderly persons?**
Yes, pg. 23, goal 2, policy 3 & 4.
12. **Does the Plan for the provision and financing of an efficient system of public facilities and services meet future needs?**
- a. **Does the Plan include services as fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal in its planning for facilities and services?**
Yes. Ch. 5 goals, policies, and recommendations.
- b. **Does the planned rate of growth exceed the ability of the town and the area to provide facilities and services?**

No. FLU Map and Ch. 12 goals, policies, and recommendations.

13. Does the plan work to ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and child care work force development?

Yes, pg. 26, section B. Pg. 28, goal 4, policy 4.

14. Does the Plan encourage flood resilient communities?

a. Is new development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas avoided? If new development is to be built in such areas, are polices in place to not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion?

Yes, pg. 51-52, policy 1-4.

b. Is the protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion encouraged?

Yes, pg. 51-52, goal 3; policy 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11; recommendation 7.

c. Are flood emergency preparedness and response planning encouraged?

Yes, pg. 52, recommendations 1-3, 6, 8.

B. Is the Municipal Plan Compatible with the Regional Plan?

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Plan was adopted on July 15, 2020, and it will remain in effect until July 15, 2028.

The Pittsfield Town Plan is found to be compatible with the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Plan. As used in this review, the term "compatible with" has been defined (in Section 4302) as meaning: that the Plan in question, as implemented, will not significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the other plan (emphasis added). If a Plan, as implemented, will significantly reduce the desired effect of the other Plan (in this case, the Regional Plan), the Plan may be considered compatible if it includes the following:

- (a) a statement that identifies the ways that it will significantly reduce the desired effect of the other Plan;
- (b) an explanation of why any incompatible portion of the Plan in question is essential to the desired effect of the Plan as a whole;
- (c) an explanation of why, with respect to any incompatible portion of the Plan in question, there is no reasonable alternative way to achieve the desired effect of the Plan; and
- (d) an explanation of how any incompatible portion of the Plan in question has been structured to mitigate its detrimental effects on the implementation of the other Plan.

C. Is the Plan Compatible with Approved Plans of other Municipalities in the Region?

At the time of review of this Pittsfield Town Plan, the following municipalities have Plans approved by the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission that are in effect:

Barnard, Bethel, Bradford, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Chelsea, Fairlee, Granville, Hancock, Hartford, Hartland, Newbury, Pittsfield, Pomfret, Randolph, Rochester, Royalton, Sharon, Stockbridge, West Fairlee, and Woodstock.

These approval decisions and Plans have been reviewed in the context of the above question. Based on this, we find the Pittsfield Town Plan to be compatible with these Plans.

D. Municipal Plan Elements - Are They Included?

A plan for a municipality shall include the following required elements. These elements or components are, in summary:

- (a) a statement of overall objectives and policies;
Yes, pg. 12, section E
- (b) a current and future land use plan and maps;
Yes, Ch. 12, CLU & FLU maps
- (c) a current and future transportation plan and maps;
Yes, Ch. 8, Transportation map.
- (d) a current and future utility and facility plan and maps;
Yes, Ch. 5, UF&E map.
- (e) a statement of policies for "special resources";
Yes, pg. 99 section N
- (f) a current and future education plan and maps;
Yes, ch. 4, UF&E map
- (g) an implementation program;
Yes, Ch. 14.
- (h) a statement on relationship of plan to trends and plans for adjacent towns and the region;
Yes, Ch. 13
- (i) an energy plan;
Yes, Ch. 9
- (j) a housing plan;
Yes, Ch. 3
- (k) an economic development plan;
Yes, Ch. 10
- (l) a flood resiliency plan.
Yes, Ch. 7

1. Does the Plan include a statement of objectives, policies and programs of the municipality, to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment.

Yes. Ch. 12: Land Use.

- 2. Does the Plan include a land use plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective land use, that:**
- A. indicates those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agriculture, (using 6 VSA Section 8), residence, commerce, industry, public and semi-public uses and open spaces; areas reserved for flood plain; and areas identified by the State, the regional planning commission, or the town that require special consideration for aquifer protections, for wetland protection, for the maintenance of forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors, or for other conservation purposes?**
Yes, FLU map, “Wildlife Area”.
 - B. sets forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity and character of such land uses and the appropriate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and services?**
Yes, FLU map “Village Center Area” and “Route 100 Corridor Area,” Ch. 12: Land Use, Ch. 5: Utilities and Facilities, Ch. 3: Housing.
 - C. identifies those areas, if any, proposed for designation under chapter 76A of Title 24, together with, for each area proposed for designation, an explanation of how the designation would further the plan’s goals and the goals of 24 V.S. A. section 4302, and how the areas sought meets the requirements?**
Yes, Ch. 12, FLU map. Pg. 105 & 106, section E & F
Pg. 82-83, section G.
 - D. and indicates those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests?**
Yes, Ch. 12, FLU map. Pg. 112.
- 3. Does the Plan include a transportation plan, consisting of a map and a statement of present and prospective transportation and circulation facilities showing existing and proposed highways and streets by type and character of improvement, and where pertinent, parking facilities, transit routes, terminals, bicycle paths and trails, scenic roads, airports, railroads and port facilities, and other similar facilities or uses, with indications of priority of need.**
Yes, Ch. 8: Transportation. Pg. 53, table 7. Pg 55 & 56, section G.
- 4. Does the Plan include a utility and facility plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective community facilities and public utilities showing existing and proposed educational, recreational and other public sites, buildings and facilities, including hospitals, libraries, power generating plants and transmission lines, water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage and other similar facilities and activities, and recommendations to meet future needs for community facilities and services, with indications of priority of need, costs and methods of financing.**

Yes, Ch. 5: Utilities and Facilities. U&F map. Costs/priority of need: pg. 30-32, "Town of Pittsfield 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan".

5. **Does the Plan include a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources.**
Yes, pg. 99 Section N.
6. **Does the Plan include an educational facilities plan consisting of a map and a statement of present and projected uses and the local public school system.**
Yes. Ch. 4, UF&E map.
7. **Does the Plan include a recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the development plan?**
Yes, Ch. 14, Appendix A: Implementation Matrix.
8. **Does the Plan include a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region developed under Title 24?**
Yes, Ch. 13, pg.116.
9. **Does the Plan include an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, a statement of policy on the conservation of energy (including programs, such as thermal integrity standards for buildings, to implement that policy), a statement of policy on the development of renewable energy resources, and a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy.**
Yes, pg. 75, section K.
10. **Does the Plan include a housing element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to Section 4348a (a)(9) of Title 24, including the permitting of accessory dwelling units?**
Yes, pg. 23-24. Goal 5; policy 3, 5-7; recommendation 2, 4-6
11. **Does the Plan include an economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth.**
Yes, Ch. 10
Pg. 83, section H.
Pg. 84-85, goal 1-4; policy 2-12; recommendation 1-5
12. **Does the Plan include a flood resilience plan that:**

identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas based on river corridor maps provided by VT ANR or other maps recommended by the Secretary of Natural Resources, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river

corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property?

Yes. FLU map, "Flood Hazard Overlay Area".

and recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments?

Yes, pg. 51-52, goal 3; policy 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11; recommendation 7.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the above findings, it is the conclusion of TRORC that the Pittsfield Town Plan be approved. This approval shall remain in effect until the date that the Plan expires, or until it is amended or readopted and reviewed pursuant to these provisions, whichever occurs first.

DISCUSSION

Prior to issuing a Permit under Act 250, the District Environmental Commission or Environmental Court must find that the project is in conformance with the duly adopted Town Plan, where this Plan includes clear, unambiguous mandatory language regarding development that can be reviewed by these bodies as part of an Act 250 project application.

Sections that need to be addressed for the next plan:

Add priority of need to transportation capital improvement projects.

Dated this 24th day of May, 2003 at Woodstock, Vermont.

By: Peter G. Gregory
Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director