

## Regional Plan - Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is TRORC**

The Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) is a regional planning commission. Maintaining a Regional Plan is just one part of its activities. You can see the entire range of its work [here](#).

**Q: Is TRORC a state agency?**

No, TRORC, like all regional planning commissions, is a ‘political subdivision’ of the state. That means that we are created by the state.

**Q: What area does TRORC cover?**

TRORC covers 30 towns and 3 incorporated villages in parts of 4 counties. You can see a map of the Region [here](#).

**Q: Does TRORC have to prepare and adopt a Regional Plan?**

[Yes](#).

**Q: Where can I find the current Regional Plan adopted in February, 2025?**

You can find the current Plan [here](#). There are links to the entire Plan, as well as each part. There is also a map viewer of the future land use map so you can see that in more detail.

**Q: How is the Plan made?**

The Plan is drafted by regional commission [staff](#) and then discussed at Board meetings as well as meetings with the general public before having a set of formal hearings.

**Q: What is the purpose of a Regional Plan**

Regional Plans have several statutory [purposes](#) and must further the [state planning goals](#).

**Q: Where can I follow the Regional Plan drafting process?**

TRORC maintains a web page that shows any drafts, meetings, and hearings [here](#).

**Q: How is the Plan adopted?**

The Plan is regionally adopted by the [TRORC Board](#) after a [required public process](#). And then the Plan must go through an [approval process](#) with the [Land Use Review Board](#) for a ‘determination of regional plan compliance’. After this approval the Plan is fully adopted.

**Q: What is the TRORC Board?**

The Board is made up of representatives appointed by each member town's Selectboard, plus several at-large members.

**Q: Are TRORC's Board meetings public?**

Yes. TRORC is covered under Vermont's [open meeting law](#), just like towns, and our Board is considered a non-advisory body. You can find our agendas and schedule of upcoming meetings [here](#) and minutes of past meetings [here](#).

**Q: What are the parts of a Regional Plan?**

A Regional Plan is required to cover several topic areas, referred to as [elements](#), but may have different formats. Our Plan begins with an [Introduction](#) that explains the Plan's layout and uses. This is an excellent way to understand Regional Plans.

**Q: What subjects does a Regional Plan have to cover?**

A Regional Plan is required to cover several [elements](#), including ones on natural resources and working lands, energy, transportation, utilities and facilities, housing, economic development, flood resilience, and future land use.

**Q: Does the Plan have to have a future land use map?**

Yes, the Plan is required to have [several maps](#), often as part of each element. The [future land use map](#) is one of these.

**Q: What is a future land use map?**

It is a map of the entire region with lands placed into 'future land use areas'. Lands are placed into these areas largely based on their current or desired usage, their physical characteristics, the functions they perform, and the infrastructure that is serving them.

**Q: Is the Regional Plan zoning?**

No. The Plan has no regulatory effect of its own.

**Q: Is the Regional Plan eminent domain?**

No, the Plan does not take any land.

**Q: Can TRORC veto local zoning through the Regional Plan?**

No, that is not possible or even logical.

**Q: Can TRORC veto town plans through the Regional Plan?**

No. Towns can seek [regional approval](#) of their plans, but are not required to. After a town adopts a plan, if seeking regional approval it must be found to be consistent with the Regional Plan. A plan that does not have regional approval is still a valid plan.

**Q: Can the Regional Plan ban logging?**

No, that is not possible.

**Q: Can the Regional Plan ban farming?**

No, that is not possible.

**Q: Does TRORC or the Regional Plan create tiers?**

No. Tiers will be created by the [Land Use Review Board](#).

**Q: What are land use ‘tiers’?**

‘Tiers’ are neither a state designated area for tax and grant purposes by the [Community Investment Board](#) nor a future land use area by TRORC. Tiers are a third thing that does not exist yet, but will be created by the [Land Use Review Board](#). Tiers are mainly to alter what would otherwise be the Act 250 jurisdiction. Please see our [handout on tiers](#) and follow the development of tiers by the Land Use Review Board [here](#).

**Q: Does the Regional Plan designate areas?**

This is complicated, but the short answer is not directly. ‘Designation’ is a certain state process that enables financial incentives. The Regional Plan describes future land use areas in its text and *delineates* them on its [future land use map](#), and the state currently *designates* areas through its own process. Two of TRORC’s most common core land use areas currently are ‘Village Settlement’ and ‘Town Centers’. Often the central part of these areas is also currently *designated* by the state as a ‘Village Center’. This [state designation](#) is separate from the Regional Plan, but the names are similar.

To bring these two processes more into alignment, our next future land use map will delineate areas that will essentially also become the map for the new state designations. Due to [Act 181](#), in our 2026 Plan revision, many of our smaller core areas will be called ‘Village Centers’, which is *currently* one of five state designations. The [Community Investment Board](#) will review our map and, hopefully, use what we *delineate* as ‘Village Centers’ as the area they will then *designate* as ‘Village Centers’.

**Q: What does the Regional Plan mean to me?**

The Plan is a great place to find out about many issues and the Region. It supports many actions beneficial to individuals, from energy assistance to increasing childcare. The Plan also has some policies that would affect developers that trigger Act 250, or build cell towers or electrical generation. See our handout – [The Regional Plan and You](#).

**Q: What does the Regional Plan mean for my town?**

Towns can use the maps, data, and policies of the Regional Plan for much of what is needed for their town plan. The Plan also recommends ways that TRORC can help towns, and it raises some municipal concerns, such as the need for more funding for sewer systems, to state and federal agencies. Having certain areas called out on the future land use map creates the ability for those local areas to get or keep some grant funding and tax credits under a revised state designation program.

**Q: Is the Regional Plan used in Act 250?**

Yes. For decades [projects regulated under Act 250](#) have been required by the [District Environmental Commission](#) to conform to regional and town plans where these plans have mandatory and clear policies.

**Q: How can I tell if the Regional Plan is mandatory?**

Mandatory policies use words like ‘shall’ and ‘must’. Most of the Plan is advisory and uses words like ‘encourage’ or ‘should’.

**Q: What projects are regulated by Act 250?**

That is a long answer, since it depends on what town it is in and where in that town, but this [page](#) is where to start. As a general rule, building 5 housing units or creating five lots never triggers Act 250. Agriculture and forestry are also exempt from Act 250.

**Q: Is the Regional Plan used by the Public Utility Commission?**

Yes. Projects regulated by the PUC under a 248 (grid-connected electrical generation) or 248a (cell towers) process are looked at with an eye to regional and town plans. Such plans are at least given ‘due consideration’ when the PUC reviews projects, and may be given more stringent (but not mandatory) ‘substantial deference’ in certain cases.

**Q: If a town’s zoning is different than the Regional Plan, what happens?**

Nothing, zoning and plans are different things. Local zoning is a local matter, though state statute lays out what towns can and can’t do, and all zoning has to further the state’s land use goals.