



MINUTES

Thursday – July 27, 2023

5:30 PM

Prospect Mountain Ski Area – Woodford

Present: Liz Ruffa, Dixie Zens, Shelia Kearns, David McAneny, Linda Schmidt, Charlie Rockwell, John Lavecchia Jr., Donald Campbell, Michael Fernandez, Matt Bachler (WRC)

Staff: Scott Grimm-Lyon, Callie Fishburn, Jonathan Cooper, Bill Colvin, Dara Zink, Janet Hurley, Mark Anders

After enjoying a meal from Bringing You Vermont, the meeting was called to order at 6:15PM.

I. Minutes of March and May 2023 Meetings

Motion (Zens): Approve as presented. Second by Campbell. Passed unanimously.

II. Motion on Bank of Bennington Account Signers

Colvin noted that The Bank of Bennington and Vermont State Employees Credit Union have requested formal approval via an approved motion by the Commission to remove previous account signers and add new signers based upon the results of the election of officers at BCRC's Annual Meeting in May.

Motion (Kearns), second by Zens to remove John Lavecchia Sr. and Caroline (Cinda) Morse and to add Nick Zaiac and James Salerno as signers on BCRC bank accounts. Passed unanimously.

III. Developing a Web-Based Regional Plan

Matt Bachler, Senior Planner at Windham Regional Commission (WRC), provided an overview of WRC's current work updating of their regional plan and collaboration with a web design consultant to develop a web-based regional plan (see attached presentation).

IV. Overview of RES Listening Sessions

BCRC staff member Callie Fishburn gave an overview of upcoming listening sessions that BCRC will host in partnership with the Vermont Department of Public Service about renewable electricity programs and policies (see attached presentation).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

Windham Regional Web-Based Plan



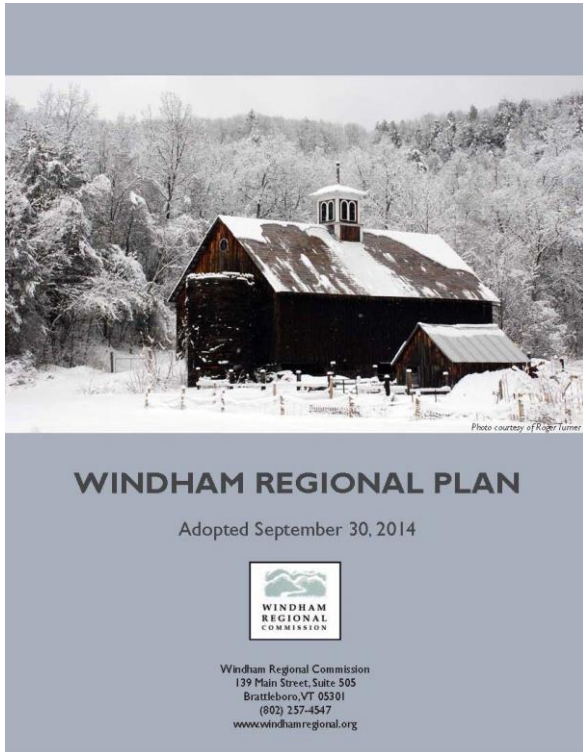
*Bennington County Regional Commission Meeting
July 27, 2023*

Regional Plan Update Goals

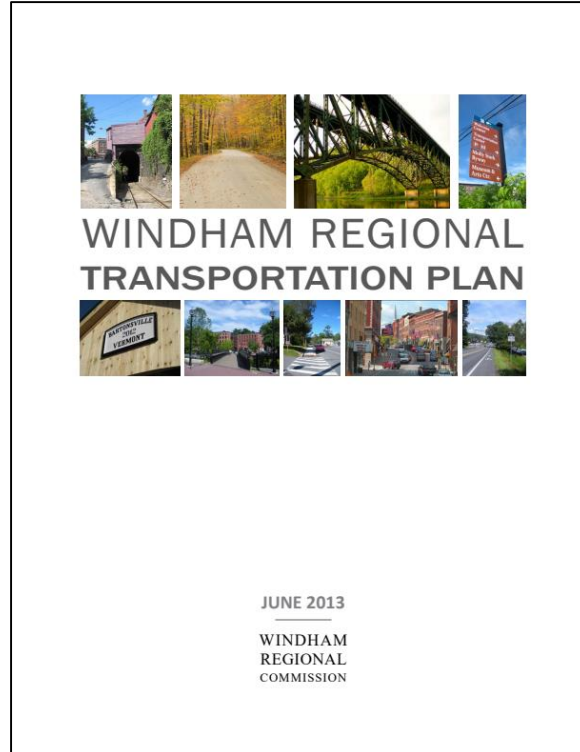
- Create a plan that is more accessible and useful for member towns and residents
- Address the specific issues and challenges towns in our region are dealing with
- Provide examples of best practices and recommended implementation tools for towns to use



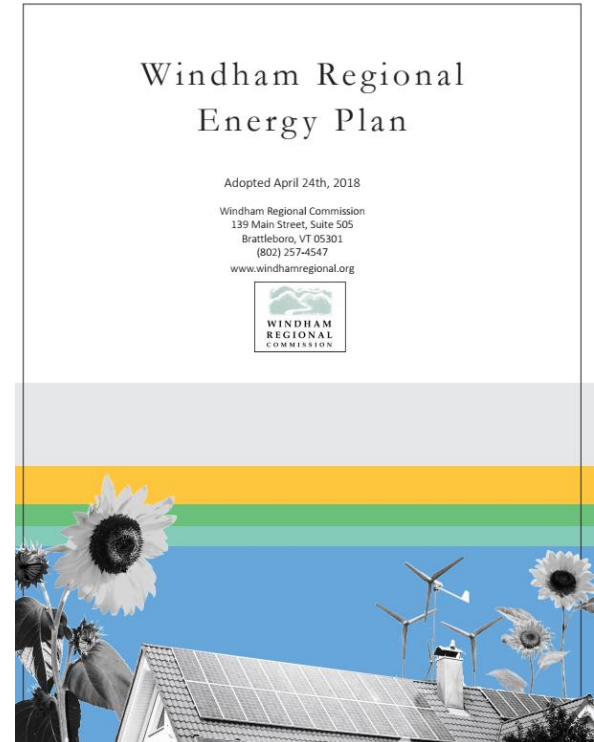
*Vermont Council on Rural Development
Community Meeting in Guilford*



320 pages



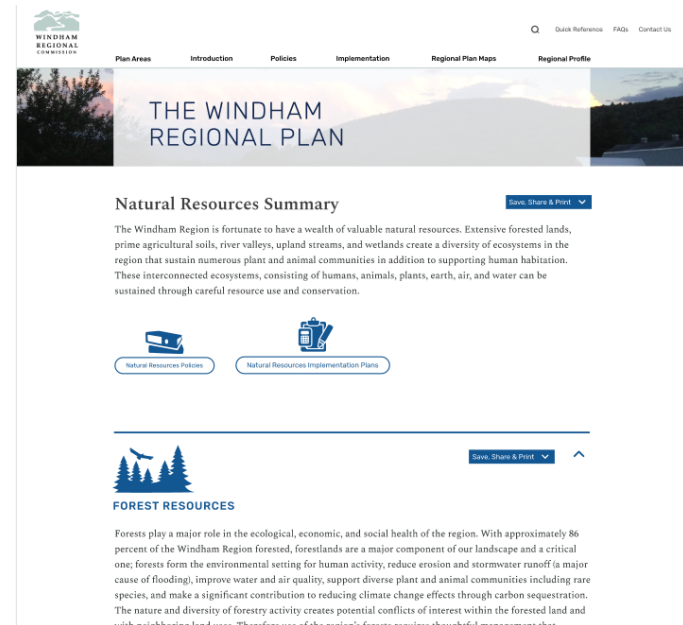
150 pages



60 pages

Goals for Web-Based Plan

- Allow for easy navigation of site by different types of users
- Provide more visual interest
- Focus on policies and implementation plan
- Ability to download and print sections and entire plan
- Allow for future updates by staff

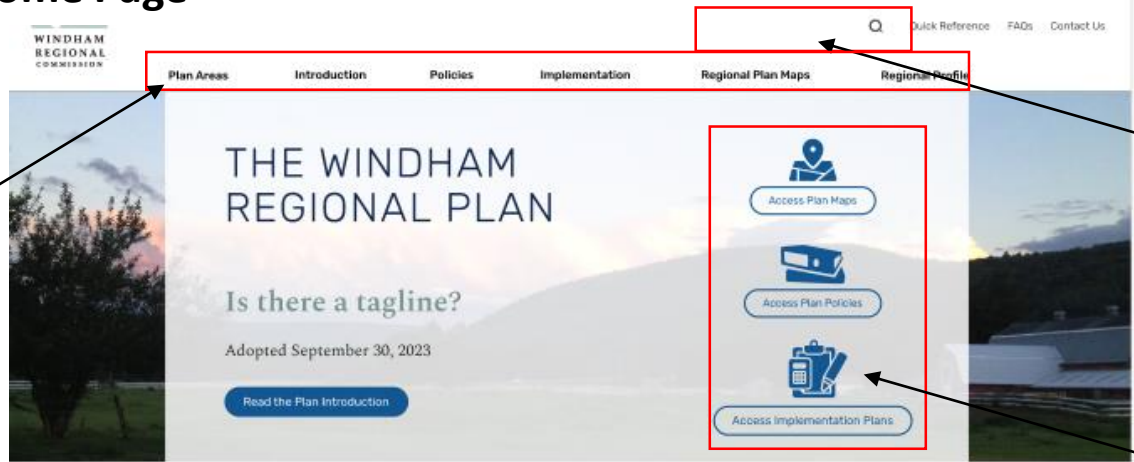


Draft webpage from web-based Regional Plan

Project Schedule

- Issued RFP and hire consultant: Summer 2022
- Website design process: Fall 2022 – Winter 2023
- WRC Regional Plan content update: Began Winter 2023 and continuing
- Website coding and development: Began Spring 2023 and continuing
- Draft web-based plan for public review: Fall 2023/Winter 2024
- Public hearing and approval process: Spring/Summer 2024

Regional Plan Home Page



Main navigation bar

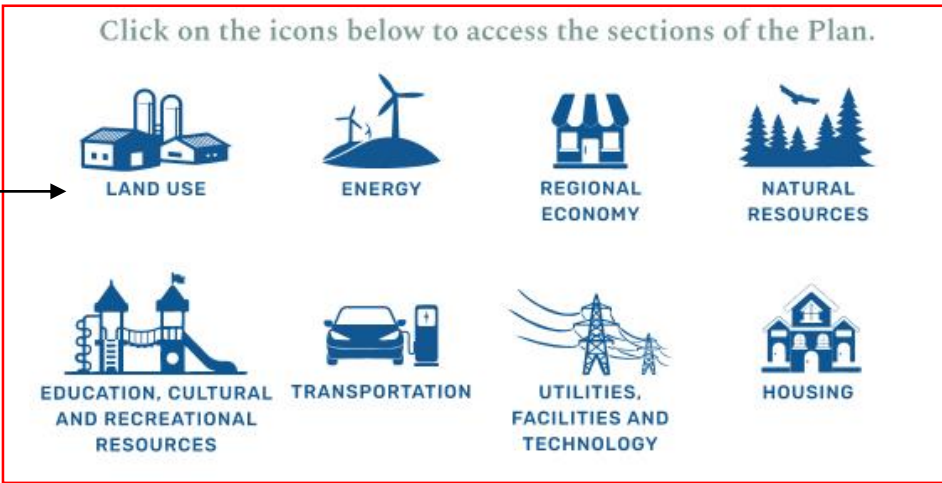
Text search function

Easy access to maps, policies, implementation strategies

Welcome

Do we want some welcome text here? Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.

Click on the icons below to access the sections of the Plan.



Icons for different plan sections



Example of Landing Page for Plan Section

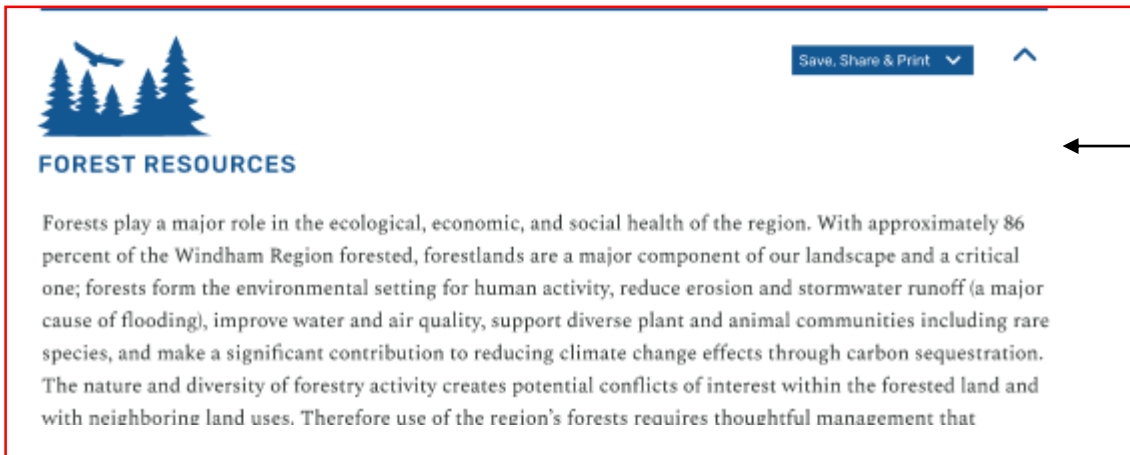


Natural Resources Summary

Save, Share & Print

The Windham Region is fortunate to have a wealth of valuable natural resources. Extensive forested lands, prime agricultural soils, river valleys, upland streams, and wetlands create a diversity of ecosystems in the region that sustain numerous plant and animal communities in addition to supporting human habitation. These interconnected ecosystems, consisting of humans, animals, plants, earth, air, and water can be sustained through careful resource use and conservation.

Easy access to policies and implementation strategies for the Natural Resources section



Introductory text for chapter subsections that link to additional content

Example of Policies Page

[Quick Reference](#) [FAQs](#) [Contact Us](#)[Plan Areas](#)[Introduction](#)[Policies](#)[Implementation](#)[Regional Plan Maps](#)[Regional Profile](#)

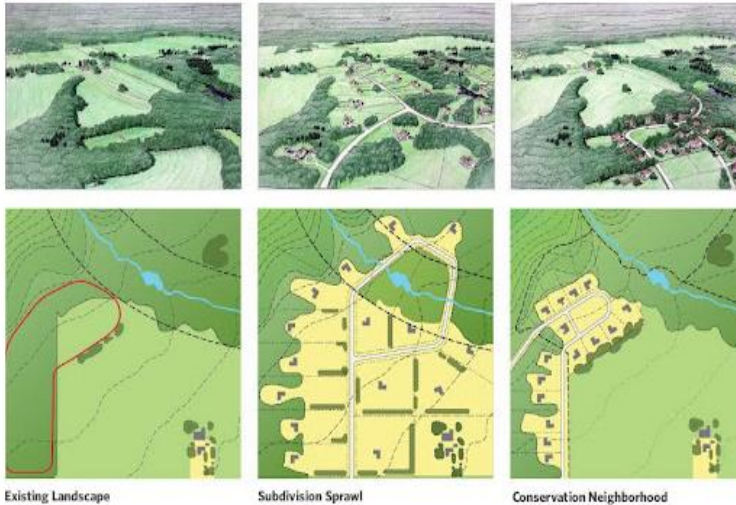
LAND USE POLICIES

1. Direct new growth, such as jobs, housing, commerce, public infrastructure, industry, community facilities, into appropriate development types: Regional Centers, Industrial areas, Commercial Nodes & Corridors, Resort Centers, and Villages. New growth must give attention to the type and scale of the existing form, in order to keep these centers culturally, socially, and economically viable. In-fill development and redevelopment are encouraged in these areas.
2. Utilize strategies that increase the energy efficiency of new and existing development. All projects reviewed under Act 250 should provide evidence demonstrating how the development is energy efficient from a regional land use perspective, including projected transportation, heating, and electricity needs.
3. Preserve the historic and architectural character of the region. Support the reuse and repurposing of viable existing structures to retain historic development patterns, densities, and character in the region, especially within Regional Centers, Villages, and Hamlets.

Example of option for saving PDF of page or printing

Example of Page Content

Residential subdivisions in **Rural Residential** and **Productive Rural** areas should incorporate design characteristics such as walkable layouts, community identity, public open spaces, and preservation of important resources, such as agricultural soils and wildlife habitat. Many of these objectives can be realized by clustering lots to create a hamlet-type character around homes, while setting a significant percentage of the project area aside as open space reserved for agriculture, forestry, or public recreation. This development approach is commonly referred to as conservation subdivision and it is economically efficient because road and other infrastructure requirements are less extensive and costly to construct and maintain.



Website Navigation

Example of how the main navigation bar at the top of the page is set up to allow users to find sub-sections within each of the main plan sections.

REGIONAL
MISSION

Plan Areas

Introduction

Policies

Implementation

Regional Plan Maps

Regional Profile

All Plan Areas	→	Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Policies	Cultural and Historic Resources
Land Use	→	Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources Implementation Strategies	Arts
Energy	→	Education, Libraries, and Media Resources	Historic Resources
Regional Economy	→	Early Education and Child Care	Recreation
Natural Resources	→	Elementary and Secondary Education	
Education, Cultural, and Recreational Resources	→	Post-Secondary Education	
Transportation	→	Adult Education	
Utilities, Facilities, and Technology	→	Libraries	
Housing	→	Media Resources	

Lessons Learned

- Helpful to bring a consultant on board toward beginning of the process
- Would have benefitted from beginning plan content update earlier to help inform the design process better
- Helpful to have one staff member that works with consultant and is able to make most design-related decisions
- Develop a Word document template to ensure consistent font and style choices
- Provide opportunities for Commissioners to learn about website development process

Questions?

Renewable Electricity Listening Sessions

Quick Background

- Vermont has a goal of meeting 90% of its energy needs with renewable energy by 2050.
 - Benchmark goals:
 - 25% by 2025
 - 45% by 2035
- Where does this goal come from?
 - This goal was established in the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan which also outlines pathways for achieving 90 x 2050.
 - [Comprehensive Energy Plan \(2022\)](#)

Purpose of the Listening Sessions

- The Vermont Department of Public Service (PSD) will partner with regional planning commissions (RPCs) to host regional public listening sessions about Vermont's renewable electricity policies and programs.
 - Goal: hear from Vermonters about what they value about renewable electricity and what they would like to see from renewable and clean electricity policies and programs in Vermont.
 - Preferences for "clean" or low carbon versus "renewable" energy standards and supporting programs
 - Priority issues when deciding where their electricity comes from (including but not limited to technologies, scales, locations, pace, costs, benefits, and other core issues such as affordability, reliability, and environmental impacts) and/or
 - Particular benefits and/or challenges with existing programs and policies
-

What's Next?

- BCRC will host two public listening sessions this fall
 - One session may take place as part of the September meeting.
 - Working on possible dates, locations and organizations to partner with.
 - Once sessions are announced, please help spread the word in your community!

Learn More!

- PSD hosted a three-part webinar series about electricity in Vermont:
 - Webinar 1: Where does Vermont's electricity come from?
 - Webinar 2: Current Renewable Electricity Policies
 - Webinar 3: Renewable Energy Certificates and Their Markets

View the recordings and associated materials at:

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewables>
