



southburlington

PLANNING & ZONING

MEMORANDUM

TO: South Burlington Planning Commission
FROM: Paul Conner, Director of Planning & Zoning
SUBJECT: 2024 Comprehensive Plan: Statutory Requirements and “Knowns” leading into the Plan
DATE: May 24, 2022 Planning Commission meeting

Statutory Requirements:

A municipal Plan in Vermont, in order to be “confirmed” (and therefore valid and eligible for a variety of state programs), must [contain certain required elements](#) and must [demonstrate consistency with statewide planning goals](#).

The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) will perform a review of the Plan at the start and again at the end of the Plan preparation process, followed by a public hearing and action by the CCRPC’s Board for confirmation. Throughout the process, staff will be working to assure compliance with these requirements. There have been two changes of note to the enabling statutes in the time since the 2016 Plan was adopted:

- [Act 171, Planning for Habitat Blocks and Forest Connectors](#) requires that confirmed municipal plans address the subject and includes in the Land Use Plan a component that “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. A plan may include specific policies to encourage the active management of those areas for wildlife habitat, water quality, timber production, recreation, or other values or functions identified by the municipality.”
- [Act 174, Enhanced Energy Plans](#), gives municipalities the **option** to have greater weight – substantial deference – in the State’s Section 248 review process for energy generation facilities by developing a plan to meet identified targets for renewable energy generation and conservation. The Climate Action Plan Task is looking at this subject and to date has recommended that the City strive to attain this designation if the targets can be met in a manner that is consistent with the City’s other climate action and planning goals.

Knowns Leading into the Plan:

As presented in the Plan outline last month, the next (and iterative) step in the preparation of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan is to identify and establish “knowns” to serve as a framework for the Plan. These include basic structural elements, existing adopted City Council resolutions, such as the Climate Change Resolution; and economic and demographic conditions and projections, known land use conditions, and travel patterns.

The purpose of the knowns is to provide a common set of parameters for all those involved in preparing the Plan to be cognizant of. Having an understanding of our anticipated population change and new housing will help the City’s departments assess their service and capital needs, for example. These “knowns” are not intended to be

policies in and of themselves – they are a framing, together with the overall vision and goals – to help every be on the same page as we develop the Plan over the next year.

The “knowns” below are looking back, for the moment, and we anticipate projecting them forward in the coming weeks as part of a full demographics report. We would welcome Commissioners’ thoughts on what “knowns” we should be considering.

Overall Policy

- The Plan will meet the Statutory requirements for a regionally-confirmed plan
- The Plan will strive to meet the Statutory option for an Enhanced Energy Plan
- The Plan will incorporate the City Council’s resolution on Climate Change
- The Plan will make use of studies and reports undertaken and completed by the City since adoption of the 2016 Plan

Population

- Annual population growth since 1990 has been 1.55%, and declined to 1.28 annually between 2010 and 2020. (The 2016 Plan anticipated 1-1.5% annually)
- The City’s population is becoming more diverse. The most recent data showed 11% of the population speaking a language other than English at home, and increasing.
- The City’s population is aging. Average age is 41.7, which has been trending up. 18.5% of our population is over 65 years of age.
- Of the City’s 8,801 households, 2,141 include a person with a disability

Housing

- Housing growth was 1.4% annually 2010-2020 (2016 Plan anticipated 1.5-2% annually)
- The City has averaged ~143 dwelling units added annually since 1980. The trend is steady and is anticipated to remain, and possibly increase slightly based on City Center and State and Federal incentives for affordable and missing middle housing.
- The majority of new housing since 2000 has been multi-family. Since that time, 64% of new homes have been multi-family, and overall represent 41% of our total housing. Stand-alone single family homes now represent 53% of our housing, down from 67% in 2000.
- Since 2010, approximately 85-89% of new housing that has been approved through development review has been within or immediately adjacent to the City’s Transit Overlay District [note: this does not include housing that was approved prior to that time and for which construction has been ongoing since]

Employment and Transportation:

- Of the City’s 8,801 households, 752 have no vehicle
- The City’s daytime population is ~24,592
- There are 20,120 employees and 1,418 businesses in South Burlington
- Home and Workplace. There is a lot of travel in and out of the City for work
 - 2,613 people live **and** work in South Burlington.
 - 17,639 people live elsewhere **and** work in South Burlington
 - 8,206 people live in South Burlington **and** work outside the City