

Contents

1 Introduction to Planning in Vermont

1.1 Need for Planning	1
1.2 Framework for Planning in Vermont	3
1.2.1 Planning Law in Vermont.....	3
1.2.2 Planning Goals in Vermont.....	4
1.2.3 The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act	4
1.2.4 Municipal Planning Programs in Vermont	7
1.3 Responsibility for Planning	9
1.3.1 Role of the Municipality	9
1.3.2 Role of the Regional Planning Commission	9
1.3.3 Role of the State.....	10
1.3.4 Role of the Council of Regional Commissions.....	12
1.3.5 Union Municipal Districts	14
1.3.6 Solid Waste Districts	15
1.4 The Planning Process.....	15
1.5 A Coordinated Planning Process	17

2 The Municipal Plan

2.1 Definition of the Plan.....	19
2.1.1 General Description	19
2.1.2 The Elements of a Municipal Plan.....	20
2.1.3 Relationship of the State Planning Goals to the Plan Elements	22
2.2 Purpose of the Plan	22
2.3 Using the Plan.....	22
2.4 Preparation and Adoption of the Plan	24
2.4.1 Responsibility of the Planning Commission	24
2.4.2 Responsibility of the Legislative Body	26
2.4.3 Adoption by Australian Ballot	26
2.4.4 Public Participation.....	26
2.4.5 Effective Date	28
2.4.6 Adoption of Regional Plan by Municipality	28
2.4.7 Municipal Plan Approval.....	28
2.5 Maintenance and Amendment of the Plan	30
2.5.1 Responsibility of the Planning Commission	30
2.5.2 Amendments Proposed by Other Parties	31
2.5.3 Written Reports on Amendments.....	31
2.5.4 Readoption and Amendment Procedures	33
2.6 Legal Considerations	33
2.6.1 Proper Adoption Procedures	33
2.6.2 Foundation for Municipal Regulations and Programs ..	33
2.6.3 Use of the Plan in Act 250	34

3 The Municipal Planning Commission

3.1 Designation of the Planning Commission	35
3.1.1 Membership.....	35
3.1.2 Terms of Membership	36
3.1.3 Ex-officio Members.....	36
3.1.4 Joint Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission.....	36
3.1.5 Joint Planning Commissions	36
3.1.6 Planning Department in Urban Municipality.....	37
3.1.7 Development Review Board.....	37
3.2 Role of the Planning Commission	37
3.3 Powers and Duties of the Planning Commission.....	38
3.4 Organization and Procedures of the Planning Commission....	39
3.4.1 Officers.....	39
3.4.2 Rules.....	39
3.4.3 Meetings	40
3.4.4 Records.....	41
3.4.5 Annual Report	41
3.5 Technical Assistance	41
3.6 Expenses.....	42

4 Organization of the Planning Program

4.1 Getting Started.....	43
4.2 Designing the Planning Program.....	44
4.2.1 Outline the Process	44
4.2.2 Set the Work Schedule	44
4.2.3 Determine the Planning Period.....	46
4.2.4 Prepare Public Participation Program.....	46
4.2.5 Plan the Budget	50
4.2.6 Coordinate with Adjacent Towns, the Region and State Agencies	51
4.3 Keeping the Plan Current	52
4.3.1 Evaluations	52
4.3.2 Updating Requirements	52
4.3.3 Expand the Data Base.....	53
4.3.4 Reassess Goals and Objectives.....	53
4.3.5 Revise Implementation Program	53
4.3.6 Focus on Geographic Areas.....	53
4.3.7 Focus on Topics.....	54
4.3.8 Revise the Format.....	54
4.4 Sources and Uses of Technical Help	54
4.4.1 Regional Planning Commissions.....	54
4.4.2 Staff	55
4.4.3 Conservation Commissions	55
4.4.4 Planning Consultants	55
4.4.5 Federal and State Agencies.....	55
4.4.6 Colleges and Universities	56
4.4.7 Interns	56
4.4.8 Other.....	56

5 Collecting and Analyzing Information

5.1 Conduct a Preliminary Assessment	57
5.2 Identify Information Required.....	59
5.3 Make a Community Profile	59
5.3.1 History.....	59
5.3.2 Population.....	59
5.3.3 Housing	60
5.3.4 Affordable Housing	64
5.3.5 Economy.....	66
5.3.6 Fiscal Conditions	68
5.4 Prepare a Base Map	71
5.5 Analyze Physical Condition	73
5.5.1 Soils.....	73
5.5.2 Topography.....	77
5.5.3 Water Resources.....	80
5.5.4 Natural Areas.....	85
5.5.5 A Summary of Physical Capability for Development.....	86
5.6 Analyze Existing Land Use and Special Feature.....	89
5.6.1 Pattern of Development	89
5.6.2 Resource Production.....	91
5.6.3 Special Features	95
5.7 Analyze Community Facilities and Services	101
5.7.1 Transportation.....	103
5.7.2 Education	111
5.7.3 Recreation.....	112
5.7.4 Libraries.....	113
5.7.5 Water Supply	114
5.7.6 Sewage Disposal.....	114
5.7.7 Solid Waste Management.....	115
5.7.8 Gas, Electricity, Cable, Telephone Service, and Towers	116
5.7.9 Energy	116
5.7.10 Public Safety and Emergency Services.....	118
5.7.11 Health and Human Services.....	119
5.7.12 Administrative Services.....	120
5.8 Using GIS	120
5.9 Summarize Data Collection and Analysis	121
5.9.1 Identify Needs and Options for Land Use	121
5.9.2 Identify Needs and Options for Community Facility and Services.....	122
5.9.3 Identify Needs and Options for Community Development.....	123
5.9.4 Identify Needs for Environmental Resources	123

6 Developing the Plan

6.1 Establishment of Goals and Objectives.....	125
6.1.1 Definition of Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs	125
6.1.2 Need for and Use of Goals and Objectives in a Plan.....	126
6.1.3 Developing Municipal Goals and Objectives.....	127
6.1.4 Consistency of Municipal Goals and Objectives with State Planning Goals	127
6.2 Formulation of Plans.....	128
6.2.1 The Need for and Use of Plans.....	128
6.2.2 The Contents of a Municipal Plan.....	129
6.2.3 Organizing the Plan.....	138
6.3 Selecting an Appropriate Implementation Program.....	141
6.3.1 Bylaws	142
6.3.2 Other Regulations	145
6.3.3 Programs	145
6.3.4 Coordination of Public Actions.....	147
6.3.5 Coordination of Private Actions.....	148
6.3.6 Special Projects.....	149
6.4 Financing	149
6.4.1 State Planning Funds.....	149
6.4.2 Community Development Block Grants	150
6.4.3 Impact Fees	150
6.4.4 Taxation	151
6.5 Conclusion	151

Appendix

A. Checklists and Certification for Adoption	153
B. Resources	162
C. Glossary.....	167
D. Selected Bibliography	169