



TOWN OF SUNDERLAND, VERMONT
P.O. Box 295, East Arlington, Vermont 05252

PLANNING COMMISSION

Written Report for the Re-adoption of the Town of Sunderland Municipal Plan

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4384(c) which states:

When considering an amendment to a plan, the planning commission shall prepare a written report on the proposal. The report shall address the extent to which the plan, as amended, is consistent with the goals established in §4302 of this title.

The Town of Sunderland Municipal Plan has been updated in accordance with the goals set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4302. The changes made to the plan include an updated land use map, natural resources section in accordance with Act 171, and an updated energy section in compliance with the enhanced energy planning requirements set for by the Public Service Department and Act 174, to comply with state planning goals, and to be consistent with the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) *Regional Plan*.

The updated Land Use Plan Map modifies the eastern boundary of the Forest District to correspond with natural resource areas, settlement patterns of the area and parcel boundaries. As a result of the modification, the western boundary of the Rural Residential district and the boundary of the Southern Commercial-Industrial district have been modified.

Act 171 relates to forest fragmentation and a new municipal plan requirement to consider forest and wildlife habitat when planning for new development. Act 174 involves planning for renewable energy generation such as meeting state targets for new renewable energy generation and recommendations for the siting of renewable energy generation projects.

To help create these changes, the Town of Sunderland Planning Commission held a number of public meetings over the course of a year and-a-half and requested input from the public throughout the process.

24 V.S.A. §4384(c) also requires that when the designation of any land area is altered, that the report covers the following points:

- (1) *The probable impact on the surrounding area, including the effect of any resulting increase in traffic, and the probable impact on the overall pattern of land use.*

The updated Land Use Plan will not result in any increase in traffic, nor impact the overall pattern of land use. The southern area of the existing Southern Commercial Industrial district is currently un-developed,

and growth is extremely limited due to natural resource and transportation infrastructure constraints. Re-designation to the Forest District will more accurately reflect current land uses and probable future land development for the area.

- (2) *The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact on:*
- (A) *the municipal tax base; and*
 - (B) *the need for public facilities.*

The long-term cost would be negligible as the land being re-designated has little existing development (including public infrastructure). Future development of this area is also limited due to the natural resource and transportation network constraints. Re-designation not strain existing public facilities and will remove the need for additional public facilities to serve these areas.

- (3) *The amount of vacant land which is:*
- (A) *already subject to the proposed new designation; and*
 - (B) *actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.*

The re-designation of land area will primarily affect vacant (un-developed) land. The southern area of the existing Southern Commercial Industrial district is currently un-developed, and growth is extremely limited due to natural resource and transportation infrastructure constraints. Re-designation to the Forest District will more accurately reflect current land uses and probable future land development for the area.

- (4) *The suitability of the area in question for the proposed purpose, after consideration of:*
- (A) *appropriate alternative locations;*
 - (B) *alternative uses for the area under consideration; and*
 - (C) *the probable impact of the proposed change on other areas similarly designated.*

The changes in the Land Use Plan are appropriate as the Forest District designation will more accurately reflect current land uses and probable future land development for the area. There will be no impact on other areas similarly designated.

- (5) *The appropriateness of the size and boundaries of the area proposed for change, with respect to the area required for the proposed use, land capability, and existing development in the area.*

The size and boundaries of the changes would be appropriate and minimal with respect to the area required and land capability. The impact on existing development would be minimal or nothing.