

PERSPECTIVES FOR PLANNING IN ALIGNMENT WITH STATE GOALS

*Smart Growth Principles and Vital Conditions
Framework*



State Planning Goals

Review of 24 VSA §4302



DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOWN OF

BRISTOL, VERMONT

1973

Planning Purpose

It is the intent and purpose of this chapter to encourage the appropriate development of all lands in this State by the action of its constituent municipalities and regions, with the aid and assistance of the State, in a manner which will:

- ❖ promote the public health, safety against fire, floods, explosions, and other dangers;
- ❖ to promote prosperity, comfort, access to adequate light and air, convenience, efficiency, economy, and general welfare;
- ❖ to enable the mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands;
- ❖ to encourage appropriate architectural design;
- ❖ to encourage the development of renewable resources;
- ❖ to protect residential, agricultural, and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings, from traffic congestion, from inadequate parking and the invasion of through traffic, and from the loss of peace, quiet, and privacy;
- ❖ to facilitate the growth of villages, towns, and cities and of their communities and neighborhoods so as to create an optimum environment, with good civic design;
- ❖ to encourage development of a rich cultural environment and to foster the arts; and to provide means and methods for the municipalities and regions of this State to plan for the prevention, minimization, and future elimination of such land development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen and to implement those plans when and where appropriate.

In implementing any regulatory power under this chapter, municipalities shall take care to protect the constitutional right of the people to acquire, possess, and protect property.



State Planning Goals:

1. Maintain Historic Settlement Patterns
2. Provide a strong and diverse economy
3. Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities
4. Provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems
5. Identify, protect, preserve important natural and historic features
6. Maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land uses
7. Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
8. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities
9. Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries
10. Provide for wise and efficient use of VT natural resources...
11. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing
12. Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs
13. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care
14. Encourage Flood Resilient communities
15. Equitably distribute environmental benefits and burdens



1. Maintain Historic Settlement Patterns

Compact villages and urban centers separated by rural countryside

Avoid strip development and encourage intensive residential development in down centers and planned growth areas. These centers and growth areas should be planned to accommodate the substantial majority of housing for regional housing targets

Economic growth should be used to revitalize existing village and urban centers or in local/regionally designated growth areas

Public investments in new or expansion of infrastructure should reinforce planned growth patterns

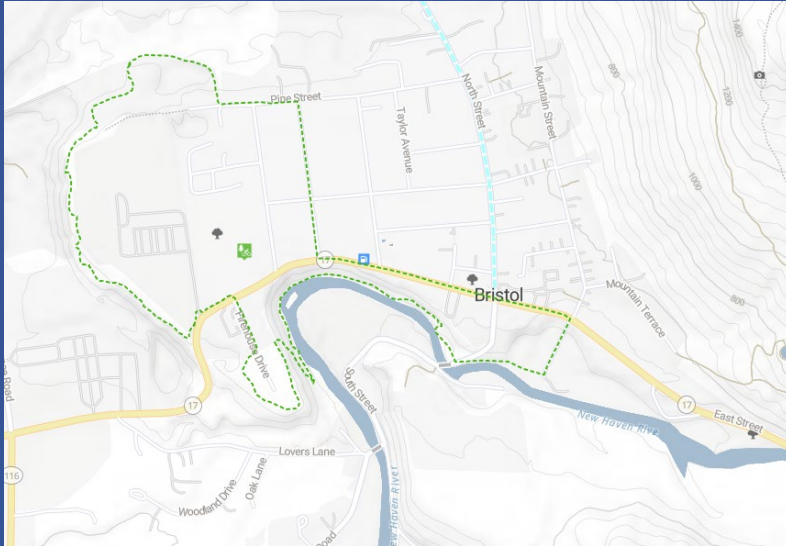
Development should occur in line with smart growth principles

5. Identify, protect, preserve important natural and historic features

- A) Significant natural or fragile areas
- B) Outstanding water resources (lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands and wetlands)
- C) Significant scenic roads, waterways and views
- D) Important historic structures site or districts; archaeological sites and sensitive areas



8. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities

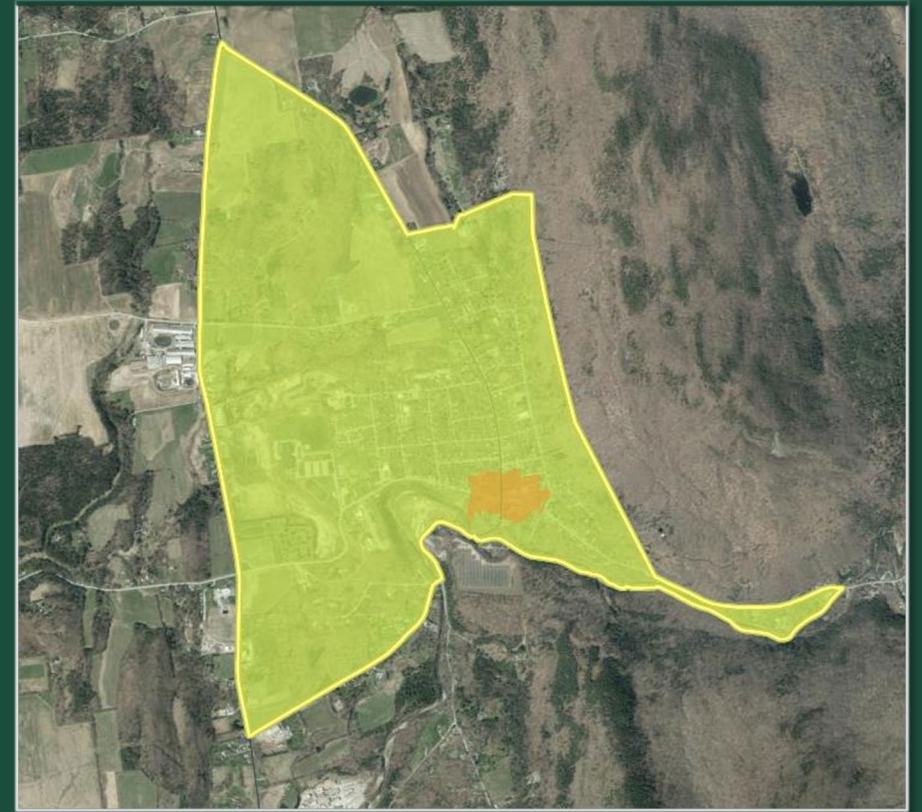


(A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.

(B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.

11. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing

- (A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income, and consistent with housing targets provided for in subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title.
- (B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.
- (C) Sites for multifamily and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family dwellings.
- (D) Accessory dwelling units within or attached to single-family residences that provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.



Low-Moderate Income Percentage: 55.12%



Smart Growth Principles

1. Maintains the historic development pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.
2. Develops compact mixed-use centers at a scale appropriate for the community and the region.
3. Enables choice in modes of transportation.
4. Protects the State's important environmental, natural, and historic features, including natural areas, water quality, scenic resources, and historic sites and districts.
5. Serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries and minimizes conflicts of development with these industries.
6. Balances growth with the availability of economic and efficient public utilities and services.
7. Supports a diversity of viable businesses in downtowns and villages.
8. Provides for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each community.
9. Reflects a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by:
 1. scattered development located outside compact urban and village centers that is excessively land consumptive;
 2. development that limits transportation options, especially for pedestrians;
 3. the fragmentation of farmland and forestland;
 4. development that is not serviced by municipal infrastructure or that requires the extension of municipal infrastructure across undeveloped lands in a manner that would extend service to lands located outside compact village and urban centers;
 5. linear development along well-traveled roads and highways that lacks depth, as measured from the highway.

Planning for People

Smart Growth Principles are guidelines for development and growth in our communities. A town can be “perfectly” designed, but still have issues. How do we plan for people? How do we consider a holistic approach to growth?



THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS ARE NOT THRIVING

U.S. Life Evaluation Slumps to Pandemic-Era Levels

Thriving rate below 50% in two measurements in a row for first time since 2020

— % Thriving



Data from January 2008-August 2019 and from August 2020 are based on the Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index; data from March 2020-current estimates (excluding August 2020) are from the Gallup Panel.



Thriving: a working definition

*Thriving means people and communities have the **vital conditions** they need — health & safety, housing, meaningful work, learning, transportation, nature, and belonging — to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”*

The Rippel Foundation, Vital Conditions for Health & Well-Being Framework

The Great Stride Goal

The Rippel Foundation's Movement to Thrive Together

+20 percentage-point increase in the share of Americans thriving, nationwide, by 2036



Baseline: just 48% of U.S. adults are thriving today (Gallup's 2025 Life Evaluation Index), after five years of steady decline.

Four drivers of thriving



Belonging & Civic Muscle

Strengthening social connection, trust, and collective voice



Vital Conditions

Investing in the seven vital conditions everyone needs



Fairness in System Design

Promoting equity in how systems and policies are built



Right-Sized Urgent Services

Adequate urgent care — not relied on as a path to thriving



**SMART
GROWTH +
VITAL
CONDITIONS
= RESILIENT
COMMUNITY**