

MEMORANDUM

TO: SHELBURNE SELECTBOARD
VIA: JOE COLANGELO
RE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS
FR: DEAN PIERCE
DA: JUNE 1, 2016

On June 14 the Selectboard is scheduled to hold the first of at least two public hearings on the Planning Commission's latest proposal to amend the Town's Comprehensive Plan. As noted in a previous memorandum, the proposal would have two main components. The first responds to a request from the Shelburne Bike and Pedestrian Paths Committee. (As a result, the Planning Commission is proposing to revise Map 23 and Map 24 to reflect the information contained in the Committee's "Shelburne Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure Development Plan.") The second responds to new statutory requirements relating to Designated Village Centers and Vermont Neighborhoods. (The proposal would modify the Future Land Use section of *Volume I* and adding a map—designated Map 6—to the Map Volume of the Plan.) Shelburne has maintained Designated Village Center and Vermont Neighborhood designations for a number of years.

The Selectboard has warned a second public hearing for June 28. Looking ahead, should the Selectboard support the proposal as written, it may adopt it, and the changes would take effect immediately (unlike zoning amendments, which involve an appeal period). The Selectboard may also decide to make changes to the proposal. However, state law would require the Board to warn an additional hearing on the revised proposal, potentially adding at least two weeks to the adoption process.

Finally, please consider reviewing the attached documents prepared by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Development. (The documents highlight the benefits of holding Village Center and/or Vermont Neighborhood Designation.) I believe this material will provide additional context for Selectboard discussion relating to the Designated Village Centers / Vermont Neighborhoods portion of the proposal.

Village Center Designation Program Benefits

The Vermont village center designation program supports local revitalization efforts across the state by providing technical assistance and state funding to help designated municipalities build strong communities. Once designated, the community is eligible for the following benefits:

10% Historic Tax Credits

- Available as an add-on to approved Federal Historic Tax Credit projects.
- Eligible costs include interior and exterior improvements, code compliance, plumbing and electrical upgrades.

25% Facade Improvement Tax Credits

- Eligible facade work up to \$25,000.

50% Code Improvement Tax Credits

- Available for up to \$50,000 each for elevators and sprinkler systems and \$12,000 for lifts.
- Eligible code work includes ADA modifications, electrical or plumbing up to \$25,000.

50% Technology Tax Credits

- Available for up to \$30,000 for installation or improvements made to data and network installations, and HVAC (heating, cooling or ventilation systems) reasonably related to data or network improvements.

Priority Consideration For State Grants

- Priority consideration for Municipal Planning Grants, Vermont Agency of Transportation grants, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources grants and funding from Vermont's Community Development Program (CDBG).

Priority Consideration By State Building And General Services (BGS)

- Priority site consideration by the State Building and General Services (BGS) when leasing or constructing buildings.

Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Eligibility

- Communities may also designated Neighborhood Development Areas within 1/4 mile from the designated village center. Qualified projects are:
 - Exempt from Act 250 regulations and the land gains tax.
 - Eligible for, once designated, reduced Agency of Natural Resources review fees.



Downtown, Village Center and New Town Center Designations

New Rules for Linking Designation in Municipal Plans

To strengthen the linkage between community revitalization and planning, municipalities must now describe, in their Municipal Plans, how a designated Downtown, Village Center or New Town Center supports community goals. Municipal Plans must include this information prior to applying for and renewing a Downtown, Village Center or New Town Center Designation after July 1, 2014. The Regional Planning Commissions are happy to help communities update their plans to meet this requirement.



Statutory Requirements

Applications:

For applications filed on and after July 1, 2014, the intention to apply for designation under this section shall be included in the plan of the municipality, and the plan shall explain how the designation would further the plan's goals and the goals of section 4302 of this title. 24 V.S.A. § 2793 (a) (1), 24 V.S.A. § 2793a (a) (1) and 24 V.S.A. § 2793b (a) (1).

Renewals (not applicable for existing New Town Centers):

On and after July 1, 2014, any community applying for renewal shall explain how the designation under this section has furthered the goals of the town plan and shall submit an approved town plan map that depicts the boundary of the designated District. 24 V.S.A. § 2793 (c), and 24 V.S.A. § 2793a (d).

Before applying for a new designation – what does a Municipal Plan need?

- There should be at least one statement that recommends state designation as a way to help achieve the goals of the Plan. The statement should link the goals in the municipal plan to the relevant purposes and benefits of state designation. The municipal plan shall explain previous, current and future revitalization activities in the designated area.

Before designation renewal - what does a Municipal Plan need?

- Every renewal application must explain how designation helps implement the relevant goals in the municipal plan. The explanation should link the goals in the municipal Plan to the relevant purposes and benefits of state designation. The municipal plan shall explain previous, current and future revitalization activities.
- The adopted municipal plan shall include the designation boundary on at least one map. At a minimum, the Board Approved map can be included to meet this requirement. DHCD also recommends including the designation boundary on any maps that illustrate statements referencing designation.

More Questions?

For additional information, please contact Richard Amore, richard.amore@state.vt.us or your Regional Planning Commission (<http://www.vapda.org/>)

Intent of State Designation:

24 V.S.A. § 2790 (b)

1. Support historic downtowns and villages by providing funding, training, and resources to communities designated under this chapter, to revitalize such communities, to increase and diversify economic development activities, to improve the efficient use of public investments, including water and sewer systems, and to safeguard working landscapes;
2. Improve the ability of Vermont's historic downtowns and villages to attract residents and businesses by enhancing their livability and unique sense of place; by expanding access to employment, housing, education and schools, services, public facilities, and other basic needs; and by expanding businesses' access to markets;
3. Coordinate policies and leverage funding to support historic downtowns and villages by removing barriers to collaboration among local downtown organizations, municipal departments, local businesses, and local nonprofit organizations and increasing accountability and effectiveness at all levels of government to revitalize communities and plan for future growth;
4. Promote healthy, safe, and walkable downtown and village neighborhoods for people of all ages and incomes by increasing investments in those locations; providing energy efficient housing that is closer to jobs, services, health care, stores, entertainment, and schools; and reducing the combined cost of housing and transportation;
5. Encourage investment in mixed use development and provide for diverse housing options within walking distance of historic downtowns and villages that reinforce Vermont's traditional settlement patterns and meet the needs of community members of all social and economic groups;
6. Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation options in historic downtowns and villages to decrease household transportation costs, promote energy independence, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health; and
7. Reflect Vermont's traditional settlement patterns, and to minimize or avoid strip development or other unplanned development throughout the countryside on quality farmland or important natural and cultural landscapes



More Questions?

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