



WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

June 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

Beth Cook
Robert Cook
Emma Hanson
AnnMarie Harmon, Vice-
Chair
Becca Newhall
Alice Peal
Jonathan Ursprung, Chair

THE PLANNING COMMISSION WILL BE HOLDING A HYBRID MEETING. THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND IN PERSON AT WAITSFIELD TOWN HALL OR REMOTE VIA ZOOM WITH TELEPHONE AND/OR VIDEO ACCESS. THOSE PARTICIPATING MAY SPEAK DURING THE DESIGNATED PERIODS.

To join the meeting remotely, use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9190265312>

Meeting ID: 919 026 5312

Or call: 1 929 205 6099

Planning & Zoning Administrator

J. B. Weir

Town Administrator
York Haverkamp

Town Clerk
Jennifer Peterson

Town Treasurer
Steve Lewis

Waitsfield Town Office
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Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-2218
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1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
2. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY (5 +/- min)**
3. **PUBLIC FORUM (10 +/- min)**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES –MAY 20 (10 +/- min)**
5. **IRASVILLE MASTER PLAN (30 +/- min) AnnMarie/Jonathan/JB**
6. **CVRPC UPDATE (15 +/- min) Alice**
7. **VERMONT LOCAL-LEVEL OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC IMPACT PROJECT (15 +/- min) JB**
8. **WASTEWATER PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE (10 +/- min) JB/Bob**
9. **2025 PC WORK PLAN (15 +/- min)**
10. **OTHER BUSINESS (10+/-min)**
11. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Waitsfield Planning and Zoning Administrators Report
Planning Commission June 3, 2025 meeting**

5. Irasville Master Plan

The Village Master Plan Steering Committee (VMPSC) met on May 29th to discuss a formal written response to Shannon Morrison in the aftermath of the meeting with her two weeks back. That written response is included in the meeting packet. The recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

SE Group is planning next steps on the project, which is set to be concluded this fall. Next steps somewhat depend on the response from the Wetlands Division to the steering committee's letter. SE Group is planning for additional community input – whether that takes the form of a survey or other form of input is to be determined.

The next meeting of the VMPSC is set for July 1st from 10:30am – 12:00 noon.

The project website is up to date and can be found [here](#).

6. CVRPC Update

Alice will update the board on CVRPC current work. Included in the packet is the summary of the comments at the LURB Public Hearing in Essex on defining Tier 3 in the Future Land Use Plan. Alice will also update the PC on recent flooding and culvert work.

7. Vermont Local-Level Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Project

On May 23rd, the Town was invited to participate as a pilot community in the development of a toolkit to better understand the economic contributions of outdoor recreation at the local and regional level.

This project aims to provide actionable insights into the economic impact of outdoor recreation at the local level in Vermont. While the economic contributions of outdoor recreation to Vermont's statewide economy are well-recognized and celebrated through impressive GDP data provided by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, there is a significant gap in understanding how these large data points translate into tangible benefits for individual communities or regions. By developing a scalable economic impact toolkit, this project will equip local and regional partners with the tools needed to assess and leverage their community's outdoor recreation potential for sustainable economic development. The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM), with support from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic

Collaborative (VOREC), is partnering with SE Group and Headwaters Economics on this project.

The PZA has spoken with the Town Administrator and we believe this could be a great opportunity – without cost – to get a deeper understanding of the economic impacts of outdoor recreation in the Town. The PZA believes this project could be overseen by the Planning Commission.

Suggested motion: To confirm participation as a pilot community in the Local-Level Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Project, and to approve the PZA to complete the application form found [here](#).

8. Wastewater Project Update

The project team continues to meet with engineer Jon Ashley as the Design plans move to 90% completion. The 60% design plans were submitted to the State on May 15.

The team has been working with USDA RD to finalize a funding package, which is expected within the next two weeks.

Town staff will be in attendance at the June 5 board meeting for the Vermont Community Development Program. The Town will be presenting on its application for \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant funding.

An award announcement from the Northern Borders Regional Commission is expected in the month of June. The Town applied for \$1 million in funding for the purchase and installation of the advanced treatment system for the Munn Field disposal site.

The SBR Manufacturer Pre-Selection Re-Bid process and schedule have been updated, with Bid Opening is scheduled for Thursday, June 19th at 10:00am at the Town Office.

The PZA is again including the project update from Joshua Schwartz that was presented at the May 19 Selectboard meeting.

9. 2025 Work Plan

The PZA has updated the 2025 work plan and it is included in the packet. There may be suggested bylaw changes that come from the Village Master Plan project, which will conclude in the fall.

The PC has set its sights on a second phase of the Master Plan which would focus on the Irasville wetlands. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development has not yet released info on the fall application process. In the meantime, the PZA is working to find out whether that is the best funding source for wetland work, which will likely focus on hydrology and connectivity to the Mad River.

With regard to the Limited Business District, the PZA would like to complete an analysis of how much acreage of developable land is encompassed within the LBD before the PC goes too far down this road. Due to wetland constraints and other factors, it may not be worth revising the current standards.

9. Other Business

Upcoming trainings/webinars:

Grants & Funding Chat:

This chat is a bi-monthly series to help members learn about specific funding opportunities as well as ways to make their funding applications competitive – and the advance work that is required when using someone else’s money.

Each meeting focuses on a different topic. After an eye-opening 15-minute presentation on the day’s topic, the format transitions to a participant Q&A, where attendees can ask questions of the presenter and each other. Bring your questions, share your challenges, and learn from other communities.

This series is presented by Bonnie Waninger, the Project & Funding Specialist on VLCT’s Municipal Operations Support Team.

Registration Information

Register once and attend all sessions! Once you register, your link to join will be the same for every 2025 Grants & Funding Chat. Zoom will send you an email with the link to join ahead of each chat.

Future Dates and Topics

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 – Housing*

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 – Transportation*

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 – Community Economic Development

* These two might switch dates due to timing of the legislative session.

Presenter: Bonnie Waninger, Project & Funding Specialist, VLCT

Website [here](#).

Vermont's Land Use Review Board (LURB) Overview

June 11, 2025 10:00 AM - June 11, 2025 11:30 AM EDT

Vermont's Land Use Review Board (LURB) was established in 2025 to administer the state's Act 250 land use permitting program, which works to ensure that development contributes to the vibrancy of Vermont's communities and economy but not at the expense of the state's landscape. As outlined in Act 181, enacted last year, the LURB's responsibilities include administering the program's existing land use permitting system, reviewing and approving new regional plans, and transitioning the program to a new location-based tiered jurisdictional system.

Join us for an overview by the LURB Statewide Coordinator and learn:

Why the LURB was created and its role in the Act 250 process

Major changes to land use planning and regulation brought about by Act 181 of 2024

Status of those changes and the timeline for phased implementation

Presenters

Aaron J. Brondyke, State Coordinator, Vermont Land Use Review Board

Register [here](#).

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Weir

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Draft

Members Present: Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung
Members Absent: Beth Cook
Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Others Present: None

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Jonathan Ursprung. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum

Nobody requested an opportunity to comment.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of May 6, 2025 were amended and approved.

During the discussion of the minutes, there was a conversation about data that might be collected or surveys put in place to gather more information about residents and short term rentals.

5. Irasville Master Plan

AnnMarie reported on a steering committee that had been held with Shannon Morrison regarding how to move forward with more consolidated wetland planning and the potential for a second phase of master planning to focus on the wetlands issues associated with Irasville development. AnnMarie outlined that there were three main aspects planned for discussion, but that the group generally was looking to receive some guidance on where they should next place their focus, and some recommendations for how to move forward. The three topics covered were the sharing of village center design objectives, the presentation of draft wetland conservation and enhancement strategies, and the sharing of future development scenarios in Irasville.

AnnMarie then summarized the meeting, noting that Alex (SE Group) also made a point to cover that Irasville is part of bigger picture framework as a focal point for the MRV, not just for Waitsfield, and that the focus of the planning is primarily on flood resilience, but also with some emphasis on providing recreation opportunities in the area. Alex had outlined that there are three things necessary for implementation of the project: additional studies of local and regional wetlands, development of an understanding of how zoning regulations or other regulatory tools can help, and understanding what the relationship is between ANR and this master planning work.

Shannon explained that, when impacting wetlands, a developer might make payments through the Army Corps in order to gain the ability to impact wetlands, or might provide enhancement/creation of wetlands in order to balance the damage caused by development. She recommended reaching out to Mike Adams of the Army Corps in order to learn more, and offered to assist with that connection. Shannon pointed out that enhancing the wetlands at the corner of Carroll Road and Route 100 and those on Sean Lawson's property would be a good step, but would not be enough of a positive impact to balance out the potential development planned for. Shannon also outlined that ANR's overriding priority is avoiding the potential impacts of infill development on downstream flooding along the main stem of the Mad River, and noted that if it can be demonstrated that identified projects and actions will mitigate the loss of flood retention function, then ANR would be willing to partner with the Town on the project.

Following the meeting, SE Group staff summarized the guidance they had heard from Shannon, and outlined some of the work that will need to be completed in order to follow through. These tasks could be included in a second phase of Irasville planning, and include collecting data to demonstrate the connection between the wetlands and flood prevention. A follow up hydraulic study would help identify the scope of wetland mitigation needs. Alex also explained that Shannon had spoken of a pathway to partnership with ANR for future wetlands permitting being the identification of major creation/enhancement projects as a foundational step to a master agreement between ANR and the Town. AnnMarie noted that she is under the impression that Shannon needs to see completed projects and to not simply have projects identified; Jonathan noted that this would be completion of projects undertaken through working with the Army Corps. He also explained that Shannon had appeared to indicate that ANR might provide some leeway if projects have been identified and are partially underway, but that the conversation had been an introductory discussion and further discussions with ANR are needed.

Shannon specifically referred to the channelized runoff from the Food Hub/Skatium and bever pond area, and the need to disperse this type of runoff.

Jonathan noted that any impact payment required by the Army Corps needs to be made by the development applicant, and pointed out that determining responsible parties for projects is likely to be somewhat complicated.

During AnnMarie's report, several things were noted by other PC members, including:

- New wetlands mapping is being created with lidar, and will include indications of wetlands that need restoration.
- It may be useful for the group to ask Rebecca Diehl to attend a meeting, as she is able to provide a lot of useful information.
- Upstream work along the Mill Brook and other tributaries may be beneficial and would likely involve cooperation with Fayston.
- SLR Consulting has hydrologic study capability and experience in remediating wetlands, and might be a useful organization to connect with.

There was also a discussion of culverts in Town, the upcoming culvert inventory update, and impacts of the prior weekend's flash flooding. Jonathan noted that the MRVPD will be working on documents

for mutual aid cooperation between the towns in these types of events, as well as appropriate road policy language for replacing private culverts in emergency situations.

Bob noted what he felt were the priorities in Alex's report, with the last sentence as being the most important and the last bullet point being second. He also spoke of potential bureaucratic hurdles in working with the Army Corps, and determining who is the best person to work with. There was a discussion of potential contacts in this area.

JB noted that he will attach to the minutes some of the communication referred to.

6. CVRPC Update

Alice reported on the following:

- The deteriorating condition of the Meadow Road Bridge, and that there are also issues with the Trembley Road bridge decking that need to be addressed
- A housing forum will begin meeting quarterly, including CVRPC representatives and others; the forums will include a presentation and breakout sessions
- An Act 250 letter has been issued regarding a GMP petition to upgrade their substation on Carroll Road. The site is near wetlands; no application for permits has been submitted yet.
- The Housing chapter of the Regional Plan is being written, and discussions have included infrastructure and the cost of building, along with potential incentives including public/private partnerships such as the CHIP (Community Housing Infrastructure Program) program currently included in S.127.
- Numbers are being developed for the RPC housing plan in future land use discussions, currently the projections for the area are that 3800 new units are needed in the region covered by the RPC, although that may be lowered. Sixty of those units are indicated as being Waitsfield's responsibility. The related Act 250 tiers discussion is also ongoing, with Tier 3 proving to be contentious due to the tension between natural areas and development.
- A recent Statewide Transportation Improvement Program meeting focused on a four-year plan for VTrans and allocation of predicted funding (which may end up being less than anticipated); the Route 100/17 intersection is currently included in the plan.
- Funding opportunities for addressing the Meadow Road bridge are still being sought.
- Governor Scott has reduced bike/ped funding.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

JB pointed to the information included in the meeting packet, including an update from Joshua Schwartz. He noted that there has been no award of Vermont Community Development Program funds, as that program is very underfunded, and that more funding request results will be available by the end of June.

8. Other Business

MRVPD – Jonathan provided some updates from the most recent meeting:

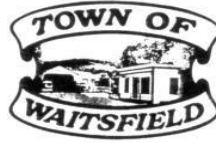
- Mad Bus costs are going up significantly, Sugarbush will be proposing how to potentially share the increase with the towns. Looking at routes and determining ways to increase ridership will also be investigated.
- Wait House e-bikes are available for demo use.

- Community development opportunities were discussed, including future ownership of the Village Meeting House.
- A 40th anniversary event will likely be planned for later in the year.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary



5/30/2025

To: Shannon Morrison, ANR Wetlands Management Division

From: Members of the Irasville Village Master Plan Core Team, on behalf of the Village Master Plan Steering Committee

Re: Irasville Village Master Plan

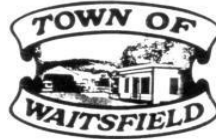
Dear Shannon,

Thank you for taking some time to meet with the project team on the Irasville Village Master Plan. It was helpful to dig into some of the complexities around permitting and mitigation, which will be informative to the development of the plan.

Following this meeting, we have a few questions and some additional thoughts to share with you:

Questions:

- Re: Army Corps of Engineers permitting – thank you for clarifying the role of Army Corps permitting, and connecting us to your contacts. Can you confirm that Army Corps permits have been required for recent wetlands permits in Irasville?
- Can you clarify your expectations around the timeline/process for a future master agreement for mitigation and wetlands permitting? Is it your expectation that this mitigation agreement would need to be fully in place before any permits will be considered? Would mitigation projects need to be completed first as well? How long might it take to finalize such an arrangement?
- Are you aware of any data or resources (beyond the readily-available wetlands and hydrology data maintained by the state) that speak to the hydrologic nexus between the Irasville wetlands complex and the Mad River? This continues to be an area where we observe a disconnect between how ANR describes the flood mitigation role of low function wetlands and what our local partners have observed on the ground. The (admittedly anecdotal) reports are that these wetlands do not appear to collect much surface water during heavy precipitation events, including the major events of the few years (and last weekend). Our understanding from recent construction projects is that the underlying soils are not particularly well-drained either, indicating a lack of water storage potential, although this has not been comprehensively studied. And we still have a difficult time explaining to others why such a small drainage area is the focus for flood retention when it is just downstream of Mill Brook and many other, much larger subwatersheds in the Mad River Valley.
 - We have identified a hydrologic study as a potential follow up action to shed some light on this question, but it will be difficult to justify to the community and



key stakeholders the additional expense and delay that performing this study will introduce and the impacts of that delay on ongoing village center planning initiatives (more on that below).

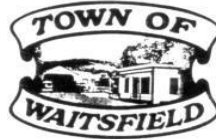
Thoughts:

We appreciated the suggestions you provided for potential wetlands enhancement projects and will be exploring those further. We also agree that there would be benefit to having a master agreement between the Town and relevant permitting agencies for wetlands mitigation banking and permitting future development. However, we are not clear that this level of effort is necessary for mitigating impacts of future development in the lowest-functioning wetlands areas (versus a typical wetland permitting process) and are concerned about the potential timeline impacts to ongoing infrastructure investments in Irasville (especially given the time it may take to bring Army Corps to the table with their recent staffing cuts and subsequent lack of local staff).

We understand that there has been long history of wetlands impacts in Irasville and are committed to preserving wetland function in the area. Our original understanding was that no further wetlands permits would be approved in Irasville until a master plan was developed. Now it seems that the expectation is that this master plan must be developed AND there must a complex, fully-executed agreement and possibly mitigation project implementation before any permits can be approved. We have worked in good faith on a master plan for Irasville that will address the original requirement and have concerns about the impacts of the seemingly expanded requirements.

As you are aware, the Town of Waitsfield and its regional partners have been tackling the issue of smart growth in Irasville for decades. After years of sustained work and collaboration, we are at a position where there is significant alignment and momentum at the local, regional, and state level for implementing this work. To summarize:

- **There is strong alignment with recent state land use law and policy.** Planning for village center development in Irasville aligns with the provisions of Act 181 (and associated Act 250 interim exemption areas) as well as S.100 that seek to promote infill development in village centers. The Town of Waitsfield approved revised zoning bylaws in 2024 in anticipation of triggering S.100 minimum density requirements with the implementation of the new village wastewater system.
- **The State of Vermont is an active investor in Irasville village center planning and smart growth.** The State is financially supporting the development of the village wastewater system through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and is funding the current master planning work through the Municipal Planning Grant Program. Recent state funding awards through the Downtown Transportation Program and Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative have been used to improve village center pedestrian infrastructure and establish a recreation hub and central trail access point in



Irasville. Our work on the Irasville Village Master Plan seeks to create pathways for the economic return on these investments.

- **There is strong and extensive local and regional planning support.** Town Plans and regional plans have consistently cited Irasville as the most suitable location in the Mad River Valley to accommodate new development in response to the region's longstanding housing availability / attainability challenges, increasing flood resiliency threats, and desire to retain the overall rural and undeveloped character of the watershed. Infill development in Irasville is central to addressing all of these challenges. The concept of establishing Irasville as the valley's regional center is well-known in Mad River Valley communities and supported by recent public engagement efforts.
- **In addition to the above, there are mission-critical timing considerations.** The planned village wastewater system is being advanced through a complex financial package that will require the Town to recoup project costs and reimburse funders through future wastewater service connections and fees. While there is the potential for additional studies and complex wetland mitigation banking projects to deliver benefits to Irasville and the Mad River Valley, the potential for delay introduced by layering these additional actions is a serious consideration for the financing and successful implementation of the wastewater project, and for the ability for that project to support smart growth development patterns envisioned in the Irasville Village Master Plan.

To summarize, we find ourselves in a position where the State is imposing a broad set of conditions that the Town must meet to allow desired future infill development in low-functioning wetlands. At the same time, we are receiving financial support from the State to enable that same infill development, conducting our planning work for future development in alignment with recent State land use policy changes, and attempting to implement decades of local and regional planning directives. We are working and will continue to work to identify strategies for wetlands conservation and enhancement in Irasville and the broader Mad River Valley, but are deeply concerned about an arrangement where impacts to low-function wetlands in Irasville are completely off the table until there is a master agreement and/or project implementation, given that we seem to be in a position where the hydrologic connection to the Mad River and relationship to flood mitigation are both unclear.

To that end, we are hopeful that we can identify a productive arrangement where we can advance wetland conservation and enhancement and Irasville redevelopment hand-in-hand while keeping our current projects and investments in Irasville on track. We are curious to hear your thoughts on what this could look like, how we can move forward together as partners, and what ideas you have for concrete next steps.

Best regards,

Members of the Irasville Village Master Plan Core Team, on behalf of the Village Master Plan Steering Committee



TIER 3 RULEMAKING

Meeting Summary – Public Engagement Session – May 22, 2025

Goal: Provide an overview of the Act 250 program, the changes that are in process due to the passage of Act 181 in 2024, and focus on the Tier 3 rulemaking effort that is just getting started. Answer questions and collect comments on critical resource areas to consider for Tier 3 designation, as well as possible Act 250 jurisdictional thresholds for Tier 3 areas.

The meeting was attended by approximately 55 participants. Five people participated in person at the Essex Junction Act 250 hearing room, and approximately 50 people participated remotely via Microsoft Teams. Questions and comments were received from 12 participants. This meeting was designed to get input from the public before the Land Use Review Board (LURB) begins drafting Tier 3 rules.

Attendees:

LURB staff: Alex Weinhagen, Sarah Hadd, Rachel Lomonaco

Public:

Sam Lincoln, Pam Loranger, Jonathan Wood, Fred Glanzberg, Thomas Weiss, Richard Geof, Richard Howe, Mark Delaney, John Moore, Danelle Birong, Cathyann LaRose, Joe Segale, John Reid, Alex Hurst, Mila Lonetto, Chris Brimmer, Cathlin Lord, Chris Fife, Jean Richardson, Kate McCarthy, Annette Smith, Doug Greason, Eric Webb, Emily Alger, Bruce Riddle, Herb Olson, Monica Callan, Nick Zaiac, Norm Etkind, Alice Peal, Renee Carpenter, Seth Jensen, Jim Manley, Tony OMeara, Benjamin Brickner, Steve Harrington, Jackie Folsom, Christian Meyer, Christi Bollman, Kristen Dietrich, Jason Rasmussen, Bill Sayre, Rob Apple, Malcolm Fitzpatrick, Suzanna Jones, Margaret McNurlan, Jennifer ??, Cathy Emmons, Elizabeth Thompson, Peter Erb, Jacob Pluta, Rutland, Jamey Fidel, Brian Bannon, Jennifer Decker, Alexandra Horst, Meg Emmons, one unidentified (phone # only)

Questions and Comments:

Alex Weinhagen presented an overview of Act 250, the new road rule, and what is a Tier 3 area. He then reviewed the rule making process for Tier 3 including process and timeline, noting a draft will be available in July for comment. He noted the working group of stakeholders and the need for public input as well. Initial feedback from stakeholders on possible Tier 3 areas was noted.

Sam Lincoln of Randolph noted that Tier 3 areas are supposed to be “critical natural resources”. He asked if there was a definition for “critical natural resources”. A. Weinhagen noted that the Statute did not define the term. He noted that a critical natural resource has a value and function, and it was subjective as to what should be included.



LAND USE REVIEW BOARD

10 Baldwin Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05633-3201

<https://act250.vermont.gov/>

S. Lincoln asked who the burden was on to define the term. A. Weinhausen noted that the statute does enumerate six resource areas that must be considered the Tier 3 designation. He said that these six are examples of some resource areas the Legislature felt were critical. He indicated that it was the LURB's responsibility to consider potential natural resource areas, and decide which ones would be included in Tier 3.

Alice Peal of Waitsfield recommended conferring with the scientific experts in the VT Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) for clarity on the definitions of particular resource areas. She said that flooding is a key issue to consider, with impacts coming from higher elevations at the top of watersheds. She asked whether regional and municipal plans are being consulted to help identify potential Tier 3 areas. She noted that habitat corridors and forest blocks are being looked at in municipal plans. A. Weinhausen said that the future land use area mapping in regional plans will determine the location of Tier 1 areas, but not Tier 3 areas. He said he would like to get input from municipalities on Tier 3 areas, and is open to hearing suggestions and seeking out more input; however, it will likely be impossible to read and factor in every municipal plan in Vermont.

Monica Callen was recognized, but was unable to unmute on Microsoft Teams. A. Weinhausen recommended she submit questions and comments afterwards via email. Contact information available on the Act 250 Tier 3 webpage.

Joe Segale of Huntington asked what the level of Act 250 review would be in Tier 3 areas. Would projects be reviewed under all or a subset of the typical Act 250 criteria. A. Weinhausen said that there is flexibility to determine this through the Tier 3 rulemaking, and that some stakeholders in the Tier 3 working group have suggested limiting Tier 3 review to just the most relevant Act 250 criteria (e.g., criterion 8). J. Segale thought this was a good idea. J. Segale asked about the size of the Tier 3 areas and if there could be a consideration of areas that were perhaps too small to qualify. A. Weinhausen noted that there was a minimum under consideration so as to filter out small areas.

Thomas Weiss of Montpelier recommended using all the Act 250 review criteria for projects that trigger the need for an Act 250 permit in Tier 3 areas.

Herb Olson of Addison County said that he is in the Vermont House of Representatives for the Addison-4 district that includes Monkton, Starksboro, Lincoln, and Bristol. He stated that the towns in his district have a deep commitment to preserving natural heritage but are in an existential housing crisis. He asked that the housing needs of the state be kept in mind while addressing the requirements of Act 181. He hoped that the rules would not take away from towns areas suitable for housing. A. Weinhausen asked



how the LURB could outreach to rural communities to make sure that they were part of the process. H. Olson said that he would send along what the towns he represents have and noted geographic limitations.

Jonathan Wood of Cambridge asked if this would be a parcel by parcel analysis, such that an entire parcel may be jurisdictional no matter the size of the parcel, or the location of the Tier 3 area with regard to the proposed development. He said parcel-based jurisdiction could drive the carving up and fragmentation of forests. As a consulting forester, he said that the Tier 3 concept is already causing landowner concern. He said that landowners are wondering if some of the important natural resource areas that he has helped them identify will now become a liability driving the need for Act 250 permitting in the future. He said that it has already created fear and could drive parcelization. A. Weinhausen noted that the concept discussed to date is to have jurisdiction in Tier 3 areas based on the area of impact and not the overall parcel.

Alice Peal noted that she is a Planning Commissioner and Emergency Coordinator in the Town of Waitsfield, and that she is happy to provide Waitsfield's Town Plan for information. She cautioned about the adverse impacts of building roads and development in forested areas. She highlighted the impact and cost to municipalities of such development, including stress on the provision of emergency services.

Sam Lincoln emphasized the importance of the rural economy, and the ability of landowners to maintain a working landscape. He cautioned against requiring an Act 250 permit for agricultural uses and forestry uses (e.g., logging, wood products manufacturing). He recommended that Tier 3 rules include clear definitions, tight/limited review criteria, and exemptions when a project utilizes good development design (e.g., conservation subdivision design). He recommended that the LURB start small with Tier 3 designations, with the understanding that the rules can be revised later if necessary. A. Weinhausen noted the Act 250 Wood Products Manufacturing Report that is underway to see how that sector could be better supported.

Renee Carpenter was recognized, but was unable to unmute on Microsoft Teams. A. Weinhausen recommended she submit questions and comments afterwards via email. Contact information available on the Act 250 Tier 3 webpage. Renee did submit a brief comment via email, which was only seen after the meeting. This comment is included below in italics. Renee also followed up with a longer set of comments the next day, which are not included below.

Sorry that my mike wouldn't work (in Edge, either). My Question, relating to Alice Peal's first question about "the science": Permacultural science regarding water management to minimize flooding during extreme weather events would indicate the need for combinations of holding ponds at upper elevations , with contour



diversions (as exemplified, specifically, on a 10-acre Moretown property during Irene). I'm curious how the LURB will balance the protection of ecologically-sensitive tier 3 areas and the need to prevent excessive erosion that leads to lower elevation flooding. Is this something yet considered?

Chris Fife explained that he works for Weyerhaeuser, a forest products company that owns and manages 86,000 acres of woodland in the Northeast Kingdom (former Champion Lands). He recommended not adding any further Act 250 permitting requirements to logging and forest management activities in Tier 3 areas. He indicated that his company already has to get Act 250 permits for logging above 2500 feet in elevation, and that this permit requirement is a disincentive for other smaller landowners to manage their high elevation woodlands, to the detriment of the forest. He noted that logging is not like permanent development in that the forest land use remains.

Caithlin Lord explained that she is a regional planner from the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) – the regional planning entity for the Northeast Kingdom. She expressed concern about the Northeast Kingdom being disproportionately impacted by potential Tier 3 designations. A. Weinhagen agreed that this would need to be addressed given that the area is generally less developed and at a higher elevation than other regions. He mentioned habitat connectors as a case in point, as reflected in the Vermont Conservation Design data sets. He noted that there were a lot of habitat connectivity blocks in the Kingdom. Rather than using these blocks as Tier 3 areas, ANR has suggested focusing on where there are gaps between the highest priority connectivity blocks. He said such areas might then be further subset to focus on associated priority wildlife road crossing areas. High elevations are a bit more challenging but intersecting other important resource areas to target specific high elevation areas may be a method to pursue.

Jonathan Wood recommended not ignoring potential Tier 3 areas in more developed places. He said there could be significant natural communities in developed areas. He noted sandy soil areas in Chittenden County where Pitch Pine trees are found. A. Weinhagen noted that there will be Tier 3 areas in more developed parts of the state, and that the extent of Tier 1 areas will be reasonably tight. J. Wood noted that there are existing protections for many resources, and that he felt the Legislature made a mistake by mandating the creation of Tier 3 areas. A. Weinhagen said that the Tier 3 working group is recommending that Tier 3 areas not include areas with adequate protections by other means (e.g., ANR review). He said that we plan to evaluate existing ANR permitting to see where there might be gaps. As an example, he mentioned that ANR is standing up a new river corridor permitting system, but that it will only cover the major river corridors, and not smaller streams with drainage areas between a quarter and two square miles.



Sam Lincoln reiterated that duplication of permitting should be avoided. He went on to say that for some resources, the right solution to additional protection/review might be enhancement of existing ANR permit processes or the creation of new resource-specific permitting. This could be preferable to requiring a full Act 250 review via the Tier 3 mechanism.

Cathy Emmons of Pomfret spoke to the regional planning future land use maps, and discussions around the three rural designations (Rural General, Rural Agriculture/Forest, Rural Conservation). She indicated that her family owns a 1,000-acre farm that is largely conserved, and is being mapped within the Rural Conservation land use area. However, when the property was conserved, an allowance was retained to create three floating house sites in the future. She expressed concern that a Tier 3 designation could require Act 250 permitting for these three house sites, even though they represent a tiny fraction of an already 1,000-acre property. She asked if Tier 3 designations will consider conserved land, and how the road rule would impact the need for an Act 250 permit. A. Weinhagen spoke to the Road Rule and the Statute. He stated that understanding where conservation areas are is helpful, but not determinative of Tier 3 designations. He noted that the regional plan land use type (e.g., Rural Conservation) has no bearing on whether or not an area will be mapped as Tier 3. C. Emmons spoke to the need to lessen burdens for those in working agriculture. A. Weinhagen asked if there was a number of new houses that should be under the threshold in a Tier 3 area. She stated that the geography should be looked at and that the Board had a hard job. She said that there will need to be more housing in forests and other places.

Fred Glanzberg of Royalton asked whether the Road Rule measured the 800 feet of new road along the path of the road, or instead as a linear distance from an existing road. He noted that roads over terrain need to include turns and possibly switchbacks to create usable grades and properly address stormwater runoff. He said that measuring along the path of the road effectively penalizes good road design. A. Weinhagen said that the Statute was pretty clear that the 800-foot Road Rule trigger was the length of the new road – i.e., the path of the road.

Kristen Dietrich said that if municipal plan analysis has been done, it should be used to inform the Tier 3 designation areas.

Meg Emmons was recognized, but was unable to unmute on Microsoft Teams. A. Weinhagen recommended she submit questions and comments afterwards via email. Contact information available on the Act 250 Tier 3 webpage.

Thomas Weiss spoke to the planned ANR river corridor permitting. He asked how such ANR permitting would be coordinated with Act 250 permitting for jurisdictional projects in Tier 2 areas. A. Weinhagen felt that such a project (located in a river corridor area)



LAND USE REVIEW BOARD

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<https://act250.vermont.gov/>

would require both the ANR river corridor permit and the Act 250 permit. He said the river corridor permit might be useful in demonstrating compliance with certain Act 250 review criteria. With respect to Fred's comment about the road rule measurements, Thomas Weiss noted that the Legislature did discuss this issue when Act 181 was being written, and they made a conscious choice to measure based on the length of the new road – i.e., the path of the road.

Jonathan Wood reiterated Fred's point about road's needing switchbacks, and the measurement issue. He warned about potential unintended consequences like this with the Tier 3 rulemaking. He noted that ground truthing would be needed for the mapping used to delineate Tier 3 areas. He noted that there are accuracy issues in the mapping on the ANR Atlas mapping website. He asked whether the existing mapping would be updated over time, who would be responsible for that, and how it would be paid for. A. Weinhausen indicated that Act 181 updated existing law on this front, requiring ANR to have a process for map updates that is scientifically based, in order to support the Act 250 review process. However, he said that ANR doesn't feel that the Legislature included appropriate funding to make this possible.

Fred Glanzberg noted that field verification of mapping is important. He noted that the wetland maps on the ANR Atlas can be off by hundreds of feet.

Thomas Weiss noted that Vermont has at least two major lakes in crisis. He encouraged Tier 3 consideration of impaired waters as well as source water protection areas for ground water wells (aquifers).

Other Comments

Alex Weinhausen encouraged everyone to utilize the Tier 3 webpage for additional materials, and to keep up with the rulemaking effort. He noted that there would be another public engagement session in July, once a first draft of the rules is crafted.

Tier 3 online: <https://act250.vermont.gov/tier-3-rulemaking-and-report>

Contact: Alex Weinhausen, Land Use Review Board Member,
alex.weinhausen@vermont.gov, 802-480-1885

From: [Lydia Jankowski](#)
To: townadmin@gmavt.net; pza@gmavt.net
Cc: sam@mrvpd.org; mrvpd@madriver.com; [Alex Belenz](#); [Dagger, Jackie](#); [McCracken, Maureen \(she/her\)](#)
Subject: Pilot Community Invitation: Vermont Local-Level Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Project
Date: Friday, May 23, 2025 11:35:54 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-pcl1q15f.png](#)
[About the Project.pdf](#)

Dear York and JB,

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM), with support from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) has launched the *Vermont Local-Level Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact* project. Over the next few months, we will be working to develop actionable guidance for Vermont communities and regions to better understand the economic impact of outdoor recreation.

The anticipated outcomes from this project include:

- Local Economic Impact Toolkit - Actionable guidance designed to help communities and regions better understand, assess, and plan for their outdoor recreation economy.
- Recommendations Report - A detailed outline of steps for the state and/or partners to collect additional data to support local and statewide economic impact analysis, recommendations for technical assistance to support local use of the toolkit, and strategies for outreach and promotion to increase awareness and utilization of the toolkit.

I'm reaching out to you now to extend an invitation for Waitsfield to participate as a pilot community in the development of the toolkit. Community input and engagement are central to the success of our work. Throughout the pilot our team of state leaders and consultants from SE Group and Headwaters Economics, will provide your community with resources to better understand the role that outdoor recreation plays in your local economy. In exchange, we ask for your assistance in helping test our draft toolkit so that we may provide the most helpful and impactful guidance for assessing the economic impact of outdoor recreation at the local-level. The toolkit will be piloted in four individual pilot communities and on one regional outdoor recreation asset during the summer of 2025. You can find more information below about the project and our process.

Why You

We identified Waitsfield as a preferred pilot community after a robust review process that included all recipients of either a past VOREC Community Grant,

assistance from the Vermont Council on Rural Development and/or the Rural Economies for Rural Communities program. Participation in one of these programs demonstrated a commitment and interest in developing the outdoor recreation economy and preparedness to participate in this project. We then considered geography, demographic diversity, varying recreation assets, and community economy goals to narrow the list to a set of preferred communities to invite forward.

We are interested in Waitsfield as a case study for how well-established outdoor recreation gateway communities in Vermont can continue to invest in outdoor recreation and adapt to a changing climate while retaining strong economic contributions. The ongoing work to lean into four-season recreation, including the recent opening of the Mad River Recreation Hub, provides a compelling model to examine through an economic impact lens.

Your participation will be instrumental in refining the toolkit, ensuring it is practical, accessible, and valuable for communities across Vermont.

If this is an opportunity Waitsfield is interested in, please continue reading below for more information about expected participation and next steps. See the attached PDF for a more detailed description of the overall project.

Looking forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out.

Best,
Lydia Jankowski

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

Expected Outcomes

We recognize that participation in this pilot program requires an investment of time from the selected communities. We also understand that communities across Vermont are navigating unprecedented challenges, and while you may support this initiative, you may also be evaluating whether it is the right fit for your community at this time.

We hope that your involvement not only enhances the overall usability of the toolkit but also provides your community with valuable planning resources throughout the process.

As a pilot community, you will:

- **Test the draft toolkit** and begin collecting **key data points** on your outdoor recreation economy to inform planning, grant applications, and community engagement efforts.
- **Receive tailored support** from our team of consultants to effectively utilize the toolkit.
- **Shape final recommendations** to ensure the toolkit meets the diverse needs of communities statewide.

Each pilot community will receive a visually compelling **summary report and data sheet** prepared by our consulting team. This report will highlight key findings from the process and provide high-level recommendations for leveraging outdoor recreation assets to drive local economic benefits.

Expected Participation

Each pilot community will be expected to participate in the following meetings and engagements:

- **Assemble Ad-Hoc Committee.** Identify a few community leaders with interest and availability to participate in this project. We recommend three to five members total, including yourself (other participants could include members of the select board, recreation committee, local chamber of commerce, etc.).
- **Kick Off Meeting.** We will hold a kickoff meeting to introduce the project, answer any questions, and learn a bit more about what your community is working on. We anticipate holding this meeting in early to mid-May.
- **Toolkit Training & Site Visit.** Upon completion of the draft toolkit, we will share the toolkit with each pilot community. We will then conduct a site visit to each municipality, which will include a training meeting with advisory committee members and site visits to local outdoor recreation destinations and local businesses. Please plan to spend at least half a day with us. We anticipate holding these visits in late June.
- **Local Report Outs.** During the site visit, we will work with you to outline a plan for your community to use the toolkit over the course of the following month based on your existing capacity. We will request that pilot communities complete a *brief* report-out describing their experience using the toolkit and any relevant insights they have gained about their local outdoor recreation economy. We will ask for your report by late-July.
- **Final Project Meeting.** Pilot communities will be asked to attend a final project meeting with statewide partners and stakeholders. During this meeting we will discuss the final toolkit and how it will be put into action for

Vermont communities. This will be a virtual meeting and we anticipate it will be held in late September.

Next Steps

If you would like to move forward together, by May 30th please 1) reply to this email to confirm your interest and 2) fill in this **brief application form** at <https://arcg.is/01CbqT0>:



If you believe another staff person or community member would be a better fit at this time to take-on this initiative in your community, please share their contact information with us. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out.
We appreciate your willingness to contribute to this important effort and look forward to working with you to strengthen Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.

Lydia Jankowski (she/hers)
Community & Recreation Planner
802.264.0355

SE GROUP
COLORADO | VERMONT | UTAH

VERMONT LOCAL-LEVEL OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC IMPACT PROJECT

Purpose Statement

This project aims to provide actionable insights into the economic impact of outdoor recreation at the local level in Vermont. While the economic contributions of outdoor recreation to Vermont's statewide economy are well-recognized and celebrated through impressive GDP data provided by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, there is a significant gap in understanding how these large data points translate into tangible benefits for individual communities or regions. By developing a scalable economic impact toolkit, this project will equip local and regional partners with the tools needed to assess and leverage their community's outdoor recreation potential for sustainable economic development.

Who

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM), with support from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC), is partnering with SE Group and Headwaters Economics on this project. Both consulting firms bring extensive expertise in outdoor recreation economy planning and rural community development, with specialized knowledge in key areas such as mitigating community impacts in high-demand recreation zones, articulating the benefits of outdoor recreation, and a deep understanding of Vermont's unique local context.

Overview

Outdoor recreation is a key driver of Vermont's economy. It attracts tourism, promotes health and wellness, encourages environmental stewardship, and supports business and workforce growth. In 2023, outdoor recreation activity and businesses generated over \$2 billion of economic activity in Vermont, according to data from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA). This data supports continued state-level policy making and investment in outdoor recreation. However, it provides limited actionable insights for individual municipalities, outdoor recreation, economic development or regional organizations that are seeking to leverage outdoor recreation for community and economic benefit. This project will bridge this gap by developing a more localized approach to understanding the economic impact of outdoor recreation, helping communities make informed decisions to grow their local economies.

The State of Vermont has actively supported community-based investments in outdoor recreation economy since 2019, including awarding over \$11 million in grant funding to local projects through the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC). Communities who have received funding through VOREC and other grant programs often

struggle to communicate the impact of these investments. In other communities, local leaders have stated a need for better tools to make the case to municipal select boards and/or outside funders to invest in outdoor recreation assets.

Toolkit Development Process

The toolkit will provide local level partners with tools to better understand the economic contributions of outdoor recreation at the local and regional level. The tools will utilize information from existing data sources and provide partners with guidance on how to fill in gaps in data that exist at the local level. The tools will be scalable based on the resources, capacity, and interest of different partners and their familiarity with the economic relationship to outdoor recreation of their local and/or regional area.

Community input and engagement is central to the useability and success of the toolkit. To finalize toolkit development, the tools will be tested in four individual pilot communities and on one regional outdoor recreation asset during the summer of 2025. Selected pilot communities will represent the diversity of geographies, local governments, economies, and outdoor recreation assets and experiences that exist across the state. Feedback on the toolkit will directly inform the final deliverable and how the toolkit will be used into the future.

To develop the tools in the toolkit a working group representing different local and regional outdoor recreation economy partners will convene at key milestones in the process to share feedback and guidance. This working group will consist of municipal leaders, business owners, non-profit recreation organizations, Regional Planning Commissions and economic development organizations, and other key partners. A working session will also be held with State staff and key organizational partners to collect feedback on their needs for outdoor recreation economic impact data that will inform the tools in the toolkit and conversations the Toolkit Working Group.

2025 Waitsfield Planning Commission Work Plan			
	Tasks	Project	Timeline
		VILLAGE MASTER PLANNING	
1	Irasville Master Planning	This project will incorporate the updated wetland maps and include a review of the history of planning in Irasville. Segue from the By-Laws Modernization Grant work and Wastewater project.	In process through Fall 2025
		Zoning and By-Laws	
1	GPOD	Groundwater Protection Overlay District to be adopted to protect certain land radii around the Town aquifer off Reed Road. The PC held a public hearing in February approving the overlay district and forwarding it to the SB for its own adoption in July.	Complete + pending SB adoption
2	FY 2026 MPG	Phase 2 of Irasville Master Planning Project to study wetlands etc? Depends on stance of Wetlands Division? Perhaps alternative methods of funding for pure hydrologic study?	2026-2027
3	Limited Business District	Reviewing standards and purpose. Numerous people have approached the PZA with regard to developing housing in this area. As it stands, residential development is deterred in this area. However, given the proximity to the Town's future disposal field, future phasing of the wastewater system could allow for	
4	ADU restrictions	Review and update the 30% threshold for ADUs as this restriction is less common; PZA has email into counsel as to status of this standard in the post-HOME ACT era. Per SE Group: CU for ADU above 900sqft/30% makes little sense now that duplex is allowed outright w/ no size limit.	
5	Junk Ordinance	SB member wants this to be looked into	
6	VMP - Bylaw changes	Potential Bylaw changes stemming from Village Master Plan	2026