



WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

July 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

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

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

4144 Main Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-2218
www.waitsfieldvt.gov

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
2. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY (5 +/- min)**
3. **PUBLIC FORUM (10 +/- min)**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES –JUNE 2 (10 +/- min)**
5. **TOWN PLAN AMENDMENT PUBLIC HEARING (15 +/- min)**
6. **SHORT-TERM RENTALS (60 +/- min) Emma, Beth & Becca**
7. **WASTEWATER PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE (10 +/- min) JB/Bob**
8. **OTHER BUSINESS (10+/-min)**
 - a. Legislative Warp Up
 - b. PC Vacancy update
 - c. DRB Update and Vacancy
 - d. July 21 meeting date
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 2, 2026
Draft

Members Present: Bob Cook, Beth Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall, Jonathan Ursprung

Members Absent:

Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Joshua Schwartz (MRVPD)

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Emma Hanson. 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 time to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of May 19, 2026 were amended and approved.

5. Town Plan Update

JB reported that all documentation had been disseminated as required, and the public hearing has been warned for July 7.

6. Short Term Rentals (STR)

Joshua Schwartz had provided written feedback on the draft STR ordinance language prior to the meeting. He provided a background of local and state-level work which has taken place regarding STRs; this was followed by a discussion of Waitsfield's draft ordinance language.

Joshua explained that he found the draft STR ordinance confusing, and suggested that the VLCT template might better serve Waitsfield's needs. Emma indicated that the primary goals of implementing an ordinance in Town are to address fire safety and establish a registration process. She agreed that it would likely be useful reconvene the committee and rework the draft, using the VLCT template as a basis.

Some of the specifics discussed included:

- Using the statutory definition of STR rather than the 14 days outlined in the current Waitsfield draft.
- Whether the town has the authority to enact an ordinance for all rentals; Joshua noted this is likely not allowable.
- The use of the word 'guest' in addressing parties – as this could also pertain to homeowners if it is prohibited to allow overnight parking in public spaces for 'guests.'
 - It was agreed that it is difficult to attempt to address neighborhood impacts.

- A metric to use in determining impacts to long-term rentals needs to be determined, if possible.
- The Stowe registration purpose statement may be useful.

How to proceed was outlined. It was agreed that the STR committee will reconvene and consider changes to the draft. JB will ask the town attorney for input prior to this reworking of the ordinance. The committee will restructure the draft based on the VLCT template and Stowe's registration process; parking will be revisited, as well as the 14-days included in the definition. JB offered to provide an updated draft for discussion by the committee. Josh also noted that he is willing to participate as requested.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Bob and JB spoke of efforts to ensure that the current pricing will be covered by the financing which is available for the project, noted that easements continue to be drafted, and indicated that the bid process will likely begin in July. Joshua also confirmed that permitting is underway now that the 90% design is complete, and that the Selectboard will be discussing allocations.

8. Other Business

PC Vacancy Update – The ad is being published again in the Valley Reporter, and Emma will post the vacancy on Front Porch Forum.

DRB Update – JB outlined upcoming hearings.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

**Waitsfield Planning and Zoning Administrators Report
Planning Commission July 7, 2026 meeting**

5. Town Plan Amendment Public Hearing

The public hearing for the amendment will take place at the outset of this meeting. Included in the packet is the final draft of the amended Chapter 7 of the 2023 Town Plan. In addition, the public hearing notice and the required Reporting Form are also included. All statutory notice requirements have been met. No formal comments have been received since the amendment was provided to abutting municipalities and State agencies.

Should the updated language be approved on Tuesday without material change, the amendment goes to the Selectboard for its own public hearing, likely to occur sometime in August.

The Town webpage has been updated with the amendment materials and can be found [here](#).

6. Short-Term Rental Ordinance

The STR committee has met twice to review the new STR ordinance drafted by the PZA over the course of the past month. The ordinance is based upon the model VLCT STR Ordinance, with various inclusions from that of Warren and Stowe. No initial period of data gathering is envisioned at this time. Decisions as to information gathering, including whether or not to hire a company like Granicus to identify STRs in Waitsfield, will be made by the Selectboard.

The Selectboard is looking for this draft at this time and has asked the PZA and committee members to attend one of their meetings in either July or August to discuss the recommendations and provide context to the need for regulation.

One matter pertaining to the existing Bylaws that has come up during this time includes the applicability of Section 5.03's Performance Standards to development *not* subject to Conditional Use review. The PZA has added this into the 2026 Work Plan and plans to discuss this with members at this meeting.

7. Wastewater Project Update

The project is approaching a new milestone – going out to bid! The most recent endeavors in that pursuit were adjusting the project costs down to accord to the bonding capacity approved by the voters, \$15 million. After several meetings, the project team and Dubois & King reached a point where the Project Cost Summary (inc. contingencies) minus the total amount of grants and subsidies fell below the bonding capacity threshold. The PCS is currently being reviewed by

CWSRF. The Engineering Services Agreement Amendment #5 has also been submitted to CWSRF for review. Upon execution of that amendment and acceptance of the new PCS, the project can go out to bid! Additionally, on June 30th, the Town Administrator filed the CWSRF construction loan application for review and approval.

The Town attorneys are almost done drafting the necessary easements for the pump stations, conveyance line and all individual connections. Once complete, the PZA will embark on his second outreach campaign by delivering the easements and design plans to priority landowners over the course of the summer.

The PZA has included in the packet the most recent project update from Joshua Schwartz of the MRV Planning District. This update was provided to the Selectboard at it's most recent meeting.

The project website has been updated by Planning District staff and can be found [here](#).

8. Other Business

Legislative Update

The PZA has included in the packet an update from VLCT as the Vermont Legislature wraps up for the summer.

PC Vacancy

There remains no applicant yet for the PC vacancy.

DRB Update

On July 14, the DRB will hear two applications for setback waivers – one for side setback waiver for a future garage off Hastings Meadow Lane, and the other for a front setback waiver for a shed off Village Woods Road. The Board will also hear one application for an office/workshop addition within the FHO and FEHO off Main Street. Labrador Builders owns one of the North Branch Condominium units accessed via the Meadow Road parking lot.

On July 28th the DRB will hear an application for a 2-lot subdivision off North Road.

There is also a vacancy on the DRB due to the departure of Steve McKenzie.

MRVPD

Jonathan may have an update on the work of the Mad River Valley Planning District.

Next Meeting – July 21

The PZA will be away in London from July 20-25, working for part of that time. Members should decide whether to still hold a meeting without the PZA.

Upcoming trainings/webinars:

CHIP: Generating Community Buy-In for Public-Private Partnerships

Successful CHIP projects depend not only on sound financing structures, but also on strong community understanding and buy-in. This webinar will explore how municipal leaders can build community trust, communicate project benefits clearly, and navigate public concerns throughout the development process.

Learn practical strategies for engaging residents, working with stakeholders, and creating partnerships that align private investment with community priorities. Attendees will hear real-world examples of what helps projects gain momentum and what can undermine public confidence if not addressed early or successfully.

Topics will include:

- Communicating the overall public value of development projects
- Baking transparency into the process
- Managing community concerns and expectations
- Creating effective public-private relationships
- Lessons learned from successful and challenging projects

This session is designed for elected and appointed municipal officials and economic development and planning staff participating in CHIP.

July 8, 10 AM –12 PM

FREE

Register [here](#).

Building Housing, Building Futures: VLCT's CHIP Webinar Series: The Vermont Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) aims to enable housing development by allowing municipalities to finance infrastructure improvements using future tax revenue. This webinar series helps local government officials and staff learn about different aspects of CHIP and manage its requirements. Each topic-oriented event begins with a presentation or panel discussion then transitions to Q&A. Bring your questions, share your challenges, and learn from other communities. This series is a component of VLCT's new three-year initiative CHIP – Invest in Vermont (CHIP IN VT), which is helping municipalities make use of CHIP.

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Weir

Notice of Public Hearing

WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING Proposed Amendment to 2023 Town Plan

In accordance with state statute [24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 §4384], the Waitsfield Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, July 7, 2026, 7:00 P.M. at the Waitsfield Town Offices** (4144 Main Street) to receive public comment regarding the proposed Waitsfield Town Plan. This will be a hybrid meeting and the public may attend in person at the Waitsfield Town Offices or remote via Zoom with telephone and/or video access. 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**

The Waitsfield Planning Commission completed a comprehensive update to its Town Plan in 2023. Although approved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission at that time, the Board of Commissioners found that the Plan had not adequately addressed the Town's attainment of State Planning Goal 13, relating to childcare.

The Town Plan is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302, and the revisions do not alter the designation of any land area. The proposed Waitsfield Town Plan includes all of the required elements set forth in the Act [§4382], including the following specific chapters that have been updated:

I. Chapter 7: **Facilities and Services**

This chapter has been updated to reflect the Town's progress toward meeting State Planning Goal 13: "To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare work force development."

Copies of the full text of the proposed Waitsfield Town Plan are available for examination at the Waitsfield Town Office during regular office hours or can be viewed online at: https://www.waitsfieldvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Boards/Planning_Commission/Amended_7_Facilities_Services_final.pdf. You may also send comments and suggestions to the Planning Commission, 4144 Main St., Waitsfield, VT 05673 or email them to jb.weir@waitsfieldvt.gov.

Dated at Waitsfield, Vermont, May 15, 2026
Emma Hanson, Chair
Waitsfield Planning Commission

Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Plan Amendments

Town of Waitsfield, Vermont

May 14, 2026

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.*”

A public hearing by the Planning Commission on the proposed changes to the 2017 Waitsfield Town Plan will be held at **7:00pm on Tuesday July 7, 2026** in the upstairs meeting room at the Waitsfield Town Office, 4144 Main Street, Waitsfield, VT.

The Planning Commission has prepared draft changes to the Town Plan for the Town of Waitsfield as required for re-adoption in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4387. The proposed 2026 Town Plan revisions are intended to address the statutory criteria for re-adoption, including consideration of:

- Recommendations of the regional planning commission;
- Input from the community;
- Consistency with the State Planning Goals in 24 V.S.A. §4302;
- Address all of the required plan elements as specified in 24 V.S.A. §4382;
- Internal consistency among the different plan elements;
- Compatibility with the Regional Plan and municipal plans from adjoining towns;
- Establishing a program and schedule for implementing the plan.

In consideration of the above criteria, the proposed 2026 update includes the following substantive change:

Chapter 7: **Facilities and Services**

This chapter has been updated to reflect the Town’s progress toward meeting State Planning Goal 13: “To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare work force development.”

General Notes:

- (1) We do not anticipate significant probable impacts on the surrounding area (e.g., traffic, overall pattern of land use) as a result of these proposed changes.*
- (2) We do not anticipate significant probable impact on the municipal tax base nor the need for public facilities.*
- (3) There is no substantive change proposed in this plan with respect to vacant land.*

(4) The changes proposed are relatively minor, but help to better address the suitability of the areas for the proposed purpose. For example, this plan strongly encourages the most intensive development to occur where existing infrastructure better supports it.

(5) The proposed changes are more appropriate in terms of modifying the Future Land Use Map to be consistent with recent changes and better reflecting existing conditions and future potential for development.

7. Facilities and Services

7.A Overview

A primary purpose of this plan is to identify services currently available to town residents, evaluate the effectiveness of the Town and other providers in delivering those services, anticipate future demands, and assess whether those demands can be met efficiently. Waitsfield residents enjoy a range of services and facilities, including an efficient municipal government, excellent emergency services, access to a variety of social, recreation and health care services, and state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure.

Despite the wide range of excellent services available, the Town faces several challenges regarding specific facilities and services. The lack of municipal water and wastewater hinders efforts to foster a compact settlement pattern, which can result in sprawl and a corresponding loss of the Town's rural character. Local government and education are largely dependent on property tax revenues to fund their operations and taxpayers are stressed by a growing tax burden. Continued growth in the community will require an ongoing assessment and upgrade of specific facilities.

7.B Town Government

Administration. Waitsfield is governed by a five-member Selectboard, which is responsible for preparing the Town's budget, setting policy, administering town finances and a variety of related duties. A full-time Town Administrator reports to the Selectboard and is responsible for the day-to-day management of town affairs. Town staff also includes a full-time appointed Town Clerk and a full-time appointed Treasurer. Currently, the Clerk and Treasurer serve as each other's assistants. A full-time Road Foreman reports to the Selectboard and manages a three-person road department. A full-time Planning and Zoning Administrator, who is hired by the Selectboard, reports to the Town Administrator.

Like most small communities, Waitsfield is heavily dependent upon volunteers to fulfill many governmental duties. Several dozen local residents are elected or appointed to serve on boards and committees, and to represent Waitsfield on regional organizations. This dedication and sense of duty helps define our community, and keeps local institutions open and accessible.

Planning and Zoning. Waitsfield has an active land use planning and community development program that dates back to the late 1960s. Most planning functions are carried out by a volunteer Planning Commission. A Development Review Board is responsible for reviewing

proposed projects in light of the Town's land use and subdivision regulations. With the formation of the Mad River Valley Planning District in the mid-1980s, the Planning Commission has been able to augment its planning capacity with professional assistance.

Conservation. The Conservation Commission is composed of up to nine appointed members, with lead responsibility for stewarding certain lands of the municipality which have natural resource, historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural, and/or archaeological values in which the public has an interest. Under its responsibilities to administer particular municipal lands, properties, and other rights, the commission is actively engaged in planning for the management of 793 acres of public land located on the slopes and ridgeline of the Northfield Range (Scrag Mountain Town Forest), alongside the Mad River (Wu Ledges Town Forest, Austin Parcel, Tardy Parcel) and alongside Brook Road (Woliner Parcel), plus easement monitoring on 25 acres adjacent to the Wu Ledges Town Forest (Lawton Parcel) and 10 acres behind the Valley Professional Center (Dowdell/Baked Beads parcel).

In 2012, the Selectboard approved a long-term (10-15 year) management plan for the Scrag Mountain Town Forest. In 2015-16, the Commission spearheaded the first timber harvest and the establishment of a private sugaring license on portions of the Town lands. The Commission also initiated a "Scrag Forest Gateway Project" which resulted in the Town's purchase in 2017 of a 110-acre parcel to enhance public access to the Town Forest, recreational opportunities, and forestland protection. Revenues from the timber harvest and sugaring license are helping to support stewardship and management costs on the Town's Scrag Forest lands.

In 2015, the Selectboard approved a long-term (10-15 year) management plan for Wu Ledges Town Forest. The Commission has begun implementing enhancements to public access and is working toward establishing an official trail network in the Forest.

Other Volunteer Positions. A wide range of other functions are carried out by volunteers appointed or ratified by the Selectboard, including the Fire Warden, Tree Board, Constable, Road Commissioner, Energy Coordinator, Emergency Management Director, Emergency Management Coordinator, Health Officer, Mad River Recreation District, Dog Warden, and Green Up Coordinator. Other, more ceremonial, appointed positions include Fence Viewer, Weigher of Coal, and Inspector of Lumber.

Fiscal Condition. In Vermont, the principal mechanism for funding local government is the property tax. While certain types of outside assistance are available (including state highway aid, fees for services, miscellaneous special purpose grant programs), approximately 80 percent of Waitsfield's annual municipal budget is funded through the local property tax. The fact that non-tax revenues consistently make up around 20 percent Waitsfield's budget

is largely due to an aggressive effort on the part of town government to identify and secure alternative revenue sources, such as grants, to fund specific projects.

Table 7-1 shows annual municipal expenditures between 2004 and 2009. The Town has maintained a relatively stable budget for the past several years; approximately one-third of the budget is dedicated to road maintenance.

Table 7-1: Waitsfield Municipal Budget

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Projected)
EXPENSES							
Total Operating Budget Expenses	\$1,104,231	\$1,089,584	\$1,210,673	\$528,400	\$1,196,062	\$1,167,269	\$1,306,899
Total Reserve Fund Allocations	\$178,500	\$230,500	\$206,500	--	\$169,000	\$166,500	\$201,000
Total Debt Expenses					\$108,031	\$273,767	\$320,785
Total Capital & One-Time Expenses	\$233,413	\$144,517	\$286,759	\$90,212	\$236,018	\$318,957	\$154,242
Special Article Expenses	--	--	\$5,000	--	\$7,500	\$10,000	--
Total Expenses	\$1,518,401	\$1,464,601	\$1,708,933	\$618,612	\$1,716,612	\$1,936,494	\$1,981,926
REVENUES							
Total Operating Revenue	--	--	--	\$78,490	\$270,240	\$325,426	\$294,367
Total Debt Revenues	--	--	--	--	\$17,347	\$16,642	\$21,266
Total Capital & One-Time Revenues	--	--	--	\$2,744	\$67,015	\$286,322	\$148,121
Special Articles Revenue	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Revenues	\$329,346	\$308,314	\$441,171	\$81,234	\$354,692	\$628,389	\$463,753
Tax Revenues	\$1,077,503	\$1,163,071	\$1,219,424	0	\$1,482,762	\$1,297,563	\$1,326,263

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

Capital Budget & Program. To limit fluctuations in town expenditures, thereby stabilizing tax rates, the Town has adopted a capital budget and program on an annual basis for more than 20 years. The capital budget and program is a planning tool to help the Town anticipate future capital expenditures and to schedule them so to avoid sharp increases in the tax rate during any one year. When combined with a capital reserve fund, the Town can spread capital costs over a number of years, further stabilizing the municipal budget. It is also a mechanism for considering capital expenditures in the context of this plan to ensure that \$78,490 budget decisions are consistent with the Town’s planning goals.

7.C Town Properties

The Town owns several properties used for a variety of civic, recreation, conservation, working forestland, and cultural purposes. The following is a partial list of town properties and a description of relevant considerations related to each.

Town Office. The Town Office was formerly located in the first floor of the Joslin Memorial Library. Limitations associated with that site and vulnerability to flooding, which occurred most recently during Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011, led to the determination that expansion of the library building would not be an option to accommodate new town office operations. The Town began actively planning for a new municipal facility in 2010. A Town Office Task Force, appointed that same year, hired Maclay Architects to evaluate the suitability of various sites in Waitsfield Village and Irasville.

Following more in-depth analysis and public input, the Selectboard accepted the Town Office Task Force's recommendation that the Town purchase an option for the site in Waitsfield Village owned by Wrenn Compere adjacent to the Flemer Field Community Green and occupied by a farmstand, to allow further study as the preferred site for a new town office. An anonymous donor purchased the farmstand property specifically for the new Town Office site. The project was funded primarily from a CDBG-DR grant award in the amount of \$873,200 and a Town Office bond in the amount of \$650,000. The new two-story, 5,142 square foot building is fully ADA accessible. As part of a group net-metering arrangement with Green Mountain Power and the Town's solar array, the building will be completely net-zero in terms of energy consumption. The state-of-the-art facility was completed in July 2016 and operations began in the new building that same month.

Joslin Memorial Library. The Joslin Memorial Library, located in Waitsfield Village, is administered by a Board of Trustees. A private organization, Friends of the Joslin Library, provides support on a regular basis. A part time librarian maintains library hours Monday through Saturday. Library staff is supplemented by a dedicated group of volunteers who perform a variety of tasks. Without these volunteers, the high level of service library patrons have grown accustomed to would suffer.

The library houses over 9,700 books, supplemented by an interlibrary loan program with other libraries in the state. The library offers children's programs including a pre-school story hour, a Saturday reading program for school-aged children in addition to a summer program. The library also provides internet access, a large collection of audio book tapes, home book delivery for elderly and disabled residents and, also with support of a foundation grant, a newly expanded adult program. In addition to private fund-raising and income from various endowments, a large portion of the Library's operating costs are provided by the towns of Fayston and Waitsfield.

General Wait House. The historic General Wait House, the original home of Waitsfield's founder, Benjamin Wait, was purchased in 1995. Funded with the assistance of an enhancement grant from VTrans, a grant from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board, town funds, and private donations raised by the Waitsfield Historical Society, the building accommodates display space for the Historical Society, the Mad River Planning District office, the Friends of the Mad River office, the Mad River Path office, public rest rooms, community meeting space and office space for rent-paying tenants.



The main house was restored to serve the aforementioned functions; the attached barns were only stabilized and remain in need of restoration. The Waitsfield Historical Society made much progress in 2010 restoring the Carriage Barn for expanded display space for the Historical Society, and additional space for larger community meetings and functions than can be accommodated within the main house. In addition, the Carriage Barn roof was replaced in 2009. Federal stimulus funds in 2010 helped provide for the weatherization of the main house, including new insulation, installation of an energy efficient boiler, and new storm windows. Any future renovations should provide a worthwhile community service, improve the outward appearance of the building, and enhance the northern gateway to Waitsfield Village. The General Wait House should continue to manage and have a detailed upkeep and maintenance plan in order to properly care for this important community resource.

Town Garage. The Town's highway department, discussed in Chapter 8, is housed in a garage located off the Tremblay Road, near its intersection with North Road. Built in 1986 after a fire destroyed the previous garage, the garage is located on a 10.8-acre parcel. The current facility is barely adequate to meet current needs, and additional space will be needed in the near future. The current location can accommodate expansion as it becomes necessary. A

new solar array was constructed on-site in 2014 by Aegis Renewable Energy. The 102.3 kW DC ground mounted system includes 330 310-watt solar modules designed to produce 102,106 kWh per year off-setting the electricity needs of the Waitsfield Elementary School, Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Station, Town Garage, General Wait House, Joslin Memorial Library, the Town Office, and the metered lights at the Waitsfield Village Covered Bridge.

Cemeteries. Waitsfield owns and maintains four cemeteries:

- Irasville Cemetery, on Route 100 in Irasville;
- Village/Mill Cemetery, on Bridge Street just east of Waitsfield Village;
- General Wait Cemetery, behind the fire station in Waitsfield Village; and
- Common Cemetery adjacent to Waits-field Common.

The Waitsfield Cemetery Commission is the body responsible for the maintenance and management of the cemeteries. The Town is fortunate that, due to decisions of current and past cemetery commissioners, Waitsfield has a perpetual care fund that is among the largest in Vermont. Although the Town has a cemetery endowment fund which provides funds for maintenance of the cemeteries, increased expenses and lack of growth in the fund may require additional funds or support from the Town at some point in the future.

Capacity exists in each of the cemeteries, although space is limited in all but the Common Cemetery (which was expanded with the purchase of nearly an acre in the early 1990s). Total remaining capacity, however, is approximately 521 spaces. The Cemetery Commission may need to seek expansion of existing cemeteries, consideration of the use of mausoleums, or an additional cemetery location as a last resort in order to provide for future burial needs.

Other Properties. In addition to the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department, which is discussed below, the Town owns several parcels used for conservation, recreation, and other community uses. These parcels are described in appropriate sections of this plan.

Public Parks/Spaces. The Selectboard accepted the donation by the Flemer family in 2009 of a 7-acre parcel of open common land on the north end of Waitsfield Village. A grant from the Trees for Local Communities Foundation and community partnerships resulted in the development of a fruit orchard in 2010 on the western boundary of the Flemer Field Community Green. There is also a small park adjacent to the Joslin Library, and the two undeveloped commons located at the intersections of the Common at Joslin Hill and East Roads. The Town acquired the former barber shop parcel on Bridge Street adjacent to the Big Eddy Covered Bridge in 2012 and was awarded a grant in 2014 to develop the small parcel into a public park (“Lovett Park”); site development was completed in July 2017. The so-called Munn Site is a 12-acre vacant parcel located on Route 100 by Kingsbury Road which was originally purchased for use as a centralized wastewater treatment plant. After a failed bond vote, the property has not been developed and remains open field down to the

Mad River. The Town-owned pond at Carroll Road and Main Street serves as common land in Irasville. The Town should consider ways it or additional lands could serve as a focal point for future pedestrian-oriented, village-style development in Irasville as called for in this plan.

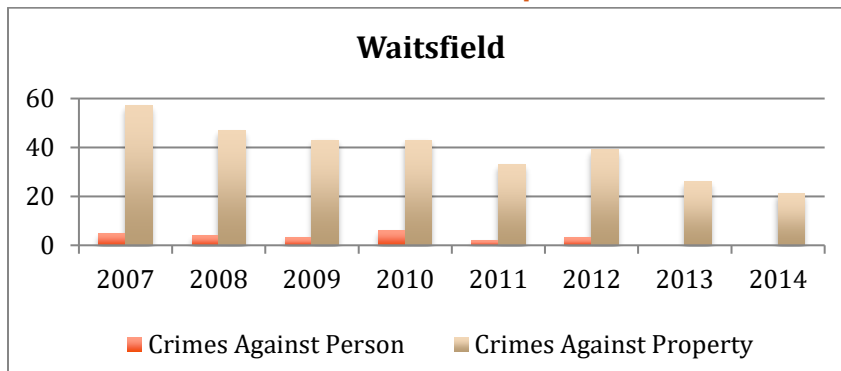
7.D Public Safety

Law Enforcement. The Vermont State Police are responsible for law enforcement in the Mad River Valley. The State Police operate out of the Middlesex Barracks located on Route 2 in Middlesex, and are primarily responsible for all law enforcement matters in our area, particularly major criminal investigations.

Waitsfield has contracted with the Washington County Sheriff’s Department for local police coverage for nearly two decades. The goals of this program are to enforce traffic safety and provide emergency response services in a cost-effective without the burden of a local police department.

Table 7-2 indicates the extent to which the number of crimes in Waitsfield has declined steadily in recent years and the predominance of property crimes (arson, bribery, burglary, embezzlement, vandalism, theft, and drug violations). Waitsfield’s crime rate remains lower than state and county averages.

Table 7-2: Total Instances of Crime Reported in Waitsfield



Source: VT Dept. of Public Safety, Vermont Crime Information Center

Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department. Fire protection services are currently provided by the Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department. The department covers both Waitsfield and Fayston and maintains a mutual assistance agreement with other nearby fire departments. Fayston funds 40 percent of the annual operating and capital costs of the department. This 60/40 split was determined by the approximate percentage of responses within each town. In addition to the funding agreement, many Fayston residents serve as volunteers. As both

towns grow, the breakdown of calls should be monitored to ensure that funding remains fairly allocated.

Presently, the department is staffed by 19 active volunteers and responds to around 98 incidents in a typical year. Over the past decade, the department has seen its average number of calls per year increase by 70 percent, while the number of personnel has decreased significantly. Volunteers are reimbursed a nominal fee for time spent on emergency responses; however, the bulk of time spent on administration, training and maintenance is voluntary.

In order to maintain the excellent level of service presently provided, the number of volunteers should be monitored and additional fire fighters actively recruited. In particular, it is important for the department to include volunteers that are in town and available to respond to emergencies during normal workday hours. Recruitment is done through advertising and events such as Labor Day at the Irasville Country Store.

Fires actually represent only a minor component of fire department calls and the department most frequently responds to motor vehicle accidents. Several calls are also related to malfunctioning heating systems that are resolved before a fire starts. In addition to emergency response, the department has emphasized fire prevention and education. The past performance of the fire department has been exceptional, and there is no reason to believe that performance will change in the coming years.

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department					
Motor Vehicle Accident	31	25	47	29	24
Fire Alarm (smoke)	22	34	26	23	26
CO Detector	4	5	4	11	5
Power line emergency	8	6	11	8	4
Chimney Fire	4	4	2	4	4
Structure Fire	9	5	10	3	4
Ambulance Assist	3	3			4
Propane Leak/Gas Odor	2	1	7	2	2
Smoke Investigation		1			3
Kitchen Fire	1				
Car Fire		2	1	6	3
Equipment Fire			1		1
Wildland Fire		3	4	3	1
Unauthorized Burn					3
Brush Fire	4				
Dumpster Fire	1				
Flooding		2	1		1
Good Intent	4		15	9	
Elevator Emergency				2	
Appliance Fire/Malfunction	1	1	2	4	

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

Service Call	4				3
Waitsfield Calls	49	49	81	62	48
Fayston Calls	37	38	38	31	31
Buels Gore M/A			2	2	0
Granville M/A		1			
Middlesex M/A					1
Moretown M/A	9	2	12	11	6
Northfield M/A			1		
Warren M/A	3	4	3	0	2
Total Calls	98	108	137	106	88
Mad River Valley Ambulance Service					
Total Calls	473	423	440	440	502

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

Major equipment, which is maintained in the fire station located adjacent to the General Wait House in Waitsfield Village, includes a 2013 International tanker pumper, a 2003 1,000-gallon International pumper, a 1987 Ford pumper, and a 2000 Chevrolet van. A 1943 Ford Model A pumper is also maintained, which symbolizes the department’s years of dedicated service to the community. Annual contributions to a reserve fund, in the average amount of \$15,000, are made toward future equipment replacement.

Ambulance & Rescue Services. The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service is organized as a non-profit corporation and provides 24-hour service to residents and visitors of the Mad River Valley.

The service operates from a facility in Waitsfield Village, which was purchased in 2001. In addition to providing four garage bays, space is available for equipment storage, administrative offices, and meeting and training facilities. The facility has an emergency generator, base station radio and 25 pair phone cable so that it can operate as an emergency operations center during a disaster. Rescue equipment currently in use includes three fully equipped ambulances, a rescue/extraction vehicle (not used for transport) that carries heavy equipment, a “mass-accident” trailer, off-road rescue equipment, a dispatch radio and field radios, as well as a substantial amount of emergency medical equipment.

The service has grown considerably over the years to meet the needs of the growing community. Since its inception in 1971, the annual number of calls has increased by 81 percent. The service currently has a roster of 60 volunteers Valley-wide. The average first responder response time is 7 minutes, while the ambulance response time is less than 17 minutes. One reason for such a fast first responder time is the local dispatch service, which notifies volunteers in scattered locations around the Mad River Valley of a call. Since the late 1990s, E-911 emergency response service has been available in The Valley.

Emergency Shelter. The Town of Waitsfield has an approved Local Emergency Operations Plan that was adopted in March 2016. The Waitsfield Elementary School serves as the Town’s primary emergency shelter and the Town Office is the Emergency Operations Center. The newly constructed town office has an elevator and backup power generation.

7.E Solid Waste

Efforts to reduce the amount of waste before it enters the waste stream and recycle the broadest range of waste in a cost-effective manner will become increasingly important as population increases.

Waitsfield is a member of the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (“MRRMA”). The alliance is a six-town district formed through an inter-local agreement in 1994. Other member towns are Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waterbury. Northfield and Roxbury were added to the MRRMA in 2010. The alliance is responsible for the preparation, adoption, and regular update of a Solid Waste Implementation Plan, which is required under the state’s solid waste law and is submitted to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for review and approval.

A representative and alternate from each town serves on the alliance board, which meets bi-monthly to set policy, determine programs and oversee the activities of a part-time administrator. A per capita assessment is charged to cover administrative and program costs.

Free or low-cost disposal of appliances, tires, electronic waste, and collected roadside trash is also provided in association with annual alliance-sponsored events such as Green Up Day, Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days, and tire collections. The alliance works with the Association of Vermont Recyclers, and is a member of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association, which helps market some recyclable commodities.

Hauling, recycling, and landfill services are provided under agreement with Earth Wise, Inc.. Trash collection services also are provided by other private haulers. A regional transfer facility, located in Waitsfield’s Limited Business District and operated by Casella Waste Management, provides area residents with a convenient solid waste disposal site as well as a place to recycle materials. In 2012, the Vermont Legislature unanimously passed the Universal Recycling Law (Act 148), which effectively bans disposal of three major types of waste materials over the course of six years: “blue bin” recyclables by July 2015, leaf/yard debris and clean wood by July 2016, and food scraps by July 2020.

7.F Sewage Disposal & Water Supply

Municipal Wastewater Treatment. Currently, all of the Town’s sewage disposal needs are addressed by individual on-site systems. Lacking a central wastewater collection and treatment facility, town officials have studied the feasibility of developing such a facility to serve the high-density portions of town, especially Irasville and Waitsfield Village. In 1999, the Town secured funding from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources’ revolving fund to study the feasibility of developing a municipal wastewater disposal facility to serve Irasville and, possibly, Waitsfield Village. As a result of preliminary analysis, the Town purchased a 12.2-acre parcel (the Munn site) located south of Irasville for \$126,000 in November, 2000 as a potential wastewater treatment site.

In 2008, a two-phase plan to provide a sewer system in Irasville and pipe the waste to Munn field for treatment was developed. The total two-phase system was estimated to cost approximately \$12 million. With grants and users funding the bulk of the project, a bond vote was held in March 2008 to finance the balance of the Phase I cost of \$5.7 million project but was defeated. The Selectboard deferred reconsideration of a municipal wastewater system while proceeding with the municipal water system, which was approved in November 2008 after being narrowly defeated in two prior votes.

In 2011, a plan for a town-sponsored loan program to finance privately-owned, shared, decentralized wastewater systems was developed as an alternative to a municipally-owned system. The same year, a wastewater study entitled “Assessment of Decentralized Wastewater Options: A Survey of Needs, Capacity, and Solutions for Historic Waitsfield Village and Irasville, Vermont” was completed. The townspeople voted at the 2012 Town Meeting to approve allowing the Town to bond up to \$250,000 to develop this program and this amount was subsequently supplemented by \$750,000. The wastewater loan program allowed property owners in the Town center to borrow funds to build or repair wastewater systems and pay off the loans over 20 years to the Town which in turn borrowed from the State of Vermont’s revolving loan fund. Six property owners took advantage of this program through 2016 with the funding that was available.

On-Site Disposal. Shared wastewater options are continuing to be explored to serve designated growth areas in Irasville and Waitsfield Village as well as future designated residential hamlets; however, many properties in Waitsfield will continue to be served by on-site, in-ground disposal. In 2002 the Vermont Legislature amended the state’s on-site septic rules to require all new development, regardless of lot size, to meet state septic system standards. This effectively eliminated the “10-acre loophole,” which exempted lots greater than 10 acres from any design standards.

The new standards also allow for a number of alternative septic system designs which allow for the placement of septic systems on land that could not have met the previous standards. As a result of the rule changes, on-site disposal systems may now be located on hundreds of acres in Waitsfield previously unsuitable for on-site systems.

Water Supply. In 2008, Waitsfield voters approved the bonds for construction of a municipal water system to serve Irasville and Waitsfield village, and construction of this project began in 2010. The \$7.6 million project will be paid for by \$4.5 million in federal grants, connection fees, and a \$3.014 million loan.

The municipal water system begins at the Reed Road wellhead and follows the Town's rights-of-way along Long Road, down Bushnell Road to a new storage tank constructed on the Town-owned former LeClair gravel pit site. From the tank, the transmission main follows a right-of-way to Tremblay Road, where it meets Route 100 and continues on to Waitsfield Village (including Old County Road), Irasville, and Eagles Resort. Hydrants and bollards provide fire protection along the route.

Outside the existing service territory for the new municipal water system, development will continue to rely on private wells.

7.G Community Services

Local Health Services. The Mad River Valley Health Center, Inc. (MRVHC) in Waitsfield is a non-profit community-owned facility leasing space to a variety of healthcare providers. The mission of the MRVHC is to provide a quality facility to ensure the availability of local health care to residents of the Mad River Valley, neighboring towns and visitors. The health center is governed by a community Board of Directors composed of individuals representing the towns of Warren, Waitsfield, Fayston, and Moretown. Healthcare providers at the health center include the Mad River Family Practice (owned by University of Vermont - Central Vermont Medical Center), a physical therapist, an alternative healthcare practice and mental health providers.

Other health care services available to local residents include:

- **Ambulance.** The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service provides 24-hour emergency response throughout the Mad River Valley.
- **Dentist.** Valley Dental Associates provides full service general dentistry.
- **Hospitals.** Hospitals serving Mad River Valley residents are University of Vermont - Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin, Gifford Memorial in Randolph, Fletcher Allen Health Care/University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

- **Urgent Care.** University of Vermont - Central Vermont Medical Center operates several ExpressCare facilities locally: two in Berlin, and one in Waterbury Center. The walk-in care clinics are open 7 days per week for adults and children with minor illnesses or injuries who are unable to get an immediate appointment with their primary care doctor. No appointment is necessary.
- **Pharmacy.** Kinney Drugs is a community pharmacy with full prescription drug services and an on-site pharmacist.
- **Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice.** Home health care services which include therapy (physical, speech, occupational) and), counseling, and consoling the elderly; homemaker service (meals, shopping, housekeeping); Hospice consoling and counseling the terminally ill and their families; and child birthing classes.
- **Vermont Department of Health.** Well Child Clinic (preschool immunization), WIC Programs (prenatal and preschool nutritional programs).
- **Washington County Mental Health.** 24-hour emergency service, out-patient clinic, substance abuse programs, job placement, day and hospital-based programs, day hospital and resident programs.
- **Evergreen Place.** Evergreen Place is located at 5305 Main Street, Route 100 in Irasville, and is one of Downstreet Housing & Community Development's subsidized rental apartments in which the rent charged is equal to 30 percent of the household's adjusted income. Evergreen Place offers 17 one-bedroom apartments and one two-bedroom apartment for seniors.



~~**Day Care.** Presently, only two home child care operators are registered in the Town—a reduction from past years, when as many as five home child care services were registered in Waitsfield. Currently, six licensed facilities operate in Waitsfield, including the after-school program which uses the elementary school. It is not known how adequately child care needs are now being served.~~

Childcare. Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality childcare is important to sound economic development. Recognizing the reality that most families lead lives that require full or at least part-time childcare outside of their homes, childcare is seen as a critical community need. Accessible, affordable and quality childcare in the area affects parents' ability to enter the workforce, be productive while at work, and remain employed. In addition, the childcare industry itself contributes to the local economy through the jobs it sustains, the revenues childcare workers take in, and the taxes they pay.

Waitsfield currently has only two registered childcare facilities: Neck of the Woods (NOW) and the Spring Hill School.

Spring Hill School – founded in 1985 - is a licensed nonprofit school, which offers a morning preschool program and afternoon program of early care and education. In 2024, the Town allocated \$4,500 of ARPA funds to the school to rehab the school's outdoor learning space and aging equipment.

Neck of the Woods - a licensed nonprofit preschool and childcare program- was established in 2020 at the outset of the pandemic. NOW currently runs full-time early childhood programs for infants through preschool at the main campus in Waitsfield. NOW also runs the after-school enrichment program at the Moretown Elementary School and summer camps for pre-school through 12-year-old children. In NOW's main building, current enrollment consists of 70 children and will continue to expand as renovations are completed to the second floor of the building. Upon completion of the renovations in the fall of 2026, the building will have capacity for up to 100 children. In 2024, the Town allocated \$25,000 of ARPA funds to NOW to build a commercial kitchen and cafeteria to become a Head Start Program. This program offers free childcare to low-income families that meet eligibility requirements and allows eligible families to choose from a wide array of child development and family support services at no cost.

The Town's commitment to childcare was also demonstrated through an additional 2024 ARPA allocation of \$25,000 to the now defunct Waitsfield Children's Center (WCC). The money was allocated for the design of an updated water system to accommodate more children. The WCC program had operated for nearly 50 years until fiscal realities led to its closure in July of 2024. However, Neck of the Woods was able to accommodate all of the staff and families who'd been at the Waitsfield Children's Center. The Town then shifted the remaining funds from WCC to Neck of the Woods.

The Town of Waitsfield has also historically waived zoning fees for all childcare centers.

Senior Services. The Mad River Valley Senior Citizens Inc. is a non-profit corporation which operates to coordinate and provide services for the elderly population of Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waitsfield. Funding is provided through a combination of local, state, and federal grant funds and donated time and energy of Valley residents. The most important program provided to seniors is the operation of the Senior Center and the senior meals program, both of which operate out of Evergreen Place.

Social Services. Most social services are provided by state government through a variety of programs coordinated through the Agency of Human Services. In addition to state programs, all of which are delivered from offices located elsewhere in Washington County outside the Mad River Valley, several private non-profit organizations provide varying types

and levels of assistance to local residents. Several of these Central Vermont (“CV”) service providers receive annual appropriations from the Town.

- Circle
- CV Adult Basic Education
- Capstone Community Action Council
- CV Council on Aging
- CV Economic Development Corp.
- CV Home Health & Hospice
- Family Center of Washington County
- Good Beginnings of CV
- Green Up VT
- Green Mountain Transit Agency
- MRV Health Center
- MRV Senior Citizens
- Northern VT RC&D Council
- People’s Health & Wellness Clinic
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- Sexual Assault Crisis Team
- VT Center for Independent Living
- Washington County Youth Services

In addition, the following two organizations are located within the Mad River Valley and provide assistance exclusively to Valley residents:

- Valley Community Fund, a non-profit organization serving residents of the Mad River Valley. Funded entirely through contributions, the Community Fund provides financial assistance to local residents experiencing financial hardship.
- Mad River Valley Food Shelf, coordinated by the Valley Clergy Council, distributes donated food and groceries to Valley residents in need of such assistance.

Cultural Organizations. Mad River Valley residents enjoy access to a wide range of homegrown cultural resources and events. While not directly supported by the Town on a regular basis, the following organizations provide a variety of performances and exhibits:

- Vermont Festival of the Arts, which, in cooperation with the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce sponsors an annual arts festival.

- Valley Players, a theater group operating out of the Odd Fellows Hall in Waitsfield Village.
- Green Mountain Cultural Center, which sponsors a variety of exhibitions, performances and classes in the restored round barn in Waitsfield.
- Mad River Chorale, a local chorus group.
- Phantom Theater, an experimental theater group based in a restored Warren barn.
- Skinner Barn, which hosts a variety of performances and events in a restored barn on the Common Road.
- Waitsfield Farmers Market, which not only provides a direct market for local farmers, cooks, artisans and crafts people, but also provides an opportunity for local residents and visitors to congregate and socialize.
- Yestermorrow Design/Build School, which has hosted public events and lectures for the local community since 1990.
- Madsonian Museum of Industrial Design.
- Big Picture Café and Theater.



In addition, several individual artists and businesses support a strong community arts culture. Artists studios, which often include display space, are located throughout town, although several are concentrated in Waitsfield Village. Musicians regularly perform at Mad Mountain Tavern, Shepherd’s Pub, and the Big Picture Theater, which also functions as the Mad River Valley’s only movie theater.

Community Center. A community center could serve as a gathering place and central recreation facility for The Valley’s youth. It could also serve as a multigenerational facility that could serve as a recreational, social and cultural resource for a broad cross section of the community.

7.H Communications & Media

Waitsfield is served by both traditional and more modern forms of communication that inform the community and connect residents with each other and the wider world. In fact, most Mad River Valley residents have access to high-quality, modern telecommunications technologies.

Newspapers. *The Valley Reporter*, a weekly newspaper since 1971, is the Town’s official newspaper for public warnings, notices, and announcements. Waitsfield also receives limited local coverage in the Times-Argus, central Vermont’s daily paper based in Barre.

Other state and national papers are available through local outlets. Traditional newspapers have been largely replaced by online news media and statewide coverage.

Telephone Service. Waitsfield Telecom, Waitsfield's local, privately owned telephone company, was founded in 1904. In 1994 the company expanded to include GTE's former Central Champlain Valley service area, forming Waitsfield/Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). The company now has 72 employees and almost 5,000 access lines in the Mad River Valley.

Wireless Services. Because of local topography, cellular phone service remains spotty in certain areas in the Mad River Valley. New towers have been installed at Mad River Glen, Mt. Ellen, and in Fayston to improve service by the two largest providers, AT&T and Verizon Wireless.

Radio, Television & Cable. Because of the mountainous terrain, Waitsfield residents without cable or satellite service get limited radio and television reception. Waitsfield Cable, owned and operated by Waitsfield Telecom, has been serving the Mad River Valley since 1980. The company currently offers within its service area, for monthly fees, cable television, digital cable and radio, and pay-per-view options. Mad River Valley Television ("MRVTV"; Channels 44 & 45) is the Valley's designated public access station. MRVTV, on the air since 2000, provides community access to local airwaves and coverage of local government, school and community events. The station is managed by a board of directors, and maintains a studio and production equipment for use by community groups and individuals.

Town residents outside the cable service area have access to other wireless television services for the price of dish installation and a monthly service fee.

Internet & Web Services. Internet service is provided by Green Mountain Access, which was founded in 1997 as an affiliate of Waitsfield Telecom and has grown from a local ISP to a statewide company that offers many of the latest internet technologies. Residential internet services currently offered in town include dial-up access, high speed digital service lines (DSLs), roaming access, and web hosting. Local businesses, in addition, may also have access to dedicated (ISDN and T1) lines, frame relay services for higher speed service. Satellite providers also offer internet service.

Waitsfield Elementary School has access to on-line services and resources through K12net, an extension of Vermont's GOVnet, which supports local and distance learning programs. The Joslin Library also provides public access. The Town of Waitsfield has an official website that provides a wealth of information about town government, local businesses, community groups, and more.

7.I Recreation

The Mad River Valley offers a rich variety of recreation opportunities to year-round residents, seasonal home owners and visitors. A brief inventory of available facilities includes:

- Two major downhill ski areas;
- Two cross country skiing facilities;
- An 18-hole golf course;
- More than 60 tennis courts;
- An airport offering gliding;
- Several riding stables;
- Biking and mountain biking;
- A clean river system suitable for fishing, paddling, and swimming (the Mad River has been identified as one of Vermont's premier swimming resources) with many sites open to public access;
- Miles of trails, footpaths and old logging roads, including the Mad River Greenway in Waitsfield;
- Ball fields located at the privately owned Couples Club; and
- Several community recreation fields owned by the Recreation District in Mad River Park.



Public Facilities. Public recreation facilities in Waitsfield are limited, although in recent years the Town has expanded the number and type of facilities available. Existing facilities include:

- Ball fields and recreation facilities located at the Waitsfield Elementary School, which are available for public use during non-school hours and the summertime.
- Scrag Town Forest, consisting of 750 acres acquired by the Town (see Chapter 11). The forest offers back country pedestrian recreation opportunities. Access was enhanced in 2011-2012 with the creation of a small parking area and trail access at the end of Bowen Road and it was expanded and enhanced again in 2017 through the Scrag Town Forest Gateway Project.
- Wu Ledges Town Forest: 125 acres of conserved woodland, offering trails leading to an outstanding scenic vista from a rock outcropping that overlooks the Mad River and its confluence with the Mill Brook. A small parking area for these lands has been established at the end of Hastings Road, and the Conservation Commission is continuing efforts to identify and establish other access points.

- The Lareau Swimhole Park, constructed with the assistance of a VTrans enhancement grant in 2003, in addition to two adjacent parcels (former Austin and former Tardy properties) that provide less formal access to the Mad River.
- Lovett Park next to the Big Eddy Covered Bridge which serves as a public river/swimming access point.
- 7.3 acres at the Flemer Field Community Green off of Route 100 (the old polo fields) and the community orchard project that was planted in 2010.

Private Not-for-Profit Facilities. Another facility open to the public is the Couples Club, an eight-acre multi-purpose field located in the floodplain of the Mad River in Irasville which offers two baseball fields, a small pavilion and river access. The property is managed by the Couples Club, a private organization, and is exempted from property taxes by the Town on an annual basis. The Valley Little League has entered into a long-term lease with the Couples Club to ensure it will remain available for youth baseball.

The Skatium, an outdoor skating facility is located in Irasville and maintained by a not-for-profit organization. The Skatium has artificial ice and a Zamboni, but is susceptible to weather conditions due to the lack of a cover. The Skatium organization has identified enclosing the facility as a priority, which should be encouraged concurrent with efforts to improve the area's appearance, especially during non-winter months.

Trails. The Mad River Path system is an extremely popular path along the Mad River, recently expanded by the Mad River Path Association (a non-profit, membership-based organization) to include connections and trails elsewhere in the Mad River Valley. The Greenway is maintained through a partnership between the Mad River Path Association and landowners. Similar partnerships maintain a village path network and increasingly in uplands such as the Fayston Town Forest and other Town and private lands throughout the Valley. This network could form the core of what could eventually be a single pathway linking Irasville with Warren Village to the south and the Fayston Elementary School to the west, and linking Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village and Harwood Union Middle and High School to the north.

Some additional trails exist on the Scrag Mountain and Wu Ledges Town Forests, and the Conservation Commission is working with partners including the Mad River Path Association and the Mad River Riders to expand the official trail networks on those lands.

The Town would benefit from developing a Town trail system, starting with the Path connecting Irasville and downtown Waitsfield, where there is copious public engagement with important Valley businesses that support dining, shopping, and entertainment. New investment in these areas could increase opportunities for walking, biking, and public enjoyment of commercial areas in close proximity to each other and to natural resource areas including open space, natural wetlands, the Mad River, and wildlife habitat. It is crucial for the Town, in cooperation with its nonprofit partners, to continue improving

walkability and non-motorized access throughout Waitsfield, consistent with this Plan and the growth of the region’s recreation economy.

An assortment of additional easements and license agreements for trails and paths around town have been made, although an extensive, integrated network has not been completed. Through continued partnerships with the Path Association and landowners, such a network could be developed in the future. In addition to trails, Class 4 Roads which are not maintained for year-round travel, as well as Town roads in year-round use, also provide popular recreational opportunities, especially in the Forest Reserve District, and could be included in the Mad River Path system. The Town and the Mad River Path Association should work with other recreation organizations to provide public information about the Town and Valley trails systems, to interpret and maintain trails throughout the Valley, and to adopt consistent, informative signage for residents and visitors.

Several miles of winter trails for skiers and snow-machines are maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) on private land in Waitsfield and surrounding towns. Part of an extensive statewide network, the local trails are maintained by the local VAST chapter—the Mad River Ridge Runners.

Recreation Programs and Planning. The Town, together with Fayston and Warren, formed the Mad River Valley Recreation District in 1993. The purpose of the Recreation District is to support local recreation facilities and programs, and to identify and pursue opportunities to expand existing facilities or create new facilities. The District has provided funds to improve the Couples Club fields in addition to providing support to other private non-profit recreation organizations such as the Skatium. In 2017, they acquired 10 acres at the Mad River Park to construct an 80-space parking area and permanently secure several recreation fields for youth and adult sports. This area will continue supporting Valley-wide youth recreation opportunities and could be connected to the Mad River Path system with a trail around the Park.

7.J Goals

- 7.J-1 A full range of community services and facilities appropriate for a small town that are provided in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner without creating an undue burden on local taxpayers.
- 7.J-2 Facilities and services that reinforce the Town’s land use, development, and natural resource protection goals and policies.
- 7.J-3 Continue to support existing childcare facilities to ensure all families have access to high-quality childcare by:

- Exploring allocating local option taxes or using municipal funds for childcare capacity grants or direct operational support to keep tuition affordable.
- Partner on housing initiatives for childcare providers who often struggle to find affordable housing near work.
- Partner with organizations to connect families with available local services.
- Streamline permitting for home-based childcare and designate areas for commercial childcare centers in town plans.

7.K Policies

- 7.K-1** Plan facilities and services to accommodate anticipated future growth and to avoid unreasonable burdens on the Town’s taxpayers. To this end:
- 7.K-1.a** The scale, timing and location of development shall be controlled to ensure that the resulting demand for services and facilities does not exceed the municipality’s ability to provide them; and
 - 7.K-1.b** In the absence of public facilities, the developer shall fund the cost of the facility(ies) needed to accommodate the new development unless the Town determines that the proposed development will provide community benefits which outweigh or offset the cost of the required facility(ies).
- 7.K-2** Coordinate the provision of facilities and services with the land use and development goals and policies outlined in this plan, including the reinforcement of growth centers. To this end:
- 7.K-2.a** Facilities that require regular access by the general public and are compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as municipal offices, post offices, community centers and fire stations, should be located in Waitsfield Village or Irasville;
 - 7.K-2.b** Facilities that do not require regular access by the general public, such as highway maintenance, or are not compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as solid waste transfer facilities, shall be located in appropriate centralized, nonresidential locations, preferably in the Industrial District or Limited Business District.
- 7.K-3** Provide services and facilities in an efficient and cost-effective manner while ensuring a high level of service. To this end:
- 7.K-3.a** Capital expenditures will be programmed to avoid sharp fluctuations in the property tax rate;

- 7.K-3.b Alternatives to the property tax to fund local services and facilities (including user fees, state/federal grants and loans, impact fees and negotiated exactions, special taxing districts, private foundations and assistance from non-governmental and/or local option taxes) will be used wherever practical, providing they do not place an additional burden on residents of limited financial means or undermine other policies of this plan;
 - 7.K-3.c Wherever practical, services and facilities to address Valley-wide growth and development will be provided in conjunction with neighboring towns.
 - 7.K-3.d Statewide efforts to restructure state educational funding to reduce the reliance on the local property tax are strongly supported.
- 7.K-4 Recognize the importance of making the most effective and efficient use of existing services, structures and facilities and utilities before expanding capacity or constructing new buildings or facilities. In the event a new building(s) is required, it shall be designed to reflect the community's historic and architectural heritage, a strong sense of permanence, and to serve as a symbol of civic pride.
- 7.K-5 Continue to use the General Wait House primarily for civic, community and cultural purposes, including public rest rooms, community meeting space, cultural activities, celebration of community history and heritage, and public information. To that end, restoration of the attached barns for one or more of these purposes is encouraged.
- 7.K-6 Maintain town funded emergency services, including fire and police protection, in a manner that continues their current level of service as the community grows. Explore opportunities to coordinate increased law enforcement services and efforts with other towns in the Mad River Valley.
- 7.K-7 Develop municipal wastewater systems to serve the Town center areas of Irasville and Waitsfield Village, in order to meet current needs as well as allow for additional growth in residential and commercial properties. Once constructed, the system capacity shall:
- 7.K-7.a Be allocated in accordance with the land use, housing, and economic development policies of this plan; and
 - 7.K-7.b Be managed, together with the operation of the facility, to ensure maximum protection of water quality in the Mad River and its tributaries.
- 7.K-8 Continue to maintain a municipal water system.

- 7.K-9 Explore opportunities for the Town to acquire land for conservation, recreation, and community facilities. Priority should be given to parcels which provide multiple values to the community.
- 7.K-10 Manage undeveloped and semi-developed town-owned properties, including Scrag Mountain and Wu Ledges Town Forests, the Lareau Swimhole, and other conservation and recreation parcels for the protection of ecological resources and sustainable use.
- 7.K-11 Support the efforts of trail organizations to create a network of walking and bicycling paths in the Mad River Valley, including extending the Mad River Greenway to link Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village to the north, and with Warren Village to the south. To this end, the Town will:
 - 7.K-11.a Hold easements on segments of the path right-of-way;
 - 7.K-11.b Encourage inclusion of trails and pedestrian connections as part of local development review processes; and
 - 7.K-11.c Incorporating path segments into management plans for town-owned land.
 - 7.K-11.d Encourage and support information about trail networks, including safe, planned use of Town roads for walking and biking in the Valley-wide trails system.
- 7.K-12 Continue to work with the Mad River Valley Recreation District, Couples Club, and other organizations to ensure recreation fields remain viable and accessible to local residents and youth sports leagues.
- 7.K-13 Continue to encourage the efforts of VAST to provide an integrated network of winter recreation trails in a manner that does not adversely impact neighboring homeowners and the natural environment, and allow VAST trail use of Class 4 roads on a case-by-case basis to avoid conflict with other users of the road and neighboring residential properties.
- 7.K-14 Limit changes to the classification, maintenance, or use of Class 4 roads that would result in an increase of automobile use unless existing recreational uses are maintained or replaced or mitigated with comparable recreation opportunities. The upgrade and/or reclassification of Class 4 roads within the Forest Reserve District shall not be permitted to allow year-round vehicular access and land development.
- 7.K-15 Manage town cemeteries, and expand if needed, to ensure that burial opportunities will exist for the foreseeable future.

- 7.K-16 Continue to participate as a member of the Mad River Valley-Waterbury Solid Waste Alliance, including the alliance's efforts to reduce waste generation and provide environmentally sound waste disposal opportunities.
- 7.K-17 Encourage continued operation of the Valley Transfer Station in its present location, and encourage a privately-operated bottle redemption center in conjunction with the Transfer Station, or at a separate location in Irasville or Waitsfield Village.
- 7.K-18 Encourage public and private social service providers, including state, regional and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations, to continue providing services to local residents. To this end, the Town will continue to consider funding such organizations on an annual basis, and will support efforts to improve local delivery of such services through partnerships with local organizations.
- 7.K-19 Support the development and operation of a multigenerational community center within Irasville or Waitsfield Village.
- 7.K-20 Encourage the Mad River Valley Health Center to continue to meet the needs of local residents.
- 7.K-21 Integrate wireless telecommunications facilities (e.g. cellular) into the existing built environment.
- 7.K-22 Support the expansion of telecommunication service in the community, including broadband Internet access, and efforts to ensure greater public access.
- 7.K-23 Continue to work with and provide support to community arts and cultural organizations.
- 7.K-24 Support and continue to help fund Mad River Valley Television's (Channels 44 and 45) efforts to broadcast meetings of public interest.
- 7.K-25 Keep the Munn Field property in town ownership as a potential shared wastewater facility resource.
- 7.K-26 Encourage the creation of recreation facilities that foster fitness and well-being (e.g. fitness courses) in a manner that is integrated throughout the community.

7.L Tasks

- 7.L-1 Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring towns and the region on issues of mutual concern, and explore additional opportunities to share facilities and services with neighboring towns. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Town Boards and Commissions]
- 7.L-2 Continue to support shared, privately-owned wastewater system framework to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Study Committee]
- 7.L-3 Revise the Waitsfield Subdivision Regulations to include updated facility and infrastructure standards, including those related to stormwater runoff, wastewater disposal, impact on community services and facilities, and trails, sidewalks and pathways. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-4 Prepare maps for the Irasville Village District depicting options for future public improvements, including roads, sidewalks, paths and park areas, and a town green/common. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-5 Explore the adoption of stormwater regulations and other recommendations as a result of Ridges to Rivers study. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-6 Assess the feasibility of on-going maintenance and renovation of Wait House. [Selectboard, Waitsfield Historic Society*]

Town of Waitsfield SHORT-TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY. This civil ordinance is adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Waitsfield (“Town”) under the authority granted by 24 V.S.A. §§ 2291(15), (29) and 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Ordinance is to promote and protect the public health, safety welfare, convenience, and peace and quiet of the inhabitants of the Town; enhance and maintain the existing character and density of residential neighborhoods, and to preserve and promote the availability of long-term affordable, residential housing in Town by regulating transient commercial use of residential property and the deleterious secondary effects commonly associated with their operations.

The Town of Waitsfield values its history and status as a vibrant, year-round mountain resort town and recognizes the significant benefit to the local economy and community stemming from tourism. The purpose of this ordinance is to seek to balance the well-established practice of renting residential dwelling units to travelling transients and the visiting public, while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods and minimizing and potential negative impacts of Short-Term Rentals, and continuing to promote public health, safety and welfare of visitors and residents, both full-time and part-time. By establishing an orderly process for licensing Short Term Rental properties in the Town, and compiling a database of the Designated Responsible Persons and emergency contact information for each Short-Term Rental property, the Town intends to ensure an effective and expedient response to an emergency that may arise in connection with the Short-Term Rental property.

Furthermore, through the establishment of a Short-Term Rental ordinance, the Town seeks to gather information regarding the practice of renting residential dwelling units on a short-term basis, so the Town may better evaluate and determine through data what regulation of such rental properties, if warranted, is appropriate and consistent with the best interests of the Town, its residents (full-time and part-time) and visitors.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS. For the purposes of this Ordinance, the following words and/or phrases will be defined as follows:

- A. “Dwelling Unit” means one or more rooms designed, occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters with cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities provided within the dwelling unit for the exclusive use of a single family maintaining a household.
- B. “Dwelling Unit Capacity” or “DUC” means the total occupancy limit for a short-term rental as determined by the maximum capacity in order of one of the following:
 - a. the property’s wastewater disposal system based upon a State of Vermont Wastewater and Potable Water Supply Permit for the property for dwelling units or wastewater and potable water supply systems constructed, modified, or occupied after June 30, 2007; or
 - b. the local zoning or septic permit for dwelling units constructed before July 1, 2007; or

- c. the number of bedrooms indicated in the listers' property database if a local zoning or septic permit does not exist for dwelling units constructed before July 1, 2007.
- C. "Designated Agent" shall mean a Person or Persons designated and authorized by the Owner to act as their agent, or that Person's employee or agent, capable of and responsible for responding to emergency situations and other issues related to the STR when the property is being rented or leased as an STR, including providing first responders with timely interior and exterior access to the Short-Term Rental. For the sake of clarity, the Designated Agent may be the Owner of the STR.
- D. "Enforcement Officer" means any law enforcement officer certified by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council, the Short-Term Rental Administrator, or any other person designated as an Enforcement Officer by the Selectboard.
- E. "Person" means an individual, a corporation, a partnership, an association, and any other incorporated or unincorporated organization or group.
- F. "Short-Term Rental" or "STR" or "Short-Term Rental Property" means a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year.
- G. "Short-Term Rental (STR) License" means authorization from the Town of Waitsfield to operate a short-term rental in accordance with this Ordinance.
- H. "Short-Term Rental (STR) License Application" means the form that the Owner of a Short-Term Rental property must submit to the Town or its designee containing required information related to the Short-Term Rental property.
- I. "Short-Term Rental (STR) Operator" means either the STR Property Owner or the person or entity designated by the STR Property Owner in their short-term rental license application who is responsible for operating, managing, or maintaining the short-term rental in accordance with this Ordinance.
- J. "Short-Term Rental (STR) Property" means the property where a short-term rental is located, including the short-term rental itself.
- K. "Short-Term Rental Property (STR) Owner" means any person or entity who, alone or with others, has title or interest in a property, dwelling unit, or portion thereof where a short-term rental is located, with or without possession. While an owner may be represented by, and Owner obligations under this Ordinance may be performed by, an agent, the Owner is ultimately responsible for the STR and compliance with this Ordinance.

SECTION 4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITED CONDUCT. Each STR Property must meet the

following standards:

- A. The number of lessees, guests, or other people using an STR pursuant to an STR License may not exceed its approved DUC.
- B. All vehicles of STR renters and their guests must be parked in parking spaces associated with the STR Property.
- C. An STR Property must have sufficient on-site (off-street) parking spaces to accommodate the STRs DUC. In calculating this allowance, one on-site parking space must be provided for every four (4) guests of an STR.
- D. The maximum number of vehicles allowed on an STR Property is limited to the number of available on-site parking spaces.
- E. A Knox-Box (i.e., for emergency keys) is required for all short-term rental properties in which an alarm system is active. The Knox-Box must be registered with the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department. [To order the Knox-Box, see this form: <https://www.knoxbox.com/Products> (click buy in upper right hand corner, location VT Dept is Waitsfield-Fayston Fire)]
- F. Trash on STR Property must be stored in a place secure from animals and outside of public view.
- G. An STR must contain, in a visually prominent location for guests to access, a list of emergency contact numbers, including but not limited to the Designated Agent and emergency services.
- H. An STR must contain, in a location on the premises that is communicated to the renter, a hard copy of this Ordinance.
- I. An STR Property must comply with the following Vermont Enhanced 911 Board's Addressing Standards:
 - a. Address numbers must be a minimum of 3 inches high, 2-1/2 inches wide and reflective.
 - b. A number must be placed on the front of every STR Property.
 - c. Mailboxes must be marked with the address number. Where mailboxes are not in front of the house or structure to be marked, a number must be displayed on the structure, if it is visible from the road.
 - d. If the STR Property is not visible from the road and no mailbox is beside the driveway leading to the structure, a sign or number post must be erected to display the number. This sign or number post may display the number either vertically (from the top) or horizontally (from the left).
 - e. Shared driveways to an STR Property must be marked both at the beginning of the driveway and where the driveway splits to each specific structure.
 - f. The address number must be placed high enough that it will not be obscured by snow during an average winter.

- J. All exterior STR Property lighting fixtures must be fully shielded and directed downward to minimize skyglow, glare, and light trespass onto adjacent properties.
- K. STR Operators, who do not live either within an hour's driving distance of the STR Property, must designate and provide the name and contact information of a Designated Agent who is located within an hour's drive who will be responsible for responding to emergency situations occurring at the STR.
- L. STR Owners, Operators, renters, and their occupants must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- M. STR Property Owners must make timely payment of any local option taxes owed.
- N. ALTERNATIVE: No noise which is excessive at the STR property line or any point beyond that property line and represents a significant increase in noise levels in the vicinity of the STR so as to be incompatible with the reasonable use of the surrounding area shall be permitted. Excessivity shall be determined by the Enforcement Officer as delineated in Tables 5.01 and 5.02 of the Performance Standards in the Zoning Bylaws.

SECTION 5. SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS.

- A. An STR Property Owner cannot lease or rent their property as a short-term rental (STR) without first obtaining an STR License from the Town.
- B. Renting, or offering for rent, an STR without first obtaining an STR License or complying with the licensing requirements as specified in this Ordinance is prohibited.
- C. An STR Property Owner must submit to the Town an STR License application on a form furnished by the Town.
- D. Every License application, including any renewal application, under this Ordinance must be accompanied by a [insert non-refundable or refundable] fee established by the Selectboard and paid to the Town.
- E. An STR License application will not be considered complete and eligible for consideration until all the information in this Section is provided and the associated application fee is paid in full.
- F. A separate application and associated fee are required for each STR offered for rent.
- G. The STR License application must be signed by the Property Owner and contain the following information:
 - a. The physical (E-911) address(es) of the property to be used as an STR.
 - b. The full name, physical address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the Property

Owner. If the Property Owner is an entity, then the legal name of the entity, its physical mailing address, its agent, and the agent's telephone number and e-mail address.

- c. The full name, physical address, e-mail address, and 24-hour telephone number of the STR Operator.
 - d. Certification from the Town's Zoning Administrator that use of the property as an STR conforms with the Town's land use regulations.
 - e. The DUC of the STR.
 - f. The number of available on-site (off-street) parking spaces.
 - g. Whether the applicant has any other STR Properties in Town.
 - h. The STR's State of Vermont issued meals and rooms tax account number corresponding to its location.
- H. An STR License will expire upon the anniversary of the date of its issuance and must be renewed using a License renewal application form provided by the Town prior to its continued use as an STR. Operation of a Short-Term rental without obtaining a license or a renewal of a license shall constitute a violation of this Ordinance.
- I. An STR License is nonassignable and must be surrendered if the STR ceases operations or is transferred.
- J. An STR License, if granted or renewed, must be displayed in a visually prominent location inside the STR for guests to access.
- K. It is a violation of this Ordinance to provide intentionally false or materially misleading information on any STR License or renewal application, or to fail or refuse to pay any associated STR License fee.

SECTION 6. ENFORCEMENT.

- A. A violation of this Ordinance is a civil matter which may be enforced in the Vermont Judicial Bureau or in the Washington County Superior Court, at the election of the Selectboard.
- B. Violations enforced in the Judicial Bureau will be in accordance with the provisions of 24 V.S.A. §§ 1974a and 1977 et seq. For purposes of enforcement in the Judicial Bureau, any Enforcement Officer has the authority to issue tickets and represent the Town at any hearing.
- C. Violations enforced in the Superior Court will be in accordance with the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure. The Town may pursue all appropriate injunctive relief.

SECTION 7. PENALTIES AND COSTS.

- A. An Enforcement Officer is authorized to recover civil penalties for violations of this Ordinance. Offenses shall be counted on a twelve (12) month basis, beginning December 1 and ending

November 30 of each year. An issuing Municipal Official shall have discretion, for good cause shown, to issue a written warning, without recovering a waiver fee, for any first offense. In such instance, the written warning shall be counted as a first offense for calculating the number of annual offenses.”

B. Civil penalties are authorized in the following amounts for each violation:

First offense:	warning or [\$200] full penalty / \$100 waiver penalty
Second offense:	[\$400] full penalty / \$200 waiver penalty
Third offense:	[\$600] full penalty / \$300 waiver penalty
Subsequent offense(s):	[\$800] full penalty / \$400 waiver penalty

- C. An Enforcement Officer is authorized to recover a waiver fee in lieu of a civil penalty, in the stated amount, from any person who declines to contest a municipal complaint and voluntarily pays the waiver fee.
- D. Determining the sequences of offenses for violations of this Ordinance will be as follows: a subsequent violation that is identical to, and that occurs within [*insert number*] months of, a previous violation will be considered a higher offense (i.e., second, third, or subsequent offense). Any subsequent identical violation that occurs after [*insert number*] months of a previous identical violation will be considered a new, first offense.
- E. A warning will not be counted towards the calculation of the number of offenses under this Ordinance.
- F. An STR License will be immediately revoked if:
- The STR License application contains any false or materially misleading information; or
 - The STR Property Owner fails to pay the renewal fee; or
 - The STR Owner has committed three (3) violations of this Ordinance within twelve (12) months.
- G. Any violation of this Ordinance committed by an STR Operator or renter, occupant, or guest of an STR will be considered a violation committed by the STR Owner and any penalty associated with it to be paid by the STR Owner to the Town.
- H. An STR Owner who has had their License revoked may not re-apply for a period of one (1) year from the time their revoked license was due to expire.
- I. Notification of STR License revocation will be issued in writing with reasons and may be appealed by the STR Owner or their STR Operator to the Selectboard within 15 days of its mailing.
- J. In the event an STR License is revoked, no paid STR license fees will be refunded.

SECTION 8. OTHER LAWS. This Ordinance is in addition to all other ordinances of the Town and all applicable laws of the State of Vermont. All ordinances or parts of ordinances, resolutions, regulations, policies, or other documents inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION 9. SEVERABILITY. If any section of this Ordinance is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such finding will not invalidate any other part of this Ordinance. If any statute referred to in this Ordinance is amended, this Ordinance will be deemed to refer to such amended statute.

SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance will become effective 60 days after its adoption by the Selectboard. If a petition is filed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1973, that statute will govern the taking effect of this Ordinance.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20_.

SIGNATURES:

Adoption History

1. Agenda item at Selectboard meeting held on _____.
2. Read and approved at Selectboard meeting on _____ and entered in the minutes of that meeting.
3. Posted in public places on _____.
4. Notice of adoption published in the _____ newspaper on _____ with a notice of the right to petition.
5. Other actions [*petitions, etc.*].

Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project

Update 6.19.26

To: Waitsfield Selectboard
From: Joshua Schwartz, MRV Planning District
CC: Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project Team Members
York Haverkamp, Waitsfield Town Admin.
JB Weir, Waitsfield Planning & Zoning Admin.
Chach Curtis, Waitsfield Selectboard Member
Bob Cook, Waitsfield Planning Commissioner
Project Engineer
Jon Ashley, DuBois & King
Waitsfield Planning Commission
Date: June 19, 2026
Re: Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project Update

I am providing this update on the Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project (WCWP) in my capacity as Project Coordinator, as outlined in the *Waitsfield Wastewater Project Structure & Timeline | 2024-25*, approved by the Selectboard on 7.8.24. This update is intended to keep the Waitsfield Selectboard and Project Team Members informed of the project's status and recent developments.

The Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project Team (WCWPT), project engineer Jon Ashley of DuBois & King (D&K), and staff from the VT Department of Environmental Commission's Water Infrastructure Division continue to meet every two weeks to discuss system design, technical specifications, permitting, outreach, cost, funding, and related topics. Key highlights include:

- Design Plans
 - D&K are progressing the project plans from the 90% design set (D90), completed in mid-April, to the 100% design set, with completion anticipated in July. The D90 design covers the entirety project, broken out by the wastewater treatment facility (Contract No. 1) and the broader collection system (Contract No. 2).
 - The D90 plan set are currently under review by various state permitting agencies (VTrans, Division of Historic Preservation, Wetlands, Wastewater System & Potable Supply Permit, Wastewater Discharge Permit, Stormwater Construction General Permit, Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan, etc.). Associated permits are expected from each entity upon completion of their review, anticipated in July 2026.
 - Once permitting approvals are in hand, final DEC approval is granted, and design is at 100%, the project will be eligible to go out to bid.
- Easements
 - A required component of the project is the execution of user agreements, temporary easements, and permanent easements that cover conveyance (force and gravity mains), pump stations, and individual property connections. The Town Attorney is currently drafting easements for all properties, anticipated to be distributed to property owners in July. In advance of completed easement drafts, Town staff are prioritizing outreach to property owners along the conveyance route that require temporary and/or permanent easements. The outreach, to consist of a site visit from Town representatives, will incorporate a WCWP update, review of current design plans,

identification of required easements, timeline, and subsequent dialogue. This is targeted for late-June/early-July.

- Per recent dialogue with VT DEC staff, completed conveyance and pump stations easements are required in advance of execution of the project's construction contract.
- Engineering Services Agreement
 - The latest Engineering Services Agreement (amendment 5) is on the Waitsfield SB's 6.22.26 agenda after being reviewed by the Town, D&K, and the State of VT.
 - Scope Elements
 - Step II (Final Design Phase – to 100% Design)
 - Additional topographic survey and design work beyond Amendment 4 for the realignment of the sewer system along Slow Road, from VT100, to improve constructability, limit impacts of cultural resources, and make the design more compatible with future growth plans in Irasville. Designing new service connections for properties in the Slow Road portion of the service area
 - Designing water service connections for users not currently connected to the water systems, permit application revisions, and development of a Soil Management Plan for management of contaminated soils in the project area.
 - Step III (Bidding, Construction, & Post-Construction Phase)
 - Develop bid Phase and Construction Phase schedules for both contracts and present to Town and Funding Agencies.
 - Assist in advertising the project for bidding, conduct related bid-meetings, perform bid review and make recommendations regarding contract awards, prepare notice of award and coordinate contract signing.
 - Throughout the construction period, act as the Owner's representative and liaison to the selected contractor(s). Coordinate twice monthly meetings w/ reps of the Town, Contractor, and funding agencies. Serve as Resident Project Representative through the duration of the project, estimated to take place for a total of 104 work weeks between the two contracts.
 - Lead post-construction phase services for the project, to include recording of drawings, preparation of an O&M Manual, and coordinate operator orientation and training during start-up of the wastewater treatment facility and pump stations.
- Munn Site
 - The wastewater treatment facility and in-ground disposal for the project will be located on the town-owned Munn Site at the intersection of Kingsbury Road and VT 100. The facility building will be situated at the rear of the open field, with disposal occurring in a 2.75-acre area directly behind the structure. Clearing of approximately 2.5 acres of trees took place on 4.13.26 as required for the disposal site. The timing complied with funding requirements and minimized impacts on endangered bat species and migratory birds. York and JB Weir conducted outreach to neighboring property owners in advance of the tree removal.
- Priority Parcel Owner Outreach
 - Through early 2026, JB Weir led site visits to all priority properties, focused on providing project updates, collecting measurements for final design, and clarifying connection implications.
- Wastewater Ordinance
 - Robin Morris, Chair of the Waitsfield Water Commission, spent the spring developing a draft Wastewater Ordinance for consideration by the Waitsfield Selectboard. Robin will be presenting the draft ordinance and related approach to wastewater capacity allocation to the Selectboard at its 6.22.26 meeting.
- Funding
 - CWSRF & ARPA

- The VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) have funded all engineering and design costs to date for the Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project and are set to fund the initial construction phase.
 - Due to the Town’s ranking on Vermont’s FFY25/SFY26 CWSRF Intended Use Plan, it qualifies for CWSRF construction loans. The town is also eligible for a 50% subsidy, up to \$1M in loan principal forgiveness, with a deadline of 6.30.26. The Town is poised to submit a CWSRF application for construction in advance of this deadline.
 - On 2.6, the Town of Waitsfield submitted a Project Priority List application to VT DEC for its FFY26/SFY27 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) funding cycle, which provides eligibility for CWSRF funding through the upcoming fiscal year (7.1.26-6.30.27). The results will be published in the State’s corresponding IUP. A draft is expected this summer.
 - NBRC Catalyst Program
 - The Northern Border Regional Commission’s (NBRC) Catalyst Program’s fall 2025 funding round awarded Waitsfield \$1M of construction funding focused on connecting the Waitsfield School to the broader infrastructure project.
 - The Town is working with CVRPC, who is serving as an administrative role as the project’s Local Development Districts (LDDs).
 - NBRC independently reviewed the project’s Environmental Review (ER) prepared by USDA-RD, completed on 12.4.24, which resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). NBRC determined that the proposed action analyzed in the 2024 ER adequately covers the proposed action under consideration by NBRC, and that the information and analysis presented in the 2024 ER are accurate and sufficient. NBRC has chosen to adopt the 2024 ER prepared by USDA-RD for the project and shared via a Notice of Availability on 5.29.26.
 - USDA RD
 - On 8.27.25, the Town of Waitsfield was notified that it had been awarded a USDA RD grant of \$649,000 and a loan totaling \$7.552M.
 - FY27 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)
 - The project has been included in the funding requests for both Senator Sanders & Senator Welch (\$3.5 M).
 - The Senators’ funding requests must be approved by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee and included in the final appropriations bill passed by the Senate.
 - On 6/1, Joshua discussed the process and details with VT DEC Commissioner Sinsigalli over the phone.
- Community Outreach
 - The latest project info is available on the Town of Waitsfield Wastewater webpage, including Spring 2026 progress, uploads covering the D90 set, and more.
 - <https://www.waitsfieldvt.gov/departments/projects/wastewater>
 - Working with Town staff to create informational “Coming Soon” signage at the Munn Site.

Near-Term Activities

- Wastewater Ordinance discussion (6.22)
- ESA #5 (6.30)
- CWSRF Construction Loan Application (6.30)
- Priority easement outreach (June-July)
- Draft easements (July)
- State permitting entities finalize D90 review and subsequent approvals (July)
- D100 Final Design (July 2026)
- Bid Phase (Late Summer 2026)
- Construction Commences (Fall 2026)

2026 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.	Completed January 2026
2	Post-Plan	- Creation of Subcommittee to analyze use of CHIP Program to promote and accomplish goals of Master Plan - Other?	
		Zoning and By-Laws	
1	River Corridor Bylaws	River Corridor Bylaws – Adopt model ordinance or similar OR maintain FEH bylaws with some adjustments (i.e., increase minimum standard of development to 2 feet above BFE)	2026
2	Limited Business District	Reviewing standards and purpose. Two landowners 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 connections in this area.	2026
3	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 2-4 units are allowed outright w/ no size limit.	2026
4	Section 6.02 (F) – Exemption for garage/yard sales	Town Garage Sale Ordinance repealed 8/11/25; Section 6.02 (F) must be revised to accord to intent and removal of ordinance mention *Cleanup only	2026

6	Act 250/LURB/Act 181 Tiers	Assess impacts of changes to Act 250 in addition to Act 181's tiered framework and discuss whether updates to the Zoning Bylaws are necessary or required	TBD pending legislative appeals process
7	Performance Standards of Section 5.03	Ensure that Performance Standards can be applicable to all uses to avoid argument that they only apply to CU or Industrial District/LBD	2026
		Town Plan Update	
1	Childcare	Update Childcare language per CVRPC feedback	In Process – hearing July 7
		Town Ordinances	
1	STRs	Work with the Selectboard to draft a framework for registering/regulating short-term rentals	In Process – final draft review July 7

Other:

- 1) Invite Eric Friedman (Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce) to a meeting to discuss the needs and concerns of business community (January 6, 2025). **Complete**
- 2) Invite Ned Swanberg to a meeting to discuss the changes in flood regulation and mapping. **Complete**
- 3) Invite Brian Voigt/Niki Sabado (CVRPC) to a meeting for further clarity on Act 181’s tiered framework and the application processes thereto. TBD

2026 Legislative Wrap-Up



Vermont's 2026 legislative session officially ended on Friday, May 29. This was a difficult session as lawmakers grappled with another substantial revenue gap in the state's education and transportation funds. The most controversial issue of the session by far was land use law, where VLCT prevailed on a number of priorities related to Act 181 reform and our continued efforts to end the duplication of state permit requirements for housing development.

The VLCT Advocacy team brought home some major wins for local government, including:

- Repeal of the road rule and Tier 3 from Act 181, which would have created duplicative state permitting requirements on more than three million acres statewide
- A new municipal finance authority to bond using special assessment district fee revenue
- A new special fund for town highway programs using PILOT special fund single-year surplus

Other incremental successes include:

- Exemption of elected and appointed municipal officials from state minimum wage requirements
- Allowing tax sale of properties with less than \$1,500 in delinquent property taxes if the parcel does not have a habitual structure and was not declared a homestead



- A new Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy financing authority to allow a voluntary assessment added to the property's local tax bill for the financing of eligible energy, water, and resiliency projects
- The Secretary of ANR can delegate to municipalities the authority to issue connection permits for potable water supply and wastewater systems – subject to certain provisions

VLCT tracked 115 bills for their potential impact on municipal government – and achieved over 30 bill or amendment introductions for priority issues. In all, the legislature introduced 608 bills. By the crossover deadline, 236 of them passed at least one chamber, and the legislature passed a total of 121 bills in the 2025-2026 session. Of those passed, 113 were either signed by Governor Scott or allowed to become law without his signature, and eight were vetoed.

In this legislative wrap-up, we recap the new laws that will have the greatest effect on municipal authority and funding. We also note VLCT's new process for developing our municipal legislative policy and seek your ideas for our 2027–2028 policy.

Act 152 (S.325): Regional Planning and Act 250 Tier Jurisdiction

For Vermont political observers, the events of this session related to Act 181 of 2024 represented a tectonic shift in the policy and politics of state land use law.

Act 181 (bill H.687) was passed in the veto session of 2024. Despite early objections raised by Governor Scott, the legislation was lauded as a



breakthrough of Act 250 reform that was 50 years in the making. In fact, the first years of implementation largely meant that housing development in downtowns and villages was temporarily exempted from Act 250 permit review. These exemptions were well received and well reported, and they produced several new housing developments. However, months after the 2025 legislative session concluded, two major phases of implementation began:

- The ongoing mapping of future eligible Tier 1A and Tier 1B areas, conducted by the regional planning commissions (RPCs)
- The rulemaking and mapping for proposed Tier 3 areas and the drafting of guidelines for the road rule, conducted by the newly seated Land Use Review Board

This means that while the new exemptions for housing created in 2024 were already bringing new units online, it wasn't really until late fall of 2025 that most members of the public were able to see how the proposed new Act 250 jurisdictional triggers would affect their communities. On January 6, the 2026 legislative session opened and [VLCT announced a slate of legislative priorities that included several urgent actions related to Act 181](#).

In May, the House unanimously passed [S.325](#) with provisions that included all of VLCT's major priorities and repealed the road rule and Tier 3. The final 31-page Act 152 of 2026 makes several substantial changes to Act 181, including the following.

- Repealing the road rule.



- Repealing Tier 3.
- Extending to 2028 temporary Act 250 exemptions for housing.
- Changing the process for amending regional plans so that minor amendments would not require public hearings, non-minor amendments would require only a 15-day notice period before a public hearing, and Tier 1B status requests could be adopted through a regional plan amendment or separately.
- Directing the Land Use Review Board (LURB) to contract with the State Natural Resources Council, in consultation with the Land Access Opportunity Board, to develop a public engagement plan to study and report on (1) the risks of losing critical natural resources not already well protected by current land use policy – including agricultural soils, forest blocks, habitat connectors of statewide significance, and headwaters – and (2) equitable, efficient, and effective regulatory or non-regulatory tools to protect these critical natural resources.
- Requiring new reporting by the LURB for Act 250 jurisdiction over commercial activities on farms and their effects on prime agricultural soils and also about the effects of Act 250 in limiting sprawl for retail and commercial activity outside of village centers.
- Creating a Joint Legislative Environmental Oversight Committee comprised of three Representatives and two Senators to oversee the Land Use Review Board, the implementation of Act 181, Act 250



permitting, and the Agency of Natural Resources and their permitting processes.

- Requiring that the future land use areas in the regional plan be consistent with the goals established in enumerated "smart growth principles".
- Expanding the accessory on-farm Act 250 exemption so that no permit or permit amendment is required for the construction of improvements for an accessory on-farm business of educational, recreational, or social events that feature agricultural practices or qualifying products. Types of events may include concerts and farm stays with five or fewer dwelling units.

S.325 is effective on July 1, 2026, except the accessory on-farm business exemption (in Section 6), which is effective July 1, 2027.

Act 179 (S.328): Housing and Common Interest Communities

[Act 179 / S.328](#) carries the substantial components of both H.775, the House housing bill, developed by the House Committee on Housing and General Affairs, and S.328, the Senate housing bill, developed by the Senate Committee on Economic Development.

[This Housing Omnibus Law . . .](#)



- Changes the state treasurer's 10% in Vermont Program by increasing the treasurer's investment authority to 12.5% of available state resources into housing development.
- Improves other state housing programs including VHIP (the Vermont Housing Improvement Program) and the Rental Housing Revolving Loan Program.
- Authorizes the Department of Housing and Community Development to create an Off-site Construction Accelerator Pilot that could allow for the bulk purchasing of panelized housing types for multiple planned housing developments.
- Creates three new reports or studies – on farm worker housing, common interest communities, and corporate purchase of homes, respectively. Act 179 also makes several changes involving municipal preemptions first passed in the HOME Act (Act 47 of 2023).

Changes Related to Municipal Efforts to Invest in Housing and Infrastructure

- **Create Special Assessment Bonds:** Proposed by the Vermont Bond Bank, this provision improves upon two existing municipal revenue authorities: revenue bonds and special assessment districts. It **allows municipalities to finance public improvements for a special assessment district area using the revenue from new future special assessment fees**. This new authority could be used in combination with



other public investment programs. For example, the special assessment bond could be used to create local match monies to draw down more substantial grant investments, or for projects financed primarily with Clean Water State Revolving Loan funds or the new Housing Infrastructure Loan Program. In these scenarios, the fees to property owners or rate payers would be modest – but could be used to leverage much larger public investments.

- **Require Changes to Municipal Plans:** The housing element shall also include an analysis of any regulatory and physical constraints preventing the development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation of sufficient housing to meet the housing needs and targets, and a description of what actions the municipality may take to accommodate the projected housing needs.

Changes to Municipal Bylaw Preemptions

- No bylaw shall have the effect of excluding mobile homes, modular housing, manufactured housing, or prefabricated housing from any district that allows year-round residential development in the municipality in Vermont.
- Removes “owner occupied lot” from existing Accessory Dwelling Unit preemption.
- No bylaw shall require a duplex to be constructed on an owner-occupied lot.



- For one year removes the provision exempting four-unit density requirement in high-density only districts by striking “unless that district specifically requires multi-unit structures to have more than four dwelling units” after “in any district that is served by municipal sewer and water infrastructure that allows residential development, multiunit dwellings with four or fewer units shall be a permitted use on the same size lot as a single-unit dwelling”.

S.328 is effective July 1, 2026.

Act 170 (H.955): Education and Property Tax Reform

[Act 170 / H.955](#) is the second bill in as many years to carry **substantial education and state property tax reforms**, and it continues implementation of Regional Assessment Districts. Despite early threats by the governor to veto the state budget over disagreements in the education reform package, this 152-page bill represents a compromise position hashed out between Senate and House conferees and representatives of the Scott administration in the late hours of the regular session. This law does not force school mergers or eliminate supervisory unions, which the governor had supported, but it does advance the concept of a foundation formula, and it introduces an emerging effort to cut back administrative costs through Cooperative Educational Service Areas (CESAs) beginning in fall 2026. The law also allows for the voluntary merger of contiguous school districts (until 2028) and creates 20 “merger committees”, made up of local school board members, to study



and report on the “advisability of forming a unified union school district” (by 2028).

Much like its predecessor Act 73 of 2025, Act 170 launches numerous new reports, studies, and rulemaking processes. The Agency of Education (AOE), with partners, shall study and report on the cost and performance of universal pre-k, tuitions charged by private and independent schools, and public-school transportation.

What is a CESA?

“Cooperative educational service area” or “CESA” means an association of supervisory unions created pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 10 to deliver shared programs and services to complement the educational programs of member supervisory unions in a cost-effective manner. A CESA “shall be a body politic and corporate” with unique powers and duties created in statute. Act 170 creates seven CESAs, encompassing all existing supervisory unions and districts.

A CESA will be managed by a board of directors composed of one person appointed annually by each member supervisory union board. Appointed persons shall be members of a member supervisory union board or the superintendent or designee of the member supervisory union. A CESA will have the power to provide educational programs, services, facilities, and professional and other staff that, in its discretion, best serve the needs of its members, including professional development, curriculum coordination and development, and transportation. A CESA will assess fees on member supervisory unions according to aggregate daily average, and may assess



service fees based on services provided, as applicable.

At a minimum, a CESA will offer services in the following areas to its members, when requested and when approved by the CESA board:

- special education, including implementation and maintenance of tiered systems of support and the provision of low-incidence, high-cost services;
- business, information technology, and administrative services; and
- union school district creation consultation and facilitation.

School Construction

The State of Vermont has been under a moratorium on school construction investment for a decade. A recent study identified over \$6 billion in total needs over a 21-year period, with an average annual need of \$300 million just to achieve replacement in kind. These needs have only grown since the 2023 estimates.

Act 170 makes the first substantial shift in state policy to invest in school buildings since 2016.

The law authorizes up to an additional \$50 million annually in state bonding capacity to support school construction. Projects that support school mergers or expanded access to equal educational opportunities are prioritized, and awards will fund 30% of the total approved cost of a project, while projects for school consolidation are eligible for additional bonus incentives up to 45% of



the total cost. Construction aid can be awarded as a debt service subsidy, as support through state bonding, or as a combination of both.

Act 170 also grants the School Construction Division within the AOE four new limited service positions to provide technical assistance to the State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board and authorizes \$800,000 for facilities master planning grants.

One may wonder whether the authorization of state bonding capacity for school construction in Act 46 of 2015 along with other efforts at that time toward voluntary district consolidation could have prevented the more significant challenges of today for implementation of Act 73. Nonetheless, more than a decade later, state government has agreed to unlock some of its financial might to assist local districts with the necessary expenses for school mergers.

Regional Assessment Districts

Act 170 continues the implementation of Regional Assessment Districts (RAD)s to standardize property valuation systems statewide and advance intermunicipal cooperation for mass reappraisal. The municipalities in a RAD must reappraise their grand lists every six years in a simultaneous full reappraisal, and each municipality may contract with one or more third parties to conduct their reappraisals. For each RAD's first full reappraisal, a municipality **may** conduct its reappraisal jointly with one or more other municipal members of the district; however, for all subsequent cycles, municipalities **must** conduct the simultaneous full reappraisals jointly with one or more other members.



The director of Property Valuation and Review shall establish standard guidelines and procedures, and may adopt rules, for RADs – including contractor guidelines, data standards, technology requirements, standard practices for mass reappraisal including when physical inspections are unnecessary, and a schedule for each RAD to fully reappraise every six years. If a municipality or RAD fails to reappraise on the schedule established, the state may withhold funds. The Commissioner of Taxes will propose geographic boundaries for RADs that are aligned with school district boundaries and have a minimum of 10,000 parcels in a report to the legislature by December 15, 2029.

In the future, property valuation appeals will be heard by Regional Assessment Appeals Boards made up of least one representative appointed from each member municipality plus one member per 1,000 parcels in the municipality. Hearings will be conducted by three-member panels, where not more than two of the three members can represent the municipality where the parcel is located. **Staffing and funding for the regional board shall be provided by its member municipalities.**

The regional assessment districts take effect on January 1, 2031. Regional Assessment Appeals Boards commence jurisdiction over valuation appeals and notices of changes of valuation on July 1, 2031.

Other Changes in Act 170 Affecting Municipal Grand Lists

- On or before May 1 of each year, the Division of Property Valuation and Review of the Department of Taxes shall furnish the listers in each town or city with the valuation of all taxable property of any public utility.



- A municipality shall be paid \$8.50 per grand list parcel per year from the General Fund to be used only for grand list maintenance.
- During the year in which a municipality is scheduled to fully reappraise, the municipality will receive the lesser of two-thirds of the estimated cost for reappraisal or \$66.00 per grand list parcel in the municipality.
- The collector of delinquent taxes may extend a warrant on land for tax sale when an amount less than \$1,500 is owed *if* the parcel has no dwelling capable of habitation on a year-round basis *and* the parcel was not declared as part of a homestead.

Sec. 57 (grand list contents) shall take effect on July 1, 2026, and shall apply to grand lists lodged beginning in calendar year 2027.

Property Tax Classifications

Act 107 does not create new tax rates for property classes (yet) but it does lay the groundwork by creating new property tax class definitions, and, **on or before October 1, 2028, the Department of Taxes will determine and assign a tax classification for every grand list parcel.** The Property Tax Classifications are:

1. **Homestead:** a parcel, or portion of a parcel, declared as a homestead on or before October 15 for the current year.



2. **Nonhomestead residential:** a parcel, or portion of a parcel, with a dwelling unit that is not: a homestead, rented out as a long-term rental, a mobile home, or part of a licensed lodging establishment. A long-term rental is defined as a dwelling unit for which rent is paid for the right of occupancy for periods of at least 30 days or for combined rental periods of least six months, or is used by an employer to house employees for at least six months.

3. **Nonhomestead nonresidential:** a parcel that does not qualify as either Homestead or Nonhomestead residential.

Act 168 (H.944): Transportation Bill

[H.944, this year's "T-bill"](#), adopts the FY 2027 transportation program including capital expenses and Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) operations. It also makes policy changes that affect transportation systems and transportation-related revenues. It governs funding for state highways and bridges, all town highway aid, public transit, rail, aviation, and some DMV related revenue structures.

As VLCT reported throughout the session, Vermont's transportation fund has structural challenges: its revenues are flat or declining, and transportation-related construction costs have risen sharply over the past five years. Vermont also relies on federal funds for more than half of its programs. At the beginning of the session, VTrans projected a \$33 million deficit in State



Transportation Fund match, which would leave approximately \$165 million in federal transportation funds on the table. Unfortunately, the governor and the legislature failed to fully close this funding gap with this year's T-bill.

VLCT collaborated closely with both the House and Senate transportation committees this session to address the structural problems with the transportation fund, and *more importantly*, to bring more aid to the State's town highway programs. We advocated for any and all solutions, as all Vermonters depend on roads, bridges, sidewalks, and a state transportation system that is safe, reliable, and affordable. It's fair to say that both committees understood the challenges and worked hard to address them, but they don't control all the levers of state government or State House politics. The practical takeaways from work on the transportation bill this session are that it temporarily bridges the financial gap and buys time through bonding and incremental revenue increases, but it leaves Vermont with ongoing difficulty in matching federal funds and a need for major future revenue raising – beyond the current plan to have electric vehicle (EV) owners help make up for lost gas tax revenues.

In summary, this year's T-bill does three main things:

1. Keeps the system funded amid revenue stagnation
2. Begins shifting to some EV-based funding
3. Prepares for increased use of bonding and future reforms

But it **does not solve Vermont's long-term transportation funding gap**: it mainly stabilizes the system and sets up future decision points.



Mileage-Based User Fee (MBUF) for EVs

For more than a decade, Vermont's transportation revenue sources have been estranged from state policy that seeks to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and decrease miles traveled in personal vehicles. While state policy encourages the adoption of electric vehicles, multi-modal transportation, and mass transit, the health of the T-fund relies on more Vermonters buying and driving more gas guzzling vehicles.

In one attempt to change direction, this year's T-bill makes good on a long-promised shift to a **new mileage-based user fee (MBUF) for fully electric vehicles**. It establishes a road use charge of 1.4 cents per mile for fully electric vehicles. It offers several different payment options, including annual, quarterly or monthly estimates; pay as you go; or a maximum flat annual fee totaling \$178 (based on the average of 11,000 miles driven per year at 1.4 cents per mile). Electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, and more fuel-efficient gas vehicles have reduced revenues from the gas tax for nearly a decade. For now, the MBUF will only be implemented on fully electric vehicles, but provisions of this year's T-bill create a study to expand implementation to hybrids and even fuel-efficient gas vehicles.

The new fee is expected to raise less than \$1 million in FY27. In FY29, when fully implemented, it is expected to raise only \$2.5 million annually – clearly not enough to fill the gap in the transportation budget.

Transportation Revenues



Other efforts to close the transportation fund gap and draw down federal funds largely failed this session. They included a proposal from the governor to redirect one third of the vehicle purchase and use tax (levied on leases as well as purchases) back to the transportation fund. For decades now, one third of the purchase and use tax has been reappropriated to the education fund. Instead, the legislature elected to transfer one-time general funds of approximately \$10.4 million to the transportation fund and \$3 million in one-time PILOT Special Funds to town highway aid (more on this in the appropriations bill (or Big Bill). The T-bill also authorizes up to \$10 million per year, for five years, in Transportation Infrastructure Bonds, a decision that requires annual review from the Capital Debt Affordability Advisory Committee and the state treasurer for debt sustainability.

Put simply, rather than leveraging state revenues to capture federal investment, the state is choosing to use taxpayer resources for debt financing of transportation projects.

Bridge Inspections, Postings, and Closures

The T-bill also prescribes the VTrans process for bridge inspections, postings, and closures. Under the new provision, **VTrans** will continue to inspect bridges on both state and town highways and must notify municipalities when locally maintained bridges require posting or closure. Municipalities remain responsible for implementing and funding closures, including signage, traffic control, notifications, and barricades for bridges under local jurisdiction. However, VTrans may take direct action when immediate public safety concerns arise. Violations of bridge postings or closures may result in civil penalties of up to \$1,000. These provisions seem to highlight the lack of



adequate funding at all levels of Vermont government to support safe transportation infrastructure across the state.

Effective Dates: Section 8,9 and 10 take effect on January 1, 2027, Section 28 takes effect retroactively on April 30, 2026, all remaining Sections take effect on July 1, 2026.

Act 163 (H.952): Capital Budget Adjustment Bill

[Act 163 / H.952](#) is a budget adjustment and mid-cycle modification of last year's capital bill, which authorizes two years of capital expenditures and bonding for state projects. It essentially updates spending levels, reallocates unused funds, and tweaks project priorities and timelines. It increases total authorized capital funding to \$160 million.

H.952 funds a number of upgrades to state-owned buildings including the State House; the Veterans' Home; courthouses in Newport, White River Junction, and Essex County; state historic sites; and state parks. The most significant new investments are reserved for HVAC system upgrades and installation of air conditioning at state correctional facilities, a line item that increased from \$1 million to \$9.4 million since last year. The bill restructures clean water funding investments for more targeted approaches including **\$3.9 million available for municipal pollution control grants**, \$2.5 million for drinking water matching funds, \$1.5 million for agriculture related water quality improvements, and \$2.8 million for agriculture and land conservation water quality.



The bill also approves the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services to transfer approximately 22.93 acres of the Southern State Correctional Facility property to the Town of Springfield, making the property available for municipal purposes including economic development.

Of note for municipalities struggling with three-acre rule compliance and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's efforts to develop a regional stormwater utility: a provision in Act 163 / H.952 that was championed by Senator Wendy Harrison from Windham County ensures that **municipalities retain the authority to create their own municipal stormwater utility**. Section 21 of the act states "The creation of a regional stormwater utility under statute or rules of the Agency of Natural Resources shall not prevent a municipality from regulating stormwater under this chapter, including adoption by the municipality of a bylaw establishing a municipal stormwater utility, including the operation of a municipal stormwater utility that establishes an assessment on an equivalent residential unit or impervious surface."

In the 2025 session the legislature passed [Act 37 / H.481](#) which extends the deadline by which owners of impervious surface subject to the three-acre rule must complete permitting. It also includes a study committee with the purpose of reviewing the feasibility and benefits of creating regional stormwater utility districts to facilitate implementation and compliance with the water quality laws, including the three-acre rule. The study committee has produced draft documents indicating a preference for regional stormwater utilities operated by the Regional Planning Commissions, which would be authorized to raise fees from all property owners with impervious surfaces. More information, materials, and documents can be found on the [DEC](#)



[Regional Stormwater Utility Study Committee Meetings](#) webpage.

H.952 took effect on passage, June 17, 2026.

Act 144 (H.951): Appropriations Bill, aka “the Big Bill”

On June 16, the governor [signed the state budget, Act 144 / H.951](#), also known as “the Big Bill”, for fiscal year 2027 (which begins July 1, 2026). The approximately \$9.38 billion budget reflects a 2.1% (\$193 million) increase over the prior year and proved to be non-controversial. Throughout the legislative session, Governor Scott threatened to veto the budget bill over disagreements with the legislature on continued education reform. One can, and many will, debate the merits of H.955 – this year’s Education Transformation Bill – which does not include forced mergers. Ultimately, the more than \$9 billion budget passed by the legislature included the governor’s proposed property tax buy-down, using more than \$100 million in one-time expenditures to hold next year’s property tax increases to an average of 3.5%.

[This budget fills all statutorily required reserves](#) and meets pension obligations. It consists of:

- \$2.57 billion in general funds (an increase of \$72 million from FY26)
- \$3.25 billion in federal funds (an increase of \$46 million from FY26)
- \$2.53 billion in education funds (an increase of \$97 million from FY26)



- \$360 million in transportation funds (an increase of only \$1 million from FY26), and
- \$677 million in other funds (a decrease of \$23 million from FY26).

The 474-page budget bill also carries significant changes to town highway aid funding, local option taxes (LOT), and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Special Fund. Section E.915.1 (on page 217 of the As Enacted PDF) creates the **Local Option Municipal Transportation Special Fund** at the Agency of Transportation. This new special fund is supported by local option tax cash receipts deposited in the PILOT Special Fund. When LOT revenues, in any state fiscal year, exceed the sum of all cash disbursements made from the PILOT Special Fund, three-fourths of the surplus annual operating cash receipts are to be transferred to the Local Option Municipal Transportation Special Fund and used solely to provide State aid to municipalities for transportation. The Big Bill also appropriates \$3 million in existing PILOT Special Fund Surplus to the Town Highway Program.

This represents almost a 10% increase in the Town Highway Program above the governor's recommended budget. The amounts appropriated to the special fund:

- may be used for class 1, 2, and 3 town highways in each State fiscal year;
- shall be apportioned, distributed, and used in the same manner and using the same formula as Town Highway Aid;



- are supplemental and do not supplant or decrease the amount appropriated from the formula Town Highway Aid *and* will not be decreased due to the annual inflationary adjustment;
- may be appropriated for town highway structures in each state fiscal year and again cannot supplant or decrease the amount appropriated from the formula Town Highway Aid for structures or be decreased due to the annual inflationary adjustment.

However, it's not all good news in the budget for municipal support. The act also directs \$3.41 million in base funding from the PILOT Special Fund (which is funded by the 51 municipalities that have approved LOT) to pay for the state's obligations for reappraisal, lister training, and the equalization study. These annual payments are made by the state to municipalities to help cover **some** of the costs associated with property valuation. **This represents a cost shift from the state general fund to the PILOT Special Fund.** VLCT vehemently opposed this shifting the state's financial responsibility to a municipal revenue source.

Read on for highlights in areas of interest to local government.

Housing

- \$37.65 million to fully fund the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)



- \$4 million from the General Fund for the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP)
- \$800,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair program (MHIR)
- \$235,000 from the General Fund to DHCD to expand the HomeShare Vermont program
- \$4 million as a one-time General Fund increase for the renter rebate program
- \$100,000 in tax credits authorized for the First Generation Homebuyer Program

Human Services

- Fully funds homelessness response initiatives at \$82.6 million
- Provides necessary funds across the Agency of Human Services (AHS) for caseload and utilization pressures and increases for designated agencies, specialized service agencies, and home and community based service providers
- \$332,000 to the Department for Children and Families (DCF) for 2-1-1



- \$1.1 million for Meals on Wheels

Health Care

- \$3.70 million from the Global Commitment fund to AHS for enhanced rates to primary care providers
- \$3.50 million from the General fund to AHS for grants to organizations providing benefit assistance
- \$300,000 from the General Fund (plus \$2.70 million federal funds) to the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) to make information technology updates resulting from federal Medicaid changes and \$1.21 million for provider stabilization grants
- \$717,111 for the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to continue offering medical professional primary care loan repayment and primary care provider placement
- \$924,000 from the Global Commitment Fund to Vermont's free and referral clinics to support health care services to Vermonters without health insurance, for total funding of \$2.50 million
- \$1.1 million to maintain Medicaid prescription co-pays



- \$300,000 from the General Fund to the Agency of Transportation (AOT) for nonemergency medical transportation

Municipal Government

- \$3 million from the PILOT Special Fund to Town Highway Aid
- \$1.3 million for disaster assistance to communities affected by flooding
- \$1.32 million for Municipal Planning Grants (MPGs)
- \$1.35 million from the PILOT Special Fund to AOT to pay for damages in the Northeast Kingdom due to 2025 flooding that did not receive FEMA disaster declaration
- \$110,000 from the General Fund to the Agency of Administration for the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Action, Leadership (IDEAL) program within the Office of Racial Equity for an additional year

Education

- Fully accounts for necessary funding for education transformation initiatives relating to H.955
- \$700,000 from the General Fund to the Agency of Education (AOE) for the Read Vermont Program



- \$2.32 million from the Higher Education Endowment Trust Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) for Freedom and Unity Scholarships and to raise the family income eligibility threshold for these scholarships from \$65,000 to \$80,000
- \$10 million from the General Fund and \$2 million from the Higher Education Endowment Trust Fund to UVM for the Multi-Purpose Center Project
- \$600,000 from the Higher Education Endowment Trust Fund to Vermont State Colleges (VSC) for a housing transformation project
- \$4.11 million from the General Fund to provide 3% increases to the University of Vermont (UVM), VSC, and VSAC

Other

- \$28.63 million from the General Fund and \$3.00 million from the Transportation Fund for the fiscal year 2027 Pay Act
- \$250,000 to the Vermont Council on Rural Development for rural technical assistance
- \$7.84 million for Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)



- \$9.08 million from the General Fund to the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) for the adoption of proposed changes to internal billing practices to establish fiscal sustainability
- \$1.80 million from the General Fund to the Office of the Secretary of State to support the Vermont Access Network
- Establishes two new permanent classified positions within the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to implement the Flood Safety Act (Act 121 of 2024)
- Establishes a Financial Director position at the Vermont Pension Investment Commission (VPIC)
- \$590,000 from the General Fund to the Office of the Secretary of State for Local Civic Journalism Awards
- \$200,000 from the General Fund for Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) grants
- \$350,000 from the General Fund to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) for a grant to NOFA Vermont for the Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus, and Farm Share programs and \$250,000 for a grant to Vermont Foodbank for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program



- \$2 million from the General Fund to the Department of Economic Development (DED) to provide grants to support business relocation and expansion efforts

Comparison of Selected Fiscal Year 2027 Line Items With Fiscal Year 2026

Budget Item	Millions of Dollars	
	FY26	FY27 as passed
(GF) Ethics Commission (B 136)	\$0.224	\$0.401
(GF) Homeowner Rebate (B137)	17.5	17.5
(GF) Renter Rebate (B138)	11.5	15.5
(GF) Tax Dept. Reappraisal and Listing (B139)	3.41	3.41
(GF) Municipal Current Use (B140)	21.35	21.65



(LOT 25%) PILOT State Buildings (B142)	12.2	12.2
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(LOT 25%) PILOT Correctional Facilities (B144)	0.04	0.04
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(GF) Special Investigative Units (B206)	2.291	2.36
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(GF) Sheriffs (B207)	6.722	7.214
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(GF,SF,FF,IF) Public Safety/State Police (B 209)	102.692	112.275
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(GF/IF) Criminal Justice Council (B221)	4.951	4.679
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(SF) E-911 Board (B235)	5.397	5.559
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(SF) Cannabis Control Board (B240)	7.159	7.141
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(GF, SF, FF, IF, Other) Total Human Services	5,987,280	6,084,347
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(GF, EF, FF, IF, Other) Total General Education	2,920,244	3,020,768
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(GF, EF, Other) Total Higher Education	138,898	142,015
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(GF, IF) ANR Lands PILOT (B701)	2,706	2,712
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(GF, SF) Land Use Review Board (B713)	5,580	5,897
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(TF) Town Highway Structures (B911)	7.2	7,394
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(TF, FF) Town Highway TA/Better Roads Program (B912)	0.481	0.481
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(TF) Town		
Highway Class 2	8.6	8.832
Roadway (B913)		

(TIB, FF, IF, Local Match) Town		
Highway Bridges (B914)	37.793	30.278

(TF) Town		
Highway Aid (B915)	30.418	31.240

(TF) Town		
Highway Class 1 Supplemental (B916)	0.129	0.129

(TF) Town		
Highway Non-federal Disaster Aid (B917)	1.15	1.15

(FF) Town		
Highway Federal Disaster Aid (B918)	4.0	4.0



(TF, FF, SF)
Municipal
Mitigation 6.893 6.143
Assistance (B919)

Table Notes:

Citations in parentheses refer to the section in the budget bill where those items are found.

GF = General Fund

LOT = 25% local option tax share remitted to state

PILOT = Payment in lieu of taxes

SF = Special Funds

EF = Education Fund

FF = Federal Funds

TF = Transportation Fund

TIB = Transportation Infrastructure Bond

IF = Interdepartmental Transfers

Resources Used for FY27 Budget Analysis:

[Conference Budget Documents | Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office](#)

[FY 2027 One Times_COC \(ID 406160\) FINA.xlsx](#)

[FY2027 Big Bill Web Report](#)

Act 118 (H.578) Penalties and Procedures for Animal Cruelty Offenses



As a bill, [Act 118](#) was championed by Representative Krasnow. It makes several enhancements to existing criminal codes and penalties related to animal cruelty.

The law also clarifies that a person convicted of animal cruelty on a first offense cannot own, possess, care for, reside with, have custody of, or work with any animal for a period that the court deems appropriate of up to five years. For a first offense of aggravated animal cruelty, the prohibition could be up to ten years.

Prior to passage of this bill, a humane officer could obtain a warrant for search and seizure, or, if the humane officer determined that an animal's life was in jeopardy and immediate action was required to protect the animal's health or safety, the officer could seize the animal without a warrant and the human officer could place a lien on the animal for reasonable costs incurred.

However, collecting payment for the costs incurred for the care and keeping of animals typically requires civil proceedings, and the previous statute placed municipalities in the position of carrying expenses for months without a guaranteed resolution. For situations involving animal hoarding, these costs could quickly become burdensome.

Act 118 keeps the authority for human officers to conduct search and seizures, and changes how costs related to the care and boarding of seized animals can be paid for. Under the new provision:

- The humane officer shall make reasonable efforts within 96 hours of seizure to serve notice to the owner of the animal



- The notice shall include
- a description of the animal seized
- the authority and purpose for the seizure
- the time, place, and circumstances under which the animal was seized
- the contact information for the authority with legal custody of the animal
- a statement that any person claiming an ownership interest in the animal at the time of seizure may post security and request a forfeiture hearing
- a statement of the amount due as security and how to pay it
- information about how apply for a hardship exemption
- The owner may request a forfeiture hearing within 14 days of the seizure. If the owner does not do so, the animal is forfeited.
- At the time of the forfeiture hearing, the owner must post a security in an amount needed to cover food and necessary veterinary care for the animal for an initial 40-day period, with an additional amount equal to the estimated cost of care and keeping of the animal for a subsequent 30-day period due every 30 days thereafter until the owner relinquishes



the animal or until the court issues an order of forfeiture.

Act 118 also creates immunity for humane officers and shelters for seizing or providing care and provides authorities for the Division of Animal Welfare to manage securities through the Animal Welfare Fund.

Act 118 is effective on July 1, 2026.

Act 166 (H.941): Municipal Regulation of Agriculture

For a long time, the conventional wisdom was that farms subject to the state's Required Agriculture Practices (RAPs) were afforded a broad exemption from municipal zoning regulation while agricultural activity not on a commercial farm was within the scope of municipal authority.

However, [in May of this year the Vermont Supreme Court issued a decision](#) that dramatically changes the landscape of municipal zoning in terms of the scope of the agricultural exemption for certain activities and structures.

The decision overrules an Environmental Division of Superior Court determination that an Essex Junction man's duck-raising and cannabis cultivation operations were exempt from municipal regulation under state law. The Court held that the law "does not prohibit all municipal regulation of farming if that farming is subject to the RAPs Rule," instead saying that the law only "prohibits municipal regulation of 'required agricultural practices,' or the agricultural land-management standards intended to protect Vermont's waters."



As a result of the court's decision, the [legislature passed H.941](#) to clarify the legislature's intent and to redraw the bounds of municipal authority over agricultural practices. Act 166 / H.941 says "Since at least the enactment of 2004 Acts and Resolves No. 115, it has been both the intent of the General Assembly and the controlling law that a municipality shall not regulate farming, including the construction of farm structures."

The new act creates a much more complex matrix for the determination of municipal authority in bylaw than was commonly understood prior to [late May of 2025](#).

For the regulation of commercial farming practice, no bylaw shall prohibit farming that meets the minimum RAP criteria, except for:

- Raising, managing, or feeding livestock under one acre
- Raising, feeding, or managing of livestock on a farm with 1.0 to 4.0 contiguous acres shall have a sufficient land base for appropriate nutrient and waste management as determined by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)
- Municipalities shall not prohibit swine or swine waste, or regulate swine waste-related farm structures, on a farm subject to the RAPs Rule, but may set a performance standard related to swine waste in downtowns or village centers if the waste is causing a significant adverse impact to the community, and the municipality has determined that the Secretary of AAFM is unable to provide redress through application of the RAPs Rule.



Act 166 / H.941 also creates a so-called “right to grow food” provision, which pertains to non-commercial agricultural activities regardless of parcel size. Under these provisions:

- No bylaw shall prohibit the cultivation or other use of land for growing plants, including for food, fiber, Christmas trees, maple sap, or horticultural, viticultural, and orchard crops. Cannabis and hemp are excluded from this exception.
- No bylaw shall have the effect of prohibiting or assessing a fee for the raising, feeding, or management of a poultry flock, excluding roosters and ratites, for personal use, donation, or sale. At minimum, no bylaw shall have the effect of prohibiting the keeping of fewer than 12 chickens or a number determined by a municipality, whichever number is higher.
- Municipalities may consider parcel size to establish other limitations on the number of poultry birds.
- A bylaw may establish a numerical limit of any poultry to be fewer than the minimum number as enumerated in the RAPs Rule regardless of parcel size.

Act 166 takes effect on July 1, 2026

Act 174 (S.212): Potable Water Supply and Wastewater System Connections



The purpose of [Act 174 / S.212](#) is to establish a comprehensive program to regulate the construction, replacement, modification, and operation of potable water supplies and wastewater systems in the state in order to protect human health and the environment, including potable water supplies, surface water, and groundwater.

Act 174 creates opportunities for municipal delegation for the technical review of potable water and wastewater connection permits, which is consistent with VLCT's goals to reduce duplicative state permit processes where municipalities provide adequate regulation, permit review, and enforcement.

The law directs the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to adopt a general permit for connections to potable water supply, and, upon request, ANR may delegate to a municipality the authority to conduct technical review of proposed projects that include both municipal potable water supply and municipal wastewater system connections, provided that the water main and sanitary sewer collection line are owned and controlled by the delegated municipality.

If a municipality requests delegation, ANR shall grant delegation provided that the municipality:

- is qualified to perform the technical review as determined by the secretary of ANR;
- receives authorization from the municipal legislative body to administer a program for review of potable water supply and wastewater system connections;



- meets any other requirement for the delegation program as adopted by the secretary in writing;
- shall only issue permits for water service lines and sanitary sewer service lines when there is adequate capacity in the public water system, wastewater treatment facility, or indirect discharge system;
- submits required documentation of the permitted project as determined by the secretary; and
- complies with the requirements for connection and all requirements of ANR's general permit rules

Act 174 also directs ANR to reconvene the Technical Advisory Committee to review the state's authority to require isolation distances for potable water supplies and wastewater systems that extend onto neighboring property – and furthermore to report on how isolation distances can limit the use of or encumber neighboring property and to recommend whether isolation distances should be allowed to extend onto neighboring property. The report was added by floor amendment by freshman Representative Will Greer from Bennington and is related to the use of "spite wells", whereby landowners create wells with the intent of inhibiting future development on neighboring parcels, or situations where landowners purchase a property and/or plan for development of property without knowing their parcel is inhibited by a neighbor's isolation area. The report on overshadowing of property by potable water supplies and wastewater systems is due on or before January 15, 2027.



Act 174 took effect on June 18, 2026, except that the repeal of a fee cap for potable water supply and wastewater system permits located in designated areas takes effect July 1, 2026.

Act 96 (H.762): County and Regional Governance Study Committee

Act 118 of 2024 created a new legislative study committee to explore regional governance structures in Vermont, including county government. The group began meeting that summer and was due to issue a report to the Government Operations committees on or before November 1, 2025. VLCT was one of nearly a dozen organizations assigned to a technical advisory group – including States Attorneys and Sheriffs, Planners, Clerks and Treasurers, Town and City Managers, School Boards, and more. However, after the 2024 state election, House Government Operations Chair Mike McCarthy lost his seat, and former Senate Governor Operations Chair Ruth Hardy did not return as chair for the 2025–2026 session. The Regional and County Governance Legislative Committee became defunct.

[Act 96 of 2026](#) reconstitutes the committee, changes its membership so that the Government Operations chairs are not required, and expands its scope of study. Act 96 includes an updated intent: “existing direct coordination and communication between the State and Vermont municipalities should be retained or strengthened. County or regional governance should enhance the work of local and State governments and not become a procedural barrier between the State and municipalities.” The committee shall report to the legislature on or before November 1, 2027, and shall cease to exist on



November 2.

The Committee is charged with studying and making recommendations to the General Assembly on how to improve the structure and organization of county and regional government, including:

- coordination and optimization of regional government provided by state, regional, and local agencies, including for public safety, emergency management, and public health purposes
- enhancement of regional collaboration, planning, and implementation
- coordination, increased transparency, potential efficiencies, and service improvements of nongovernmental agencies that provide regional public services such as designated mental health agencies and public transit providers
- allocation of public resources that is efficient, equitable, and transparent
- promotion of effective regional public services for individuals and municipalities
- reviewing the role and authority of elected county officials and their departments



- reduction of duplicated or conflicting public services and promotion of opportunities for intermunicipal collaboration
- balance of availability and cost of services across municipalities in each county
- review of mechanisms of county and regional government structures in other states
- impact of climate change and resiliency on the maintenance of public infrastructure, delivery of regional government services, and coordination of regional emergency planning
- the role of the Department of Public Safety and Vermont Emergency Management in responding to all hazards events

Act 96 is effective on passage, which was May 13, 2026.

Act 143 (H.938): Vermont Homelessness Response Continuum

Homelessness has been an increasing challenge, affecting municipalities across the state for several years. The legislature and governor had been unable to agree on the reforms needed to effectively address homelessness for most of those years. [Act 143 / H.938](#), signed by Governor Scott on June 16, is the result of more than two years of negotiations and compromises by our



state's executive and legislative branches.

[H.938 is a comprehensive overhaul of Vermont's homelessness policy.](#) It creates a **coordinated, multi-tiered system of prevention, shelter, and housing services**; reduces dependence on emergency motel housing; and invests significant funding to move people toward long-term housing stability.

H.938 establishes a **["Vermont Homelessness Response Continuum"](#)** – a statewide system of coordinated programs designed to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Provide emergency housing
- Help people transition to permanent housing

It aims to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring – and to reduce reliance on short-term fixes like the hotel/motel placement program – by establishing a centralized and integrated framework administered by the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

The "continuum" includes multiple levels of assistance:

- Prevention and diversion programs (rental aid to avoid homelessness)
- Emergency housing options (shelters, temporary placements)



- Low barrier and specialized shelters
- Permanent supportive housing with services
- Case management and individualized housing plans

Reduced reliance on motel voucher system:

- Limits use of hotels and motels for emergency housing (a major state strategy since COVID)
- Introduces caps on nightly rates, length of stay, and number of rooms used
- Encourages alternative housing options through partnerships with communities and landlords

Focus on accountability, efficiency, and prioritization:

- Requires data tracking, reporting, and oversight
- Emphasizes cost control and effective use of public funds
- Seeks more consistent rules, eligibility standards, and program structure



- Prioritizes vulnerable populations (families, children, elderly, disabled, etc.)
- Requires participants to engage in housing or stabilization plans
- Allocates \$82.6 million in FY27 for shelters, services, and implementation
- Supports programs like rental assistance, shelter expansion, and outreach services

Of particular interest to municipalities: H.938 directs \$500,000 in general funds to municipalities.

OEO will offer grants to municipalities that are experiencing high volumes of unsheltered homelessness, including municipalities underserved by traditional funding sources. The use of grant funds awarded is at the discretion of the municipality; however, when the National Weather Service declares a cold weather advisory, grant funds will include the provision of basic life-sustaining shelter. Shelter provided with this funding shall be time limited, shall not require a coordinated entry assessment or case management, and shall have minimal data reporting requirements. This language, found in Section 4, subsection 2209, leaves municipalities with a number of questions, such as: if you receive a grant used for costs associated with homeless encampment clean-up in August, must you stand up an emergency Cold Weather Shelter in January? Rulemaking by the OEO should provide guidance on these questions and others, as H.938 is heavy with intent and purpose language yet short on implementation details.



Effective dates vary by section, with emergency shelter rulemaking due September 1, 2026; permanent Vermont Homelessness Response Continuum rules adopted no later than October 1, 2027; and grant requirements taking effect on October 1, 2026.

Time will tell if this overhaul of Vermont's homeless response system is an improvement or a reorganization of the existing system that only sounds like progress.

Act 128 (S.327): Economic Development and C-PACE

[Act 128 / S.327](#) is this session's major economic development package focused on workforce and business development. It largely does not affect municipal programs. The bill directs Department of Economic Development (DED) to study existing business support systems, repeals the sunset of the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive (VEGI), and expands the Rural Industry Development Grant Program.

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE)

Act 128 also creates a statewide Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) framework. The C-PACE program, which was originally carried in [bill S.138](#), authorizes municipalities to support the financing of eligible renewable energy, energy efficiency, resiliency, and water conservation improvements on industrial properties through special assessments. The statute defines "resiliency improvements" as "improvements that increase the resilience of a



property, including air quality and stormwater infrastructure improvements, snow and flood mitigation, energy storage and microgrids, alternative vehicle charging infrastructure, and fire and wind resistance”.

Advocates of the program hope this will attract new private investment for environmental improvements. C-PACE already exists in 39 other states and is largely modeled after an existing municipal authority, [Property Assessed Clean Energy \(PACE\)](#). Under C-PACE, the special assessment would **only apply to commercial or industrial properties that enter into a written agreement** with the municipality. Therefore, unlike PACE, the creation of a C-PACE requires only an action of the legislative body, not a vote of the town. A municipality, a public agency, or a private entity may administer the program, and the municipality may charge fees to cover administrative costs.

Act 128 is effective on passage, which was June 8, 2026.

Act 176 (S.278): Reforms of Cannabis Regulation

Vermont legalized commercial sales for recreational cannabis in 2022, granting substantial oversight and regulatory authority of the recreational cannabis industry to the state Cannabis Control Board (CCB). [Act 176 / S.278](#) makes several reforming changes to existing statute related to legal recreational cannabis and also creates a pilot program for cannabis event permits.

This act authorizes the CCB to grant event permits to licensed cannabis retailers; however, no cannabis or cannabis products can be consumed at an



event. To apply for an event permit, **the licensee must have written permission from the municipal cannabis control board, or, if one does not exist, the municipal legislative body. The municipality may include conditions and limitations appropriate to protect the public, manage traffic, and abate nuisance.** The CCB can only issue 10 event permits per year, and only for events being held at locations within a municipality that has voted affirmatively to permit the operation of cannabis retail establishments. The law includes further restrictions and provisions for fees, penalties, and rulemaking.

The licensee must also satisfy:

- a security plan to ensure that intoxicated persons or persons under 21 years of age cannot access the space subject to the permit, that the premises are secured from diversion or inversion, and that the premises lawfully may be used for the purpose intended;
- a product sale plan that describes quantities and types of cannabis and cannabis products that will be offered for sale and how the cannabis will be transported, monitored, secured, displayed, and sold in conformity with Vermont state law and CCB rule;
- capacity to administer and enforce the required plans, and confirmation that the applicant has secured the services of a county law enforcement agency or private security provider licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 59, if required;



- proof of commercially reasonable insurance for the proposed event; and
- compliance with any other health and safety requirements that the CCB may prescribe for the event or event location, including limits on attendees.

Other Changes Made by S.278

- Retailers may provide up to two ounces per transaction.
- A person 21 years or older may lawfully possess up to two ounces of cannabis (increased from one ounce) or 10 grams of hashish (increased from five grams).
- Substantially lower licensing fees for retailers and cultivators.
- CCB is to pay local license fees to municipalities on an annual basis (instead of quarterly).
- Removes the "integrated" license type.
- Allows cannabis cultivator cooperative corporations in the same manner as other associations or persons engaged in the production of agricultural or handcraft products.



- Authorizes the governor to enter into an agreement with another state authorizing medical or commercial cannabis activity to create a commercial cannabis compact – to allow the interstate transportation of cannabis or cannabis products and commercial activity across state lines.
- A rental agreement shall not prohibit a tenant from possessing cannabis or cannabis products on premises or using cannabis or cannabis products within a dwelling unit, except for “use of lighted cannabis or cannabis products intended for inhalation”.

S.278 is effective on July 1, 2026, except the fee schedule changes take effect on January 1, 2027.

Act 104 (S.255): A Pilot Law Enforcement Governance Council in Windham County

VLCT supported a proposal by Windham County Sheriff Mark Anderson and other Windham County leaders that would create a new law enforcement pilot program and allow interested communities to join a shared service agreement with the Sheriff’s office to deliver policing countywide. [Act 104 / S.255](#) establishes and authorizes the new pilot.

During the pilot period of 2026–2034, municipalities in Windham County are now authorized to establish a law enforcement governance council for the purpose of providing regional law enforcement and related services.



The governance council would include one member appointed by each participating municipality and have the powers and duties to:

- Adopt bylaws for the operation of the council.
- Determine the annual budget for law enforcement and related services to be provided to member municipalities.
- Establish the level and scope of services to be delivered to member municipalities.
- Develop standards and performance metrics for delivered law enforcement and related services.
- Monitor service delivery and evaluate program effectiveness.
- Submit the approved budget to the Windham County Assistant Judges for inclusion in the county budget.
- Enter into agreements necessary for providing the services.

The council would have budget authority, but the assistant judges would assess the necessary tax rate to raise the required revenues through the county tax rate using a special assessment for each of the participating municipalities, based on population. Any municipality not participating in the pilot would not be assessed.



The Windham County Sheriff's office would enter into an annual service agreement with the governance council to provide law enforcement services.

The goal of the pilot is twofold: to reduce the ongoing administrative burden on the sheriff's office with negotiating more than a dozen service agreements annually and to improve equity and delivery of law enforcement services countywide.

This new pilot creates a way for municipalities to coordinate service delivery separate from their existing contracts and intermunicipal agreements – and without losing local control through a municipal district (like for solid waste and communication union districts). If the pilot is successful, it could be expanded to other counties and for other services.

Act 104 is effective on passage, which was May 19, 2026.

Act 177 (S.313): Exempting Elected and Appointed Municipal Officials from State Minimum Wage Law (and Transforming Vermont's CTE System)

[Act 177 / S.313](#), an act relating to transforming Vermont's career technical education system, carries a small but important provision relating to elected and appointed municipal employees (in section 8d). This provision was advocated for by VLCT and has been on a wild ride throughout the 2026 legislative session.

Under current law, municipal officers are not exempted from minimum wage. This is a problem because the vast majority of elected and appointed



municipal officials in Vermont are volunteers, and generally their compensation is established by the authority of voters at the annual meeting during the adoption of the budget. State law is also in conflict with federal law, which allows the exemption.

On the final day before the crossover deadline, the House Committee on General and Housing picked up and advanced [bill H.556](#) that would clarify that elected or appointed municipal officials are not “employees” under the statute and would change state law so that minimum wage requirements would not apply to elected or appointed municipal officials.

H.556 was picked up by the Senate and was referred to the Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs, where the language was then added to S.230 – which carried other provisions related to fair employment practices, but also had a controversial provision related to union solicitation of employees in the Department of Corrections. Perhaps anticipating a veto, Senators also amended bill S.313 by inserting the same major labor law provisions that were passed in S.230.

In June, the governor did veto S.230 but signed S.313.

The intent of S.313 is to provide universal access to career and technical education (CTE) by increasing exposure to and early awareness of CTE; addressing barriers such as transportation, scheduling conflicts, and awareness; providing consistency in admissions policies; and ensuring that no student may be placed on a waitlist or prevented from accessing CTE for lack of capacity where there is a viable alternative.

In addition to making substantial CTE reforms and exempting all elected and appointed municipal officials from state minimum wage law requirements,



S.313 also:

- extends existing labor protections for the victims of crime to include a person who is a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who has supporting documentation; and
- creates new protections for healthcare workers against non-compete and non-disparagement requirements.

S.313 is effective on passage, which was June 18, 2026.

Other Bills Affecting Municipal Government

Act 90 (H.723) changes Vermont's laws for **the posting of private land to prohibit hunting, fishing, trapping, or taking wildlife**. This act clarifies that posting land against hunting, fishing, trapping, or taking of game or wild animals is **valid and enforceable for 365 days after the date the posting is recorded with the town clerk**. This act also provides that if a posting has accidental or unintentional deviations from the posting requirements, the posting shall still be deemed enforceable if a reasonable person would believe these activities are prohibited on the land and the posting is recorded with the town clerk.

In summary, Act 90 makes Vermont's land-posting rules **more practical and enforceable** by:



- Setting a clear one-year period of validity from the date of recording with the town clerk.
- Preventing technical mistakes from invalidating otherwise clear "no hunting/fishing/trapping" postings.
- Requiring landowners to still **record postings annually with the town clerk** and maintain signage that clearly communicates restrictions.

Effective Date: April 30, 2026.

Act No. 97 (H.940) is a miscellaneous **public utility law** that makes **targeted changes to energy efficiency programs**; municipal, regional, and state **energy planning processes**; and **telecommunications planning and oversight**.

This act has three separate parts:

First, it creates a session law provision giving retail electricity providers (including Burlington Electric) the ability to carry forward existing budgeted funds for thermal energy and process fuel funds for programs, measures, and services that reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions in the thermal energy or transportation sector, such as for geothermal test wells, regardless of the preexisting fuel source of the customer for three years (2027-2029).

Second, it makes changes to the process of enhanced energy planning used by municipalities and regional planning commissions (RPCs). It requires RPCs



to submit draft regional plans to the Department of Public Service **concurrently** with their submission to the Land Use Review Board. **It ensures that municipalities do not experience gaps in an approved energy plan – thereby maintaining their ability to receive “substantial deference” in Section 248 energy siting cases.** It streamlines public feedback by consolidating it with the adoption of broader regional or town plans, rather than conducting separate processes.

Third, it extends the State Telecommunications Plan cycle from three years to five and eliminates the Telecommunications and Connectivity Advisory Board.

Effective Date: May 13, 2026.

Act 149 (S.202) creates a **new statutory category for small, plug-in solar systems** (sometimes called “balcony solar”) and makes them easy to install and use in Vermont by **largely exempting them from traditional utility regulation and municipal permitting.**

Act 149 permits Vermonters to install small plug-in solar devices, up to a combined capacity of 1,200 watts per electric meter, without obtaining approval from the Public Utility Commission or entering into an interconnection agreement with a utility, provided the systems meet applicable safety standards. These devices are not eligible for net metering, and any excess electricity sent to the grid is not compensated.

The act **limits local authority by prohibiting municipal bylaws from regulating or prohibiting the installation, operation, or maintenance of these devices** as well as renewable energy systems more broadly. Public



buildings remain subject to applicable fire and building safety requirements. Act 149 also establishes notice requirements for tenants and restricts private deed provisions that would prevent installation.

Act 149 takes effect July 1, 2026.

Act 126 (S.298) is an elections law focused on protecting voting rights, strengthening enforcement, and updating election related procedures. It creates stronger protections against voter interference and establishes a new criminal offense for intimidating or coercing voters or election officials. New duties, responsibilities and liabilities are added for municipal elections officials, particularly municipal clerks:

Local officials must ensure that:

- polling places and processes are **accessible to voters with disabilities**
- language access issues are appropriately addressed where relevant
- no informal practices create unequal treatment

Clerks must:

- require an **affirmation or oath from requestors**
- be more vigilant about **how voter data is distributed**

Municipal actions can now be subject to **civil enforcement** by the attorney general **and investigation** related to alleged voter interference or



suppression. Therefore, municipalities should:

- update **election worker training**,
- review **local election procedures and policies**, and
- **document compliance decisions** more carefully.

Act 126 took effect on June 8, 2026.

Act 105 (H.270) is a new law focused on **confidentiality and liability protections for peer support programs used by emergency service providers (police, fire, EMS)**. Act 105 makes peer support communications confidential and generally not disclosable; bars their use in court, administrative, or arbitration proceedings; and creates exceptions for threats, abuse, and public safety risks. It provides **civil liability protections (immunity)** for employers (including municipalities) and peer support providers and programs.

Municipal Benefits of Act 105:

- Supports mental health services for first responders, who are municipal employees
- Encourages use of peer programs by guaranteeing confidentiality
- Limits civil liability for municipalities providing peer support programs unless there is gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional



misconduct

- Improved recruitment, retention, and resilience in police, fire, and EMS

Act 105 takes effect on July 1, 2026.

Act 129 (H.527) Extends from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2029, the **sunset of the telecommunications Certificate of Public Good** process (30 V.S.A. § 248a) and **reinforces municipal participation requirements** in that process.

Telecommunication developers are already required to provide **a 60-day advance written notice, a copy of the application** and a description of their **rights and opportunities to participate** to municipal legislative bodies and municipal and regional planning commissions (among other statutory notice requirements) prior to filing an application to construct or install telecommunication facilities. With regard to municipalities, Act 129:

- requires that, for non de minimis projects, the municipal legislative body or planning commission hold a duly warned public meeting within the 60-day notice period;
- requires that the applicant (developer) and Department of Public Service (DPS) attend the public meeting; and
- charges DPS with considering the comments and information from the public meeting in its recommendations to the Commission about the application.



Act 129 took effect on June 15, 2026.

[Act 164 \(H.933\)](#) is a tax policy bill that makes a **series of “miscellaneous administrative and policy changes” to Vermont tax law.**

Changes most relevant to municipalities include:

- property transfer taxes, including higher rates for certain nonhomestead residential property
- current use / land use change tax adjustments

Section 24 is part of a broader group of provisions in the act that **shift Vermont's property tax system toward an assessment date of January 1 instead of April 1.** This *does not* require immediately switching assessment to January 1 in FY27: any move to January 1 depends on phased implementation and related provisions elsewhere in the act.

Municipal officials (especially listers and clerks) may need to prepare for:

- more questions from buyers and sellers
- need for coordination with state tax authorities
- increased complexity in interpreting exemptions or classifications

Act 164 has effective dates ranging by section, from retroactively January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2031 (for sections 24-48).



Act 150 (S.209) prohibits civil arrest in “sensitive locations”, including many places operated or controlled by municipalities. This law was enacted largely in response to federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions, as they are generally considered **civil, not criminal** under federal law. Local, state, or federal law enforcement can still make arrests for crimes and judicial warrants in these locations.

This law bans civil arrest (with limited exceptions) when a person is:

- In or traveling to/from:
 - court proceedings
 - DMV offices
 - polling places
- On the premises of:
 - public libraries
 - schools and camps
 - social service facilities (e.g., shelters, food pantries)
 - health care facilities



- places of worship
- In buildings owned and wholly controlled by the State or a political subdivision of the State (including municipalities) where members of the public may enter in order to conduct governmental business

Municipalities may need to update police department directives related to civil arrest procedures, update sensitive location restrictions, and train law enforcement officers on these changes.

Act 150 went into effect on June 16, 2026.

Municipal Charter Changes

- **Panton, M-11 ([H.953](#)):** This bill approves an amendment to the charter of the Town of Panton to adopt procedures for the recall of elected town officers.
- **Barre, M- ([H.902](#)):** This bill approves amendments to the charter of the City of Barre to authorize the city manager or any councilor duly authorized by an action of the city council to authorize the sale of city property. This bill also amends the City of Barre charter provisions related to the city's undesignated fund balance.



- **Williston, M-12 (H.957):** This bill amends the charter of the Town of Williston to remove listers as elected officers and instead enable the town to employ or contract with an assessor.
- **Town of Essex, M-6 (H.516):** This bill approves amendments to Essex's charter to update governance structures, appoint a town manager, establish a professional appraisal department, clarify selectboard powers, and refine town meeting and budget procedures.
- **Bennington, M-7 (H.694):** This bill approves amendments to the charter of the Town of Bennington concerning the town manager.
- **City of Burlington, M-8 (H.508) and M-9 (H.956):** H.508 approves amendments to the charter of the City of Burlington to redefine city election districts and wards into four districts and eight wards, authorizing the city council to adjust boundaries for equal population and requiring voter approval. H.956 approves an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to establish the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Summer Study Committees and Stakeholder Groups

In every session, legislation is passed that directs VLCT to appoint municipal members to be on or participate in a variety of summer legislative working groups, taskforces, studies, surveys, and reports. VLCT staff and members



provide expertise on municipal issues ranging from land use planning to law enforcement.

VLCT Advocacy relies on the experience of our members to guide our policy work. Please consider becoming involved: **your voice and direct participation are important.** We will announce available VLCT appointments and opportunities to engage legislative committees and working groups later this summer. **Stay tuned!**

What We Are Reading

Each legislative session typically ends in a flurry of actions, and it takes some time for bill signatures, vetoes, and the ensuing reporting to catch up. That was true this year as the session rushed to close, with most major bills being resolved through conference committees in the final days of the session.

Here is some recent reporting from significant legislative actions taken this session:

- [Musical Chairs: Many Vermont House and Senate Leaders Won't Seek Reelection](#), VTDigger
- [Phil Scott Signs Bill that Will Restructure Vermont's Homelessness Response](#), Vermont Public



- [Partial Rollback of Vermont's Land-Use Law Act 181 Becomes Official with Phil Scott's Signature](#), VTDigger
- [Two Days After Signing the Act 181 Rollback, Scott's Housing Chief Calls It 'Not a Housing Bill'](#), Compass Vermont
- [With a Deal on Education Reform In Hand, Vermont Lawmakers Close Out the Session](#), Vermont Public
- [Lawmakers Reject Scott's Effort to Weaken Wetland Rules for Housing](#), Seven Days
- [Costs – and Frustrations – rise as Royalton Waits for Bridge](#), Vermont Public

Send Us Your Policy Ideas

It's time to start the biennial VLCT policy setting process for the 2027–2028 biennium!

We need our members – you! – to help identify the key issues, legislative actions, and opportunities ahead for municipal government.

At its April meeting, the VLCT board changed our policy committee process to create a permanent VLCT Municipal Policy Committee. This committee will stay active throughout the biennium and work together to advise the VLCT Advocacy team, develop VLCT municipal policy and legislative priorities,



provide testimony, and recruit other municipal officials for advocacy actions. Committee members will also participate in legislative working groups to help advance VLCT policy priorities. The new standing committee will replace the prior five time-limited committees (Finance, Administration, and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR); Public Safety; Quality of Life and Housing; and Transportation and Environment) that developed separate issue areas of the Municipal Policy.

The new committee will have a current VLCT board member appointed as chair, and VLCT's Executive Director and Board President will both serve as ex officio members.

VLCT has recruited applicants to the Policy Committee over the last month, and new members will be appointed and begin meeting in mid-July to develop the proposed 2027–2028 Municipal Policy. The proposed policy will be referred to the VLCT Board of Directors in September and then voted on by the full membership at the annual meeting in October.

If you have ideas to share with the Policy Committee about how to improve VLCT's municipal policy for the next biennium, please email

advocacy@vlct.org.

Publication Date

06/30/2026

