

CCRPC Formal Staff & PAC Review – 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan  
January 13, 2016 PAC Meeting

**Staff Review of the 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan**  
**Emily Nosse-Leirer, CCRPC Planner**  
**January 13, 2016**

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The City of South Burlington has requested, per 24 V.S.A §4350, that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (1) approve its 2016 Comprehensive Plan; and (2) confirm its planning process.

This draft 2016 Comprehensive Plan is a major rewrite of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. Information from community engagement and studies and work completed by City committees and boards, regional entities and private organizations is incorporated. The first part of the plan, the community assessment, is based on discussion of four “colors” of infrastructure: social, grey (transportation infrastructure and energy), blue (water and wastewater) and green (environmental, recreational and agricultural). The second part is a land use plan addressing five distinct land use planning areas.

Discussion of quality of life, housing affordability, economic policy and long-term sustainability has been strengthened, as have linkages between this plan and policy presented in other studies and adopted plans.

CCRPC staff completed an informal review of a draft of the 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan in June 2015, and the PAC offered comments at the July 8, 2015 meeting. The South Burlington Planning Commission held formal public hearings on October 20 and 27, 2015. The Planning Commission voted on November 3rd to send the draft plan to the City South Burlington City Council. The City Council held its first public hearing on December 15 and will hold its second public hearing on February 1.

Following the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s (CCRPC’s) *Guidelines and Standards for Confirmation of Municipal Planning Processes and Approval of Municipal Plans (2013)* and the statutory requirements of 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, I have reviewed the draft 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan to determine whether it is:

- Consistent with the general goals of §4302;
- Consistent with the specific goals of §4302;
- Contains the required elements of §4382;
- Compatible with the 2013 Chittenden County Regional Plan, entitled the *2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan* (per §4350); and
- Compatible with approved plans of other municipalities (per §4350).

Additionally, I have reviewed the planning process requirements of §4350.

Staff Review Findings and Comments

1. The 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan is consistent with all of the general goals of §4302. See the attached Appendix A submittal that describes how the Plan is consistent with these goals.
2. The 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the specific goals of §4302. See the attached Appendix A submittal that describes how the Plan is consistent with these goals.
3. The 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan contains the required elements of §4382. See the attached Appendix A submittal that describes compliance with these required elements.

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4. The 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan is generally compatible with the planning areas, goals and strategies of the 2013 Chittenden County Regional Plan, entitled the *2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan*.
5. The 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan is compatible with the municipal plans for Shelburne, Williston, Burlington, Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction and Winooski.
6. South Burlington has a planning process in place that is sufficient for an approved plan. In addition South Burlington has provided information about their planning budget (attached) and CCRPC finds that South Burlington is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning.

Additional Comments/Questions:

**In the initial review completed in June 2015, CCRPC staff made a number of suggestions. An updated memo is provided as an attachment, which shows the way the suggestions were incorporated. Specifically, staff brought up two issues related to whether the June draft met statutory requirements. Both issues were resolved, described below.**

- Flood Resilience: In June, staff expressed concern over whether the plan addressed flood resilience adequately.
  - In the current draft, Section 2.4, “Blue Infrastructure,” contains narrative about flood resilience as well as associated objectives and strategies. The plan also references the South Burlington All Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Water Quality: In June, staff expressed concern over whether the plan met new statutory requirements established by the Clean Water Act, specifically the addition of a planning goal related to water quality (24 V.S.A. Section 117 § 4302 Goal 6 (B): Vermont’s water quality should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253).
  - Though the plan does not directly mention the Winooski River Basin Water Quality Management Plan, it does describe the extensive actions taken by the City to improve and maintain water quality, including adopting low impact development stormwater standards and creating a stormwater utility. The plan is clearly consistent with the goals of the Winooski Basin Plan.

**CCRPC Staff have no other recommendations, however we would like to commend the City on this Plan for the following reasons:**

1. The plan clearly draws on the extensive relevant work being completed by City agencies, committees, staff, the school district, and volunteers. For example, very clear links are drawn between the work of the Affordable Housing Committee and the objectives and strategies described in the Housing section (Section 2.2 B).
2. Overall, this is an extremely well-written and comprehensive plan.

Proposed Motion & Next Steps:

**PROPOSED MOTION:** The PAC finds that the draft 2016 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan, as submitted, meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC approval, and that the municipality's planning process meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC confirmation.

Upon notification that the Plan has been adopted by the municipality, CCRPC staff will review the plan, and any information relevant to the confirmation process, for changes. If staff determines that changes are substantive, those changes will be forwarded to the PAC for review. Otherwise the PAC recommends that the Plan, and the municipal planning process, should be forwarded to the CCRPC Board for approval.