

CCRPC Formal Staff & PAC Review and Hearing – 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan
March 8, 2017 PAC Meeting

Staff Review of the 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan

Emily Nosse-Leirer, CCRPC Planner

March 8, 2017

The Town of Hinesburg has requested, per 24 V.S.A §4350, that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (1) approve its 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan; and (2) confirm its planning process.

This draft 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan is a comprehensive update and re-adoption of the 2013 Hinesburg Town Plan. In accordance with statute, re-adoption means that this is a fully compliant plan that will expire eight years after adoption by the Selectboard. CCRPC reviewed the 2013 plan in 2013 as part of an Enhanced Consultation process. The 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan addresses several new required elements, and also describes some significant changes to the community's vision for the future.

CCRPC staff completed an informal review of the 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan in November 2016, prior to the first Planning Commission public hearing (discussed below). Staff have completed this formal review of the plan in advance of the Selectboard public hearings on the plan, which have not been scheduled.

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 2017 Hinesburg Town 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 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan is consistent with the general goals of §4302. See the attached Appendix A submittal that describes how the Plan is consistent with these goals.
2. The 2017 Hinesburg Town 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 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan contains the required elements of §4382. See the attached Appendix A submittal that describes how the Plan is consistent with these goals.
4. The 2017 Hinesburg Town 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 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan is compatible with the municipal plans for Shelburne, St. George, Williston, Richmond, Huntington, Monkton and Charlotte. The plan acknowledges that there are potentially incompatible land uses planned for Hinesburg's border with Starksboro. Along Route 116, Hinesburg plans

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for future industrial use, while Starksboro plans to preserve farmland. Staff finds that while an industrial planning area and a large scale agricultural planning area may be incompatible, they are not inherently so if managed properly.

- a. Staff suggests that as Hinesburg moves forward in developing this industrial area that they consult with Starksboro and mitigate any concerns from development pressures that may arise in Starksboro.
6. Hinesburg has a planning process in place that is sufficient for an approved plan. In addition, Hinesburg has provided information about their planning budget and CCRPC finds that Hinesburg is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning.

Additional Comments/Questions:

In November 2016, CCRPC staff completed an informal review of the draft 2017 Hinesburg Town Plan before the first Hinesburg Planning Commission hearing on the plan. The informal review included a discussion of one required section that needed to be added to the plan (a reference to basin planning), as well as a number of suggestions for changes intended to improve the next draft of the plan. All suggested and required additions were incorporated. The details of the suggestions and the way in which they were addressed can be found in the annotated 2016 memorandum, attached.

While Staff does not find that any amendments are necessary for approval and confirmation of the process by the CCRPC, the following recommendations are for the next full Plan update:

1. CCRPC staff discussed several small typos and formatting issues with Town staff.
2. The Housing chapter (Chapter 3) says that the provision of municipal water and sewer is allowing more housing development in the village center area, and says that this new pattern represents a change in the town's historic pattern of development (page 23). However, in several other places in the plan, the village center is described as an area that has historically been the town's center of development. Therefore, the statement in the housing chapter could use some clarification.

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

1. This plan left me with a very clear picture of the town as a whole: its character, the key issues and challenges facing the people and government, the specific strategies that have been identified, what's already been done and the areas where the town is letting things "shake out" before making decisions.
2. There are numerous helpful cross-references in the plan, such as emphasizing the very important connection between economic development in the town and the ongoing water and wastewater challenges.
3. The implementation section is particularly strong. I especially appreciated the top 10 strategies for plan implementation, along with the acknowledgement in the implementation section that not all the good ideas identified in the plan are possible to accomplish.

Proposed Motion & Next Steps:

PROPOSED MOTION: The PAC finds that the draft 2017 Hinesburg Town 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.