

Staff Review of the 2017 St. George Comprehensive Plan
Lee Krohn, AICP, CCRPC Senior Planner
October 31, 2017 – Annotated 9/11/2018

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

This draft 2017 St. George Comprehensive Plan is an update and re-adoption of the 2012 Plan, which has since expired. In accordance with statute, re-adoption means that this is a fully compliant plan that will expire eight years after adoption by the Selectboard. Accordingly, this 2017 Plan primarily addresses several new required elements. CCRPC staff had conducted an advance review of the 2012 Plan in December of 2015, and provided the Town with comments and suggestions for this update; we offer this formal review of the plan in advance of the Planning Commission's upcoming public hearing on November 28, 2017.

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 St. George 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 2017 St. George Comprehensive 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 St. George 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 2017 St. George Comprehensive 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 St. George Comprehensive Plan is generally compatible with the planning areas, goals and strategies of the 2013 Chittenden County Regional Plan (amended in 2016), entitled the *2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan*.
5. The 2017 St. George Comprehensive Plan is compatible with the municipal plans for the adjoining municipalities of Hinesburg, Shelburne, and Williston, as described in Section 5.13.

CCRPC Formal Staff & PAC Review and Hearing – 2018 Milton Comprehensive Plan
November 8, 2017 PAC Meeting

6. St. George has a planning process in place that is sufficient for an approved plan. Staff is still waiting on information for this.

Additional Comments/Questions:

CCRPC staff understands that the Town prepared this update primarily to address new statutory requirements, while maintaining the community vision and most of the goals and objectives of the 2012 plan.

We find that the plan meets all the statutory requirements of 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. However, much of the data are quite dated. If there is not time to research and incorporate data from more current sources, it may be helpful and appropriate to at least include citations for data sources in this Plan; for example:

New CCRPC population, household and employment forecasts for our 2018 ECOS Plan:

<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/ecos-regional-plan/#2018-update>. The American Factfinder/U.S. Census Bureau tables provide more current information on a wide array of demographic statistics:

https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml. – **Newer data were incorporated in some places. These changes are not required for approval and confirmation.**

There are also a number of technical or grammatical updates or corrections needed, which have been communicated to the Town under separate cover. – **Updated**

For the next plan, we would encourage the Town to move beyond the required elements of the plan to a more forward-looking vision for the town and specific actions for getting there. This could include: protection of natural resources and ridgelines, encouraging appropriately scaled economic development, providing for a range of housing types affordable to varying income levels, and the like. **Not incorporated. These changes are not required for approval and confirmation.**

Proposed Motion & Next Steps:

PROPOSED MOTION: The PAC finds that the draft 2017 St. George 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.