

Staff Review of the 2019 Huntington Town Plan, Including Enhanced Energy Plan Review
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Reviewed by the CCRPC Planning Advisory Committee on May 8, 2019

The Town of Huntington has requested, per 24 V.S.A §4350, that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (1) approve its 2019 Huntington Town Plan; and (2) confirm its planning process.

Additionally, the Town of Huntington has requested that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission issue a determination of compliance with the enhanced energy planning standards set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4352 for the 2019 Huntington Town Plan.

This draft 2019 Huntington Town Plan is a full re-write of the town plan. At the time of this review the Plan is nearly a final draft. At their May 13th meeting, the Huntington Planning Commission intends to warn their public hearing for June 25th. 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 2014 plan in September 2017 as part of an informal review and consultation process. The 2019 Huntington Plan addresses the comments from that initial review (as seen in the attached annotated memo), several new required elements, provides updated data, addresses recent changes to the community and includes an enhanced energy plan. Staff have completed this formal review of the plan and review of the plan against the Vermont Department of Public Service's Energy Planning Standards for Municipal Plans in advance of the town's public hearing scheduled for June 25th.

Confirming and Approving the Municipal Plan

Following the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's (CCRPC's) *Guidelines and Standards for Confirmation of Municipal Planning Processes and Approval of Municipal Plans (2018)* and the statutory requirements of 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, I have reviewed the draft 2019 Huntington 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 2018 Chittenden County Regional Plan, entitled the *2018 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 2019 Huntington 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 2019 Huntington 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.

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3. The 2019 Huntington 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 2019 Huntington Town Plan is generally compatible with the planning areas, goals and strategies of the 2018 Chittenden County Regional Plan, entitled the *2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan*.
5. The 2019 Huntington Town Plan is compatible with the municipal plans for Richmond, Bolton, Hinesburg, Starksboro, Buels Gore, Duxbury and Fayston. In addition, the identification of specific objections to work with neighboring towns to advance shared interests is great.
6. Huntington has a planning process in place that is sufficient for an approved plan. In addition, Huntington has provided information about their planning budget and CCRPC finds that Huntington is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning.

While there are no changes needed for CCRPC approval, here are a few minor additional comments/questions:

1. Consider adding photos to break up some of the text and make it more readable, especially with most of the data tables being in an earlier demographic section.
2. Great education section – really brings home the value the residents have in Brewster.
3. Great section on the importance of wastewater for long-term vitality in the village.
4. Legend on Map 1 needs to be adjusted down into the outline.
5. Map 2 includes a “Class A Ecological Watershed” that isn’t described in the text (unless I missed it). What is this?
6. Map 4 should have a reference to the source for the “potential community wastewater area” and “potential community water area” data.
7. Map 5 – is the “protected land” a subset of the Use Value appraisal program? If not, perhaps adjust the legend so that the 2017 agriculture/forestry land is the only thing from the Use Value appraisal program (maybe a separate header isn’t needed).
8. There are other minor suggestions that Staff made in the body of the text for Huntington Planning Commission to consider.

Enhanced Energy Plan Review

Following the statutory requirements of 24 V.S.A. §4352 and Vermont Department of Public Service’s Energy Planning Standards for Municipal Plans, I have reviewed the draft Comprehensive Plan to determine whether:

7. The Comprehensive Plan includes an energy element that has the same components as described in 24 V.S.A. §4348a(a)(3) for a regional plan and is confirmed under the requirements of 24 V.S.A. §4350.
8. The Comprehensive Plan is consistent with following State goals:
 - a. Vermont's greenhouse gas reduction goals under 10 V.S.A. § 578(a);
 - b. Vermont's 25 by 25 goal for renewable energy under 10 V.S.A. § 580;
 - c. Vermont's building efficiency goals under 10 V.S.A. § 581;
 - d. State energy policy under 30 V.S.A. § 202a and the recommendations for regional and municipal energy planning pertaining to the efficient use of energy and the siting and development of renewable energy resources contained in the State energy plans adopted pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 202 and 202b (State energy plans); and
 - e. The distributed renewable generation and energy transformation categories of resources to meet the requirements of the Renewable Energy Standard under 30 V.S.A. §§ 8004 and 8005.

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9. The Comprehensive Plan meets the standards for issuing a determination of energy compliance included in the State energy plans as developed by the Vermont Department of Public Service.

Staff Review Findings and Comments

Consistency with the requirements above is evaluated through the Vermont Department of Public Service’s Vermont Department of Public Service’s Energy Planning Standards for Municipal Plans, which is attached to this document and briefly summarized below.

| Standard | Met | Not Met | N/A |
|---|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Plan duly adopted and approved | | Necessary for final determination | |
| 2. Submit a copy of the adopted plan | | Necessary for final determination | |
| 3. Plan contains an energy element | X | | |
| 4. Analysis of resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems in the municipality across all energy sectors | X | | |
| 5.a. Report Current energy use for heating, electricity, and transportation | X | | |
| 5.b. Report 2025, 2035 and 2050 targets for energy use | X | | |
| 5.c. Evaluation of thermal-sector energy use changes | X | | |
| 5.d. Evaluation of transportation-sector energy use changes | X | | |
| 5.e. Evaluation of electric-sector energy use changes | X | | |
| 6.a. Encourage conservation by individuals and organizations | X | | |
| 6.b. Promote efficient buildings | X | | |
| 6.c. Promote decreased use of fossil fuels for heat | X | | |
| 6.d. Demonstrate municipal leadership re: efficiency of municipal buildings? | X | | |
| 7.a. Encourage increased public transit use | X | | |
| 7.b. Promote shift away from single-occupancy vehicle trips | X | | |
| 7.d. Promote shift from gas/diesel to non-fossil fuel vehicles? | X | | |
| 7.e. Demonstrate municipal leadership re: efficiency of municipal transportation? | X | | |
| 8.a. Promote Smart growth land use policies | X | | |
| 8.b. Strongly prioritize development in compact, mixed use centers | X | | |
| 9.a. Report existing renewable energy generation | X | | |
| 9.b. Analyze generation potential | X | | |
| 9.c. Identify sufficient land to meet the 2050 generation targets | X | | |
| 9.d. Ensure that local constraints do not prevent the generation targets from being met | X | | |
| 9.e. Include policy statements on siting energy generation | X | | |
| 9.f. Maximize potential for generation on preferred sites | X | | |
| 9.g. Demonstrate municipal leadership re: deploying renewable energy | | X – see note below | |
| 10. Include maps provided by CCRPC | X | | |

Staff finds that the draft 2019 Huntington Town Plan meets the requirements of the enhanced energy planning standards (“determination”) set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4352. However, staff identified that additional work in the

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plan is needed to demonstrate Huntington’s leadership on deploying renewable energy generation (standard 9.g.). Staff suggested revisions for achieving standard 9.g. below.

Action 32 in Appendix 1 discusses the potential to use hydroelectric turbines in conjunction with a municipal water and wastewater system. This action does not represent the planning Huntington has done for water and wastewater infrastructure. Consider rephrasing this action to capture the status of planning for water and wastewater infrastructure. To demonstrate the town’s dedication to energy planning, the town should also consider including language that creates the basis for pairing new infrastructure with combined heat and power system technology and water use efficiency. This revision could be made to action 32 in the appendix. The town should also identify a more prominent location for this action. For example, integrating the new revision into action B of Utilities Goal 2 ties energy planning nicely into the development of water and wastewater systems. Additional actions related to standard 9.g. could also be discussed in the plan. This could include siting of a solar array to offset municipal electricity use. Adding any other energy actions related to town leadership may necessitate a new goal in the energy section.

Staff encourages the Town to consider making these changes to not only meet standard 9.g. but to create a foundation for ensuring that the town is planning for reducing its energy use.

Proposed Motion & Next Steps:

PROPOSED MOTION: The PAC finds that the draft 2019 Huntington Town Plan, meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC approval, and that the municipality's planning process meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC confirmation.

The PAC also finds that the draft 2019 Huntington Town Plan meets the requirements of the enhanced energy planning standards (“determination”) set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4352.

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. If staff determines that the required data and reference have not been added, or that substantive changes have been made, the materials 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, confirmation, and an affirmative determination of energy compliance.