

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
2 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES  
3

4 DATE: Wednesday, February 10, 2021  
5 TIME: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
6 PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom with link as published on the agenda  
7

**Members Present:**

Eric Vorwald, Winooski  
Ravi Venkataraman, Richmond  
Joss Besse, Bolton, Chair  
Alex Weinhagen, Hinesburg  
Cymone Haiju, Milton  
Wayne Howe, CCRPC Representative  
Paul Conner, So. Burlington  
Darren Schibler, Essex  
Owiso Makuku, Essex

Sarah Hadd, Colchester  
Melissa Manka, Westford  
David White, Burlington  
Andrew Strniste, Underhill

**Staff:**

Regina Mahony, Planning Program Manager  
Melanie Needle, Senior Planner  
Taylor Newton, Senior Planner

8  
9  
10 **1. Welcome and Introductions**

11 Joss Besse called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.  
12

13 **2. Approval of November 18, 2020 Minutes**

14  
15 Alex Weinhagen made a motion, seconded by Eric Vorwald, to approve the November 18, 2020 minutes. No further  
16 discussion. MOTION PASSED.  
17

18 **3. Cannabis Legislation**

19 Regina Mahony provided an overview of Act 164 – Cannabis Tax and Regulate and the PAC had a discussion about  
20 who has put the retail opt-in question on their ballots this year (Burlington, Winooski & Richmond).  
21

22 Melanie Needle provided an overview of the Chittenden Prevention Network’s Prioritizing Health in the Built  
23 Environment guide. Prevention has played a key role in reducing youth substance use; and these techniques will be  
24 helpful in thinking through the regulation of cannabis businesses. This guide refers to this study that VLCT did that  
25 talks about the authority for towns to "regulate" adult only products:

26 <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/VLCT-CCRPC-Study-11-21-FINAL.pdf>  
27

28 The PAC indicated that future topics that would be helpful on this front include:

- 29 • Information/presentation from VLCT on best practices in other states that have already been through these  
30 conversations.
- 31 • Keep informed of the rule making process, and potentially provide comments, as this will greatly inform how  
32 this plays out at the local level.
- 33 • Provide standard definitions for use in zoning bylaws and/or ordinances.  
34

35 Presentation is attached.  
36

37 **4. Westford Town Plan**

38 Joss Besse opened the hearing at 3:30pm. Hearing no comments, the hearing was closed.  
39

40 Taylor Newton provided a brief overview of the Plan update, which includes an enhanced energy plan. Taylor stated  
41 that the Plan meets all of the statutory requirements. Taylor added that the Town received a VCDP planning grant  
42 and they are requiring the Town adopt their plan, even though it hasn’t technically expired during the state of  
43 emergency.  
44

1 Alex W. – several questions/comments:

- 2 1. Pg. 10. Section 3.2.1 – Census link needs to be removed or updated.
- 3 2. Pg. 17 Section 3.2.3 – Westford existing housing stock, home price and how it relates to income. Might  
4 consider updating because the data is a little old now. In 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph data from 2013. Same comment on Pg.  
5 19 – the figure is easy to understand but the data is old.
- 6 3. Pg. 20 density description is a great addition. Inspired by that.
- 7 4. Pg. 23 & 24 – poor cell service map. Any discussions about providing a cell tower? Melissa Manka stated  
8 that they did get public WiFi in the common this past summer; but there has been no Town initiative to add a  
9 cell tower. Alex suggested that the it might be good for the Selectboard to proactively reach out for cell  
10 coverage – especially in the common.
- 11 5. Pg. 25, Figure 9 – pie chart – re-title to Land Area by Parcel Size Distribution.
- 12 6. Pg. 26 – continue zoning permits out to 2020.
- 13 7. Pg. 36 schools – might want to consider showing a chart that shows the enrollment trends.
- 14 8. Energy Plan – pg. 59 – Section 7.2.9. Total electricity increase and limits of three phase power and challenge  
15 for solar. Can existing infrastructure handle the electricity increase? Or do the sub-stations need upgrades?
- 16 9. Pg. 66 – types of carpooling options: add GoVermont.

17  
18 Alex Weinhagen made a motion, seconded by Paul Conner, that the PAC finds that the draft 2021 Westford Town  
19 Plan meets all statutory requirements for CCRPC approval, and that the municipality's planning process meets all  
20 statutory requirements for CCRPC confirmation.

21  
22 The PAC also finds that the draft 2021 Westford Town Plan will meet the requirements of the enhanced energy  
23 planning standards (“determination”) set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4352.

24  
25 Upon notification that the Plan has been adopted by the municipality, CCRPC staff will review the plan, and any  
26 information relevant to the confirmation process. If staff determines that substantive changes have been made, the  
27 materials will be forwarded to the PAC for review. Otherwise the PAC recommends that the Plan, and the municipal  
28 planning process, should be forwarded to the CCRPC Board for approval, confirmation, and an affirmative  
29 determination of energy compliance.

30  
31 No further discussion. MOTION PASSED.

### 32 33 **5. Members Items Open Forum**

34 Joss Besse asked if any members had any items to discuss with each other.

35  
36 Alex Weinhagen asked the Town’s that have the cannabis question on their ballots if they have spoken with their  
37 Planning Commission’s yet about how they are going to treat the retail businesses. Eric Vorwald stated that they  
38 haven’t addressed it so far but intend to treat it just like any other retail assuming that the state Board will include  
39 restrictions on signage, etc. They already have a hemp plant in the City. Ravi Venkataraman stated that they haven’t  
40 spoken to the PC yet. They are tied up with other topics. They are just waiting to see how the vote goes first. Would  
41 potentially steer the PC toward light manufacturing districts.

42  
43 Alex Weinhagen indicated that he is curious how to enable light manufacturing in the rural land areas. Owiso  
44 Makuku stated that Essex has these same land use issues as they straddle the line between developed and rural. Essex  
45 plans to set up a Committee to think through these cannabis related issues before bringing it to a vote.

46  
47 Eric Vorwald stated that in the other states that have allowed this the licensing is very expensive so it can be  
48 prohibitive for many smaller operators that might do the cultivation piece. Owiso Makuku recalled a conversation  
49 from awhile ago about Vermont not wanting large scale cannabis in the state so they may approach this differently.  
50 Alex Weinhagen added that we are likely to take a VT scale approach to this and incentivize small folks including  
51 BIPOC folks.

52  
53 Alex Weinhagen has another topic about architectural design guidelines; but he’ll ask this via email.  
54

1 Paul Conner brought up a topic about ways to think about making it easier for folks to allow for outdoor seating and  
2 other pandemic induced positive changes. Issue with wastewater seating (typically outdoor seats mean more seats) –  
3 but unlikely that outdoor and indoor seats would be used at the same time. In Winooski – capacity is based on what  
4 you can accomodate inside. But you can put those seats anywhere.

5  
6 Next PAC meeting – how are we responding to the long-term impacts of COVID; and how can we take advantage  
7 (for lack of a better term). Bolton – inundated from recreation users – Winooski and Bolton potholes and Preston  
8 Ponds (100 cars one time). How are we doing by providing enough recreation resources? Richmond having same  
9 issue on the Winooski. Looking at creating parking and trying to manage the road. Hoping to have management  
10 strategies for the future.

11  
12 **6. Regional Act 250/Section 248 Projects on the Horizon.**

13 Regina asked the PAC to email Regina and Taylor any Act 250/Section 248 updates.

14  
15 **7. Other Business**

- 16 a. Reminder to submit your 2020 housing, commercial and bike/ped data to Melanie if you haven't done so  
17 already. We currently have all but 6 municipalites data. Melanie Needle stated "kudos to Meagan Tuttle for  
18 getting Burlington's data in on-time for the first time in 5 years!"
- 19 b. Chittenden County Housing Convening – Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Save the dates will be going out.
- 20 c. [Community Leadership in Action: A Vermont Guide to Community Engagement, Project Development and](#)  
21 [Resources](#) from the VT Council on Rural Development.
- 22 d. Incremental Development Alliance will be hosting a Small Scale Development Seminar for VT on February  
23 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9am to 1pm. More information here: [Small Developer Virtual Seminar — IncDev Alliance](#)  
24 [\(incrementaldevelopment.org\)](#).
- 25 e. [Smart Growth America Equity Summit](#). The videos of the three days are online. There are also a lot  
26 resources in the email I forwarded (in the PAC meeting email).

27  
28 **9. Adjourn**

29 Meeting adjourned at 4:06pm.

30  
31 Respectfully submitted, Regina Mahony

**Topics**

**Cannabis Commercialization**

**PAC Meeting**  
**February 10, 2021**

- Review Legislation
- Town Meeting Ballot Questions
- A Municipal Planning Look at Preventing Substance Use
- Next Steps

1

2

**Act 164 Basics**

- Retail sales will only be allowed in communities that vote to opt-in. **Note: proposed bill S.25 would require that this question be posed to the voters no later than March 1, 2022.**
- Cultivation, testing, warehousing, and distribution are not subject to any municipal opt-in. **Note: proposed bill H.164 would require a town to vote on allowing the operation of any type of licensed cannabis establishment**
- While municipalities cannot issue blanket prohibitions of cannabis establishments via ordinance or zoning, the uses are subject to zoning. The bill empowers communities to create local cannabis control commissions, and for such commissions to condition issuance of a local license on any zoning bylaw adopted pursuant to 24 V.S.A, section 4414.
- Cannabis shall not be regulated as "farming," and cultivated cannabis shall not be considered an agricultural product or agricultural crop under relevant State laws; therefore municipalities will have the power to regulate cannabis cultivation through zoning, unlike traditional agricultural practices and agricultural structures.

3

**Act 164 Timelines**

- April 1, 2021: Cannabis Control Board makes recommendations to the General Assembly regarding resources necessary for implementation of the program
- On or before **June 1, 2021: Board begins formal rulemaking** for cannabis establishments, medical program, and dispensaries
- On or before **March 1, 2022: Final adoption of rules** for cannabis establishments, medical program, and dispensaries
- On or before **May 1, 2022: Begin issuing licenses for small cultivators, integrated licensees, and testing labs; and integrated licensees may begin selling cannabis and cannabis products to the public**
- On or before Oct. 1, 2022: Begin issuing licenses for retailers; and **retailers may begin selling cannabis and cannabis products to the public**

4

**2021 Ballot Question**

**No**

- Underhill
- Westford
- Jericho
- Colchester
- South Burlington
- Shelburne
- Charlotte
- Hinesburg
- Essex Town/Junction
- Williston
- Bolton

**Yes**

- Burlington
- Winooski
- Richmond

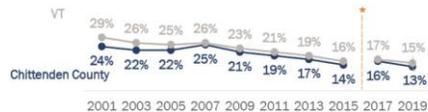
**Unknown**

- Huntington
- Milton
- St. George

5

**The percent of adolescents in grades 9-12 who binge drank in the past 30 days was statistically better in Chittenden County compared to Vermont in 2019**

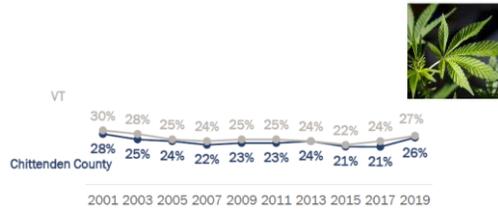
\*Note: question wording changed between 2015 and 2017. Use caution when comparing data pre- and post-change.



Source: Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2001-2019)  
Vermont Department of Health  
Prevalence: High School Youth - Binge Drinking

6

The percent of adolescents in grades 9-12 who used marijuana in the past 30 days was statistically the same in Chittenden County compared to Vermont in 2019



Source: Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2001-2019)

Prevalence: High School Youth - Marijuana Use



7

## What is prevention?

### Prevention is Essential

Prevention is a protective approach that supports healthy lifestyles and attitudes and reduces substance use in our communities, especially for youth.



There's a lot cooking in the adolescent brain.

Tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, opioids and other drugs turn up the heat. Prevention 'turns down the temperature' for youth and can prevent problems from boiling over, or even starting to simmer.

Every \$1 INVESTED in prevention SAVES \$10-18 in costs associated with:

- Health Care
- Criminal Justice
- Lost Productivity



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### Root Causes of Youth Substance Misuse

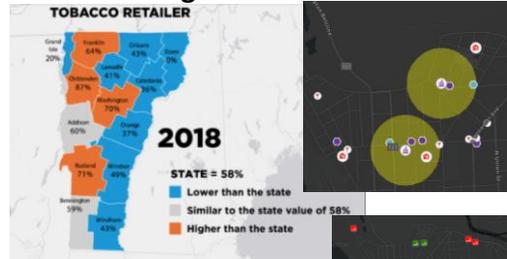


- Community Normalization
- Access and Availability
- Substances in the Community
- Low Perception of Harm by Adults and Youth
- Early Onset of Youth Substance Misuse



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### Visualizing the Retail Environment

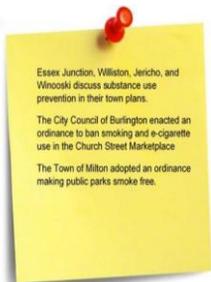


7 schools in Burlington are within 1,000 ft of at least one alcohol retailer.



10

### TOOLS FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO PREVENT & REDUCE SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND RELATED HARMS



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### Tools

- Smoke/VAPE Free Ordinances
- Establish density maximums
- Permit retailers in certain districts
- Buffer between places where youth congregate
- Healthy Retailer Practices
  - 'Safe Routes to School'
  - Signage
  - Product Placement



12

# Chittenden Prevention Network

The image is a collage of logos and a map. On the left, there are three logos: 'Essex CHIPS' with a green figure, 'Connecting Youth' with a green leaf and 'Dorset Valley School District', and 'Whizkid Partnership for Prevention' with a colorful figure. In the center is a map of Vermont with several regions highlighted in green. On the right, there are three logos: 'Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community' with a colorful figure, 'MICYC' with a colorful circular logo, and 'CPN Chittenden Prevention Network' with a green figure. At the bottom left is the 'CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC' logo with the tagline 'Customizing Partnership. Together.' At the bottom center is the website URL 'CHITTENDENPREVENTIONNETWORK.COM'.