



Date: November 16, 2023

DRAFT FOR CCRPC BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION

To: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation

From: Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

Re: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CONFORMANCE OF THE DRAFT 2023 WINOOSKI TACTICAL BASIN PLAN WITH THE 2018 CHITTENDEN COUNTY ECOS PLAN

The purpose of this memorandum is to analyze the relative conformance of the *Draft Winooski Tactical Basin Plan* with the relevant Goals, Strategies and Recommended Actions of the *ECOS Plan*.

CCRPC would like to commend Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Watershed Coordinator Keith Fritschie, on the comprehensive presentation and analysis contained in the *Draft Winooski Tactical Basin Plan (TBP)*. We appreciate the opportunity to work with him and other DEC staff to strengthen municipal and public participation in TBP development. We look forward to continued cooperation with DEC and with the Agency of Natural Resources as a whole on future TBPs, as well as water quality outreach and education and other activities.

BACKGROUND

CCRPC has the opportunity to provide recommendations to the Agency of Natural Resources regarding tactical basin plans pursuant to the following sections of Vermont Statutes Title 10, Chapter 47, §1253(d)

- (2)(G) ... *the Secretary [of Natural Resources] shall: develop, in consultation with the regional planning commission, an analysis and formal recommendation on conformance with the goals and objectives of applicable regional plans.*
- (3)(D) ... *[the regional planning commissions are to] assist the Secretary in implementing a project evaluation process to prioritize water quality improvement projects within the region to assure cost effective use of State and federal funds.*

The CCRPC reviewed [the formal draft Winooski Tactical Basin Plan update issued on October 9, 2023](#). The Winooski Basin includes major portions of the Chittenden County towns of Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Essex, Jericho, Shelburne, South Burlington, Underhill, Williston and Winooski and small portions of Burlington, Hinesburg and Westford.

The [2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan serves as the County's Regional Plan](#). The *ECOS Plan* also serves as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the County.

APPLICABLE ELEMENTS OF CCRPC'S 2018 ECOS PLAN

The ECOS Plan has four Broad Goals with each having a discrete number of Goals.

Natural Systems (Goals #1 - #3) – Design and maintain a strategically planned and managed green infrastructure network composed of natural lands, working landscapes, and open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions, and provide associated benefits to our community.

Social Community (Goals #4 - #9) – Promote the skills, resources, and assurances needed for all community members to participate in the workforce and in their family, civic and cultural lives, within and among their neighborhoods, and in the larger community.

Economic Infrastructure (Goals #10 - #12) – Build the region's capacity for shared and sustainable improvements in the economic wellbeing of the community through support of both local and globally competitive initiatives.

Built Environment (Goals #11- #17) - Make public and private investments in the built environment to minimize environmental impact, maximize financial efficiency, optimize social equity and benefits, and improve public health.

To achieve these seventeen Goals, the ECOS Plan sets forth eight Strategies. Those Goals and Strategies most applicable to assess conformance of the Draft Winooski Tactical Basin Plan are as follows:

Goals:

#1. Ecological Systems (Habitats, Water Quality, Air Quality) - Conserve, protect and improve the health of native species habitats, water quality and quantity, and air quality.

#6 Public Safety and Criminal Justice - Improve the safety of the public including the loss of life and property from natural and manmade hazards.

#12. Working Lands - Support the growth and vitality of working farms and managed forests; and sustainably manage sand and gravel extraction operations.

#13. Land Use - Encourage future growth in the Center, Metro, Enterprise, Suburban, and Village Planning Areas to maintain Vermont's historic settlement pattern and respect working and natural landscapes.

#16. Infrastructure - Ensure adequate infrastructure and facilities (i.e. water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater treatment, broadband coverage and solid waste recovery and recycling) to support areas planned for growth while conserving resources.

Strategies:

#3: Improve the safety, water quality, and habitat of our rivers, streams, wetlands and lakes in each watershed.

#4 Increase investment in and decrease subdivision of working lands and significant habitats and support local food systems.

ANALYSIS TO DEMONSTRATE CONFORMANCE

The following table details how the key objectives and strategies noted above are in conformance with and supportive of specific Actions of the *ECOS Plan*.

Draft Winooski Tactical Basin Plan, Objectives and Strategies	Conformance with ECOS Plan Goals and Strategies and relation to select Actions in the Plan
<p><i>Agriculture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target field Best Management Practice implementation in high priority watersheds. • Improve nutrient management planning (NMP) through technical support, NMP workshops, and financial support for improved nutrient utilization. • Implement NMPs and associated agricultural water quality practices in high priority catchments. Support farm teams, conservation equipment programs, soil health assessments, and farmer participation in the pay for phosphorus program. 	<p><u>Goal #1, Goal #12, and Strategy #4</u></p> <p><u>Strategy 3. Action 2.b.</u> includes "Incentivize best management practices for agricultural uses; and encourage the Agency of Agriculture to better enforce their required agricultural practices."</p>
<p><i>Developed Lands- Stormwater</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, design, and implement stormwater treatment projects identified in Phosphorus Control Plans, Stormwater Master Plans, stormwater mapping reports, or other assessments. • Support the design and implementation of small-scale stormwater practices through formula grant funding. • Provide outreach and technical support to landowners with 3-acre parcels. • Promote and, where appropriate, coordinate existing campaigns to raise awareness of simple residential stormwater management solutions and chloride application best practices. 	<p><u>Goal #1, Goal #16, and Strategy #3</u></p> <p><u>See following actions in ECOS Plan:</u></p> <p><u>Strategy 3. and all Action 2. sub-actions</u> which include data collection of areas producing water quality pollutants, help municipalities with regulatory measures (i.e. MRGP, developed lands permit, etc.), and help municipalities and partners with non-regulatory approaches (financial assistance for stormwater facility improvements).</p>
<p><i>Developed Lands- Roads</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support to towns to implement priority Municipal Roads General Permit projects and to update road erosion inventories. • Develop private road phosphorus reduction estimates and complete private road segmentation and assessments. 	<p><u>Goal #16 and Strategy #3</u></p> <p><u>Strategy 3. Action 2.</u> Non-point source pollution prevention and treatment which notes that "CCRPC will work with the municipalities and other partners to implement these programs: Municipal Roads General Permit, Phosphorus reduction integration into the existing MS4 permit, and Developed Lands (3 or more acres of impervious).</p>
<p><i>Wastewater</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support municipalities pursuing wastewater treatment facility phosphorus optimization, expansion projects, and upgrades to meet total maximum daily load allotments, phosphorus optimization and CSO requirements. • Support and ensure monitoring and permit compliance for 	<p><u>Goal #1, Goal #13 and Goal #16 and Strategy #3</u></p> <p><u>Strategy 3. Action 3</u> discusses needed wastewater treatment plant upgrades. In addition, the</p>

<p>waste management systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance and funding to towns interested in exploring and implementing village wastewater systems and septic replacement through ANR Village Wastewater Solutions. • Promote septic system maintenance in communities adjacent to nutrient- or bacteria-degraded waters via Wastewater Workshops. 	<p>Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies list includes specific wastewater treatment plant projects.</p>
<p><i>Rivers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train partners on the Functioning Floodplains Initiative (FFI) tool to estimate the phosphorus-reducing benefits of natural resource projects. • Evaluate protection and restoration projects identified in state-supported plans using the FFI tool and develop and implement priority projects. • Pilot the identification, development, and implementation of low-tech, process-based restoration projects. • Support municipalities in updating flood hazard bylaws and considering adoption of river corridor protections with new Federal Emergency Management Agency maps. • Scope, development, and implement priority culvert upgrade and dam removal projects. • Encourage landowner and recreationist stewardship of riparian areas through established social marketing and signage campaigns for water quality and biodiversity benefits. • Support outreach to towns on opportunities to reclassify waters based on fishing or aquatic biota uses. 	<p><u>Goal #1, Goal #6, Goal #13 and Goal #16 and Strategy #3</u></p> <p><u>Strategy 3. Action 1.</u> River Hazard Protection, plus multiple sub-actions.</p> <p><u>Strategy 3, Action 1.d.</u> "Support non-regulatory conservation and/or preservation of vulnerable areas through public and land trust investments, including identification of repetitively damaged structures and provide assistance to elevate, relocate or buy out structures, and identify where flood storage capacity may be restored and conserved."</p> <p><u>Strategy 3. Action 1.f.</u> - "To protect water quality, development should be located to avoid state and local known constraints that have been field verified, and to minimize impacts to state and local possible constraints that have been field verified." These constraints include floodplains, municipal surface water setbacks, riparian areas and wildlife connectivity resources.</p> <p><u>Strategy 4. Action 1.</u> Protect forest blocks, wildlife connectivity resources and crossings, surface waters, riparian areas and other significant habitats (e.g. wetlands) from development and fragmentation."</p>

Finally, it is also worthwhile to note the Draft Tactical Basin Plan also directly supports implementation of a key top action for the next five years called out in the ECOS Plan, namely “Top Action #5” which states: *#5 Assist the State and municipalities in implementation of the Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load and other water quality improvement efforts through participation in the Tactical Basin Plans, Municipal Road General Permit assistance, Regional Stormwater Education Partnership/Rethink Runoff, etc.*

PLAN CONFORMANCE CONCLUSION

Based upon the analysis above, the Board of Directors of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission determines that the draft *Winooski Tactical Basin Plan* is in conformance with and supportive of the *2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan*, specifically with the

If you desire clarification on this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Dan Albrecht, dalbrecht@ccrpcvt.org or 802-861-0133.

Note: The CCRPC will plan to provide additional staff level comments prior to the formal comment deadline.