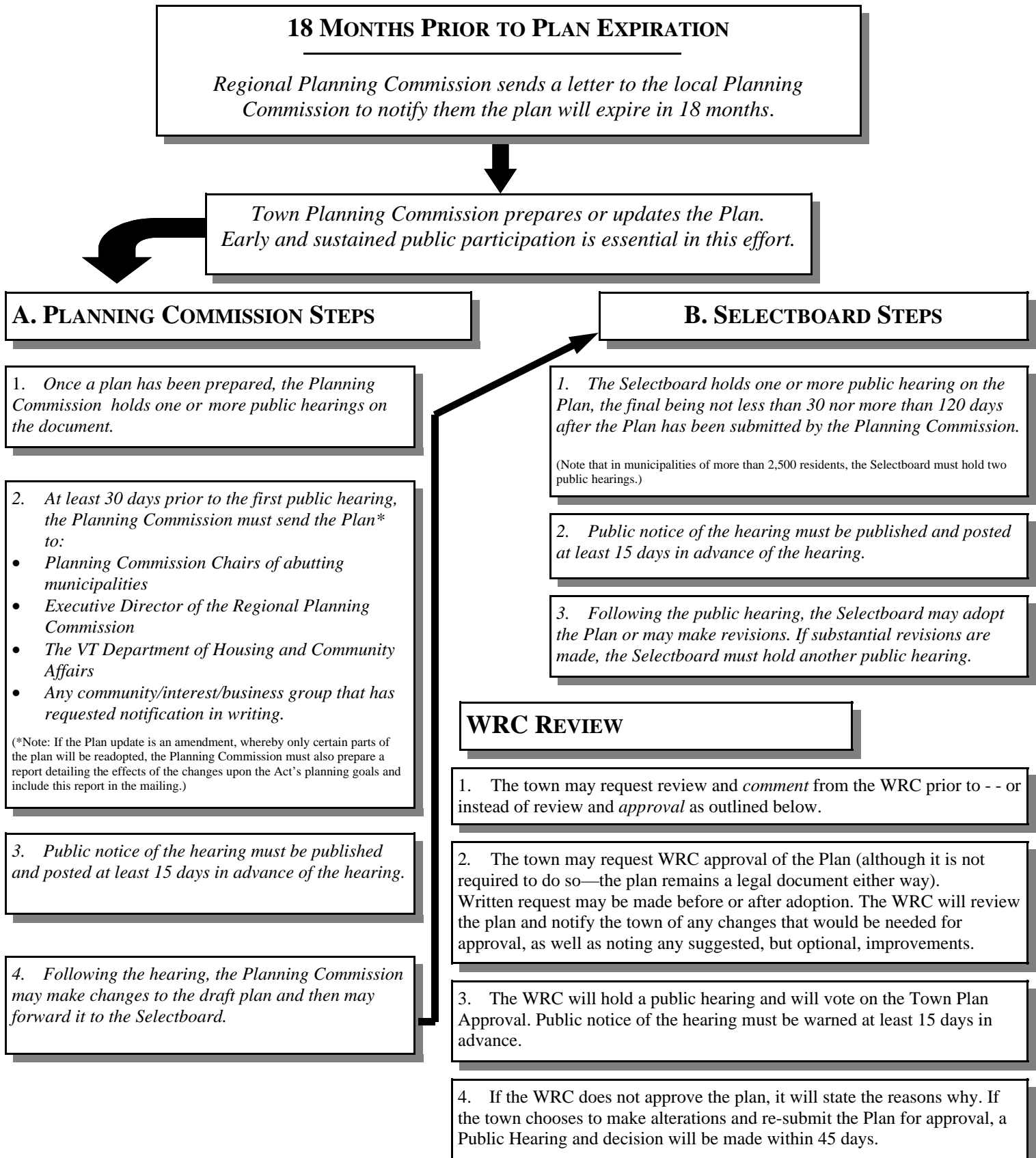


TOWN PLAN PREPARATION & REVIEW TIMELINE

Below is a streamlined overview of the Town Plan adoption process. The Town Plan approval process is also listed, with a recommended timeline. Please refer to the Vermont Statutes or the Municipal Guide for Land Use Regulation for details concerning the adoption process.



SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR THE TEN REQUIRED ELEMENTS

This section sets out specific evaluation standards for each of the ten required elements of a town plan (listed on page 2). While considering these minimum standards it is important to keep the three primary criteria in mind... Note: any of the elements may be combined in a single section in the plan.

1. The statement of objectives, policies and programs should:

- Include statements and policies that are tailored to the needs of the individual community and relate to the text of each plan section
- Include programs that are realistic and attainable

2. The land use plan & map should:

- Describe proposed land use areas in the community and define their present and proposed uses and character.
- Present each land use area and demonstrate why the area is best suited for those uses.

3. The transportation plan and map should:

- Include an inventory of existing roads and other facilities, a discussion of the problems being faced by residents and businesses, and a set of possible solutions that the community can work toward.

4. The utility and facility plan & map should:

- Describe the present and desirable location, character, and capacity of the following public facilities (as appropriate to the size of the community):
 - Parks, playgrounds, and recreation areas
 - Cultural and health
 - Religious institutions, community centers
 - Governmental and civic buildings
 - Public water and sewer
 - Police, fire, and emergency services
 - Solid waste transfer
 - Telecommunications
- Describe how changes in population will affect the need for services

5. The statement on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources should:

- Include a list of the rare and irreplaceable areas and features within the community.
- Include policies that will take steps to ensure the preservation of the identified features and resources.

6. The education facilities plan & map should:

The state's *Planning Manual* suggests that this element be written in conjunction with the town's

school board. *While working closely with the school board is not required, it is encouraged.*

- Discuss the ability of the school system to meet the needs of children and adults, with specific reference to attendance trends, school facilities, and future needs

7. The recommended program for the implementation of the objectives should:

- Discuss how the town and/or planning commission expects to address some or all of the objectives listed in the plan.
- The element need not make specific reference to each objective, but should demonstrate that the community has considered the goals, objectives, policies, and programs it has listed in the plan.

8. The statement of how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities and the region should:

- Show evidence that the town has examined and considered the trends and town plans of adjacent municipalities, especially along the border
- Demonstrate that the plan is in conformance with the Regional Plan.

9. The energy plan & map should:

- Discuss how future development in the town can support energy efficiency — both in terms of individual buildings and general land use patterns.
- Include a set of goals and objectives that support energy efficiency in general and also present specific objectives on which the municipality can have an effect.

10. The housing element should:

- An inventory of the existing housing stock
- A comparison between the existing housing stock and recent population trends (increases in numbers, drop in average household size, etc.)
- A measurement of the ability of the town's residents to reasonably afford safe, fair housing
- An analysis of future needs in the community
- A set of goals and policies that support affordable housing and include provisions for the community to assist in its development and meet the projected housing needs.

PLANNING GOALS REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL

In order for a town plan to be approved by the Regional Planning Commission, it must be *consistent with the goals* listed in Chapter 117 (and summarized on page 6 of this document).

The opening pages of Chapter 117 (T.24) of the Vermont Statutes Annotated lists two sets of planning goals that all municipalities, regional planning commissions, and state agencies are expected to further.

The first set includes a list of four general goals that are broadly applicable and can be achieved using a variety of techniques. The second set lists 12 specific issues facing Vermont communities. In some cases, these goals overlap one or more of the elements required to be included in a town plan. In other cases, such as goal two — to provide and maintain a strong and diverse economy — while there is no requirement that the goal be included in an *adopted* plan, it must be present in order for the plan to be *approved* by the Regional Planning Commission.

Because not every goal is explicitly stated among the ten required elements of a town plan, it is especially important that communities review them before completing a draft town plan.

GUIDELINE FOR REQUIRED PLANNING GOALS

Note that these goals, as well as those listed on the following page of this document must be addressed in a plan that is submitted for regional planning commission approval.

There are several planning goals in Vermont Statutes that must be addressed in an approved plan. Below is a brief guide for developing goals that are NOT directly addressed among the ten required elements of a plan.

Goal 1: To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement patterns of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

- The plan must make efforts to curb strip development along major highways and encourage village centers.
- This goal should be addressed in the land use and transportation elements of the plan and demonstrate the connection between the two.

Goal 2: To provide a strong and diverse economy...

- The plan should examine the current employment statistics in the community, as well as characterize the potential for growth.
- The plan should explore options of how to encourage businesses to locate in the town and/or make employment more accessible for residents.

Goal 3: To broaden access to educational and vocational training.

- At least one of the objectives and policies in the education section should discuss plausible ways to broaden access to education for adults and others.

Goal 6: To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources
Goal 11: To provide for the wise and efficient use of natural resources...

- The plan should include an inventory and problem analysis of water, wetland, and land resources, wildlife, ridgelines, and other important natural resources.
- The plan should present a series of goals and objectives for preserving and enhancing natural resources.

Goal 9: To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest practices

- The land use section of the town plan should discuss encouraging these practices

THE STATEWIDE PLANNING GOALS

(T. 24, CH. 117, § 4302)

“It is the... intent of the legislature that municipalities, regional planning commissions, and state agencies shall engage in a continuing planning process that will further the following goals:”

GENERAL GOALS...

1. To establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework to guide decisions;
2. To encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process, and to assure that decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact;
3. To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the region and the state, as well as the community in which it takes place;
4. To encourage and assist municipalities to work creatively together to develop and implement plans;

SPECIFIC GOALS...

1. To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.
 - A. Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers; strip development along highways should be discouraged;
 - B. Economic Growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, or employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both;
 - C. Public investments should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area;
2. To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes;
3. To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters;
4. To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers
5. To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:
 - A. Significant natural and fragile areas;
 - B. Outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands;
 - C. Significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;
 - D. Important historic structures, sites, or districts, archeological

6. To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources;
7. To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources;
8. To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors;
 - A. Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational opportunities;
 - B. Public access to non-commercial outdoor recreational opportunities... should be identified, provided, and protected where appropriate;
9. To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest practices.
 - A. Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density;
 - B. The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged;
 - C. The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged;
 - D. Sound forest and agricultural practices should be encouraged;
 - E. Public investment should be planned to as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land;
10. To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area;
11. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters
 - A. Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate incomes;
 - B. New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities;
 - C. Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings;
 - D. Accessory apartments within of attached to single family residences which provide affordable housing... should be allowed.
12. To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.
 - A. Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal;
 - B. The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.
13. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care workforce development.