



FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING PROCESS, STANDARDS & METHODOLOGY

Issued by Act 181, an Act 250 reform bill



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OVERVIEW OF ACT 181 (an Act 250 Reform bill)

Act 181, passed into law June 2024, overhauls Vermont's planning framework for coordinating state, regional, and municipal land use.

The overall intent of this Act is to facilitate increased housing production and other development consistent with the smart growth goals of the state, regions, and municipalities.

Principal State Planning Goal

“Plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.”



Bristol Cohousing




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Act 181 changes Act 250 from **project-based** jurisdiction to **location-based** jurisdiction. This will allow and/or eliminate most Act 250 review within certain areas planned for growth, and better identify areas for rural and working lands, and areas for conservation.

The new jurisdiction areas are referred to as Tiers and, where possible, will align with existing regional and local land use maps.

Graphic credit: DHCD/CCRPC

Tier 1		Tier 2	Tier 3
Tier 1A <i>Full Act 250 Exemption</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal application • LRB review • Guidelines by January 1, 2026 • Specific requirements 	Tier 1B <i>50 units or fewer of housing Exempt</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology by December 31, 2024 • Municipal requested • RPC mapped • LRB review • Specific requirements 	Act 250 Status Quo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All areas not 1A, 1B, or Tier 3 • Road rule July 1, 2026 	Expanded jurisdiction to be established by Board rules February 1, 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not based on regional maps • Road rule July 1, 2026



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OTHER LAND USE AND PROCESS CHANGES:



Whiting Schoolhouse

- ❑ Act 181 identifies new FUTURE LAND USE AREAS (FLUAs) and terminology that regional planning commissions, working in coordination with their towns, must incorporate in their Future Land Use (FLU) maps.
- ❑ The new regional FLU maps will be used to determine eligibility for municipalities' Tier 1A and 1B status, enabling Act 250 exemptions and in turn facilitating increased housing opportunities.
- ❑ RPCs will work with towns to plan for local housing targets based on proposed regional targets set by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).



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HOUSING TARGETS

The **Statewide and Regional Housing Targets** were developed as part of the **HOME Act of 2023** and **ACT 181 of 2024**. ACRPC will work to disaggregate the regional housing targets down to each municipality.



Addison County Housing Targets

2025-2030		2025-2050	
Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
1,296	1,978	4,103	8,088

2025-2030: "Lower" assume VT year-round households increase at the 2016-2019 average annual rate of 1.02%. "Higher" assume the 2019-2022 rate of 1.77%.
 2025-2050: "Lower" based on population projection. "Higher" assume VT year-round households increase at the long-term annual average rate of 1.4%.
 All targets include additional projected year-round households PLUS homes needed to normalize vacancy rates, eliminate homelessness, replace destroyed homes, and provide a margin to address Vermont's 15% seasonal home rate.

See Vermont Housing Needs Assessment: 2025-2029



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WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS?



Vergennes Housing Tour

- When updating the regional FLU map, ACRPC will work to build consensus among local municipal bodies, townspeople and property owners.
- Municipalities' Select Boards or City Council must vote to "opt in" to be eligible for Tier 1B status and Act 250 exemptions.
- The new State Land Use Review Board (LURB) will review and approve all Regional Plans and new FLU maps based on Act 181 statutory decisions.
- Municipalities eligible for Tier 1A status apply directly to the LURB.



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Lincoln Center Village

WHAT THE REGIONAL LAND USE MAPPING PROCESS WILL NOT DO?

- Impact municipalities' zoning regulations.
- Eliminate or change existing village and downtown designation benefits.
- Restrict development where it is currently allowed.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF OPTING IN FOR TIER 1B STATUS?

- State designation benefits for Village and Downtown Centers currently without them.
- Exemptions from Act 250 within newly defined Village Areas and Planned Growth Areas.



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Questions?

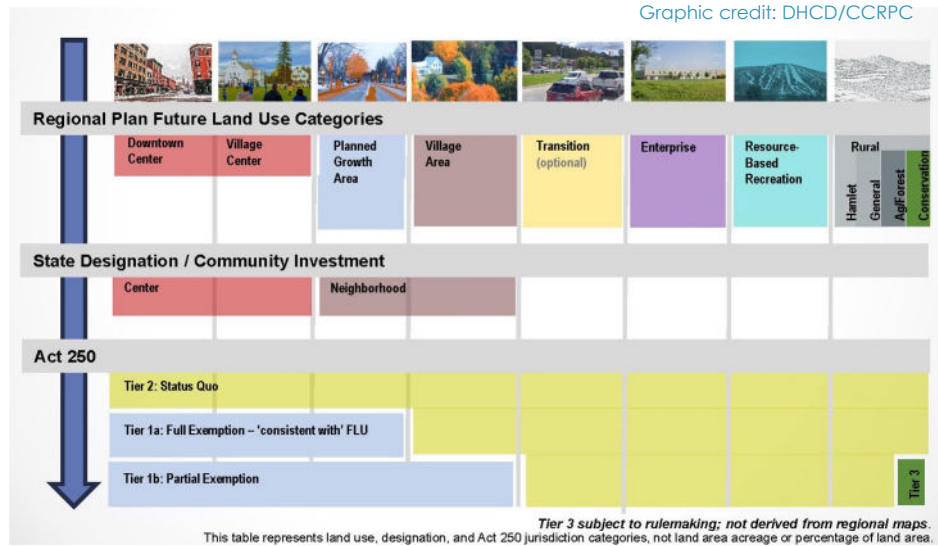
Mapping Methodology
Where are we in this process ?



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The NEW LAND USE FRAMEWORK & TERMINOLOGY

- Downtown and Village Centers
- Planned Growth Areas
- Village Areas
- Transitional
- Enterprise
- Hamlet
- Resource Based Recreation
- Rural:
General
Ag and Forest
Conservation



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DOWNTOWN CENTER & VILLAGE CENTER



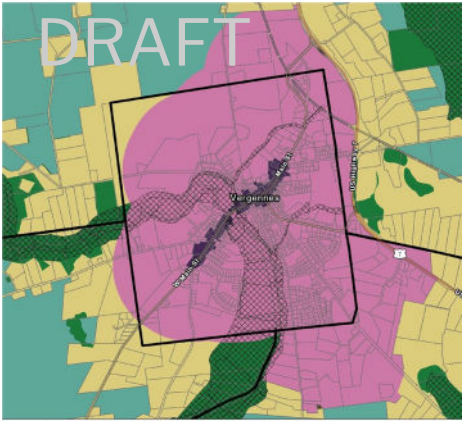
Whiting Village Center Designation

Village Centers have no requirement for municipal plans, zoning, subdivision, or infrastructure.

- Vibrant, mixed-use centers bringing together community economic activity and civic assets.
- Includes all existing Villages, New Town Centers, and Downtowns and any new (or expanded) Downtown and Village Centers seeking benefits under the State Designation Program.
- The Downtown and Village Centers are the central business and civic centers adjacent to Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, or may stand alone.
- Provide opportunities for Downtown and Village Centers to grow in a flood resilient way.



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Vergennes Planned Growth Area


Parcels	Recreation-based Recreation Area	PGA	Rural Ag & Forest
FEMA Floodplains & River Corridors	Village Area	Village Center	Rural Conservation
		Downtown Center	Rural General

REQUIREMENTS: zoning, subdivision, public water and/or wastewater, and Complete Streets.

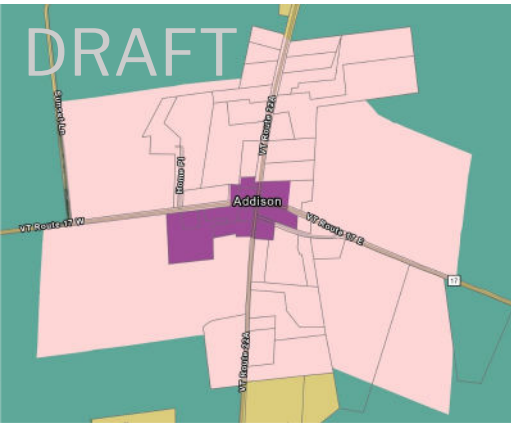
PLANNED GROWTH AREAS

- ❑ Densest existing settlement and future growth areas with the highest concentrations of population, housing, and employment in each region and town, as appropriate.
- ❑ Include a mix of commercial, residential, and civic or cultural sites with active streetscapes.
- ❑ Historic or new town centers, downtowns, and village centers are within Planned Growth Areas.

Provide opportunities for communities to grow in a flood resilient way.



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Addison Village Area

Parcels	Recreation-based Recreation Area	PGA	Rural Ag & Forest
FEMA Floodplains & River Corridors	Village Area	Village Center	Rural Conservation
		Downtown Center	Rural General

REQUIREMENTS: zoning, subdivision, public water and/or wastewater, and suitable soils.

VILLAGE AREAS

- ❑ Traditional settlement area or a proposed new settlement area, typically comprised of a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed-use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core.
- ❑ Provide some opportunity for infill development and/or new development areas where the village can grow in a flood resilient way.
- ❑ Includes existing village center designations and similar areas statewide, but this area is larger than the Village Center designation.



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REQUIREMENTS:
Served by, or planned for, water and/or wastewater.
New commercial linear strip development not allowed.

TRANSITION/INFILL AREA

- ❑ Areas of existing or planned commercial, office, mixed-use development, or residential uses either adjacent to a Planned Growth or Village Area or a new stand-alone Transition Area.
- ❑ Intent to transform into higher-density, mixed use settlements, or residential neighborhoods through infill and redevelopment or new development.
- ❑ Could also include adjacent greenfields safe from flooding and planned for future growth.
- ❑ Some areas may be linear in nature due to topography.



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ENTERPRISE

Locations of high economic activity and employment, which are not adjacent to Planned Growth Areas, such as industrial parks, resource extraction, airports, and rail facilities.


HAMLET

Small historic clusters of homes and perhaps a school, church, store, or other public buildings not planned for significant growth; no public water supply of wastewater systems.

RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION AREAS

Large-scale resource-based, recreational facilities, often concentrated around ski resorts, lakeshores, or concentrated trail networks, which provide infrastructure, jobs, and housing to support recreational activities.









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RURAL - GENERAL

Areas that promote the preservation of Vermont's traditional working landscape and natural area features. Low-density residential and sometimes limited commercial development that is compatible with productive lands and natural areas.



RURAL – AGRICULTURAL & FORESTRY

Blocks of forest or farmland that sustain resource industries, provide critical wildlife habitat and movement, outdoor recreation, flood storage, aquifer recharge, and scenic beauty; contribute to economy and quality of life.



RURAL - CONSERVATION

Areas intended to be conserved often with regulations or State or non-profit purchase of property rights. These lands have significant ecological value, and require special protection due to their uniqueness, fragility, or ecological importance.



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TIER 3

Areas consisting of the state's most critical natural resources to be identified through a rulemaking and stakeholder process. Areas to be considered include river corridors, headwater streams, habitat connectors of statewide significance, riparian areas, class A waters, natural communities.

- To be defined by Land Use Review Board (LURB) guidance - February 2026
- Not based on current Regional Land Use maps, will be included in future editions
- Is not defined by the new Rural-Conservation land use area.




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Questions?



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ACRPC's FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING PROCESS



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ADDISON, VERMONT

FLU Mapping Process Case Study



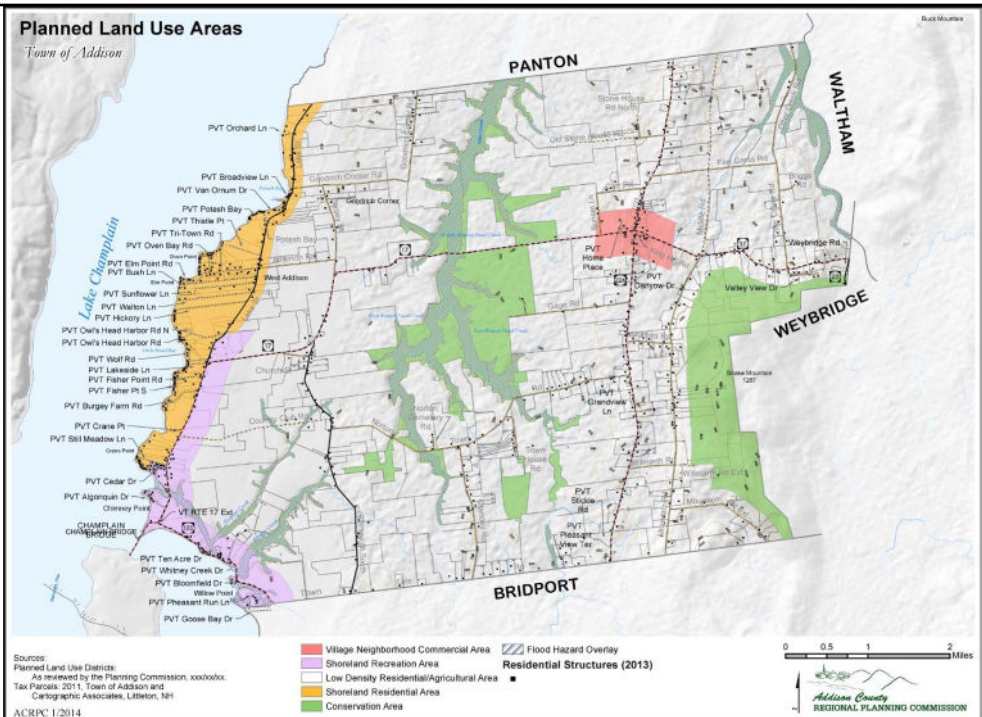
Dead Creek Wildlife Refuge



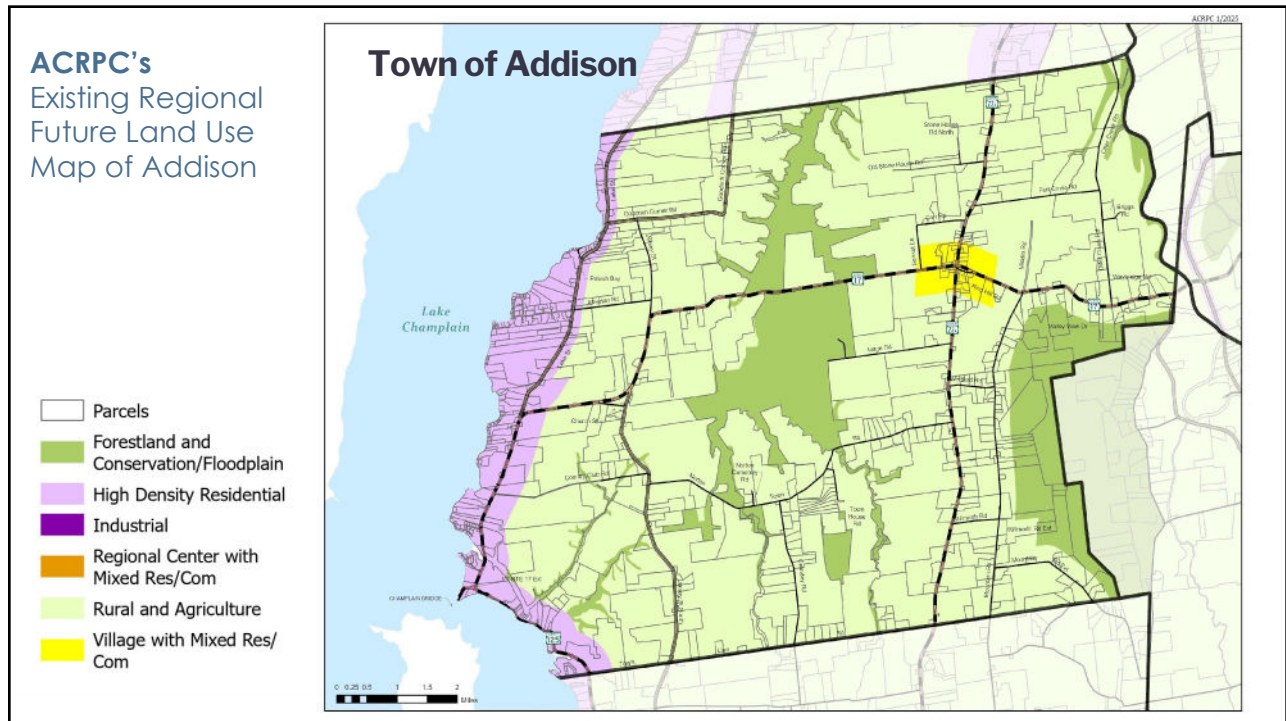
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Town of Addison Existing Land Use Map

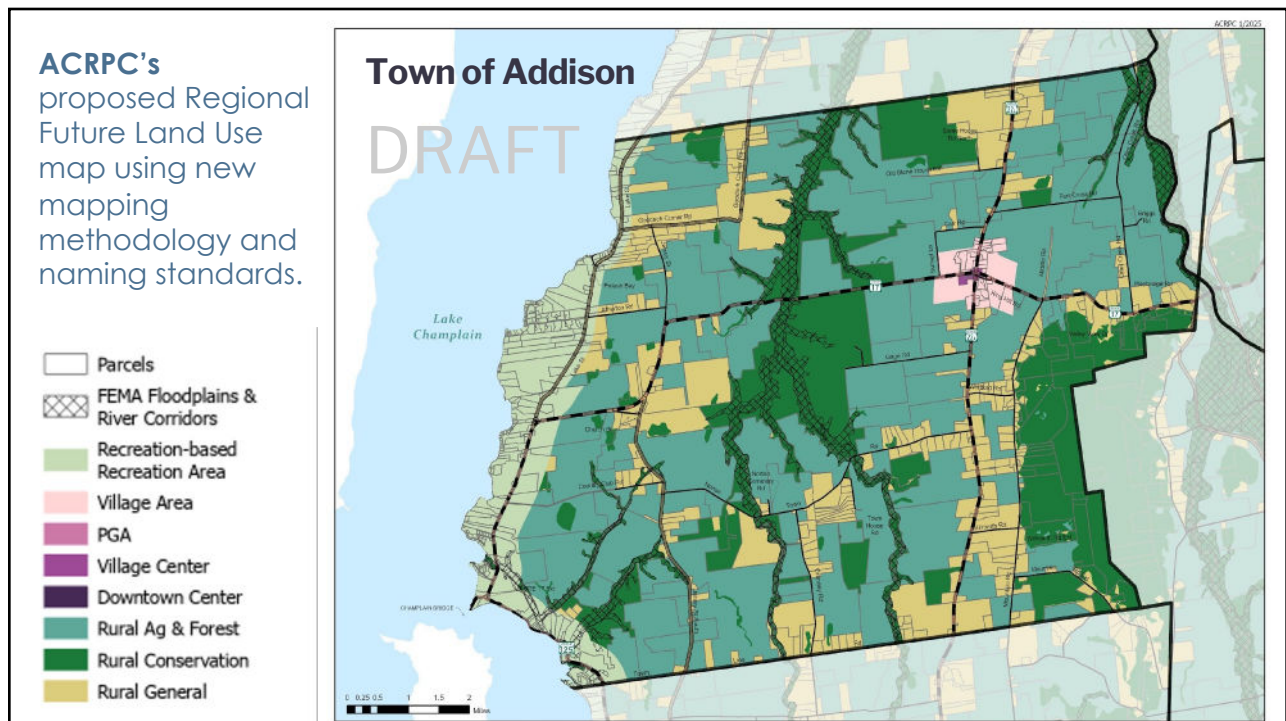
Planning Areas are the same as the town's zoning districts.



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ACRPC'S NEXT STEPS

- ❑ Ensure all 21 towns are fully informed about Act 181 requirements. Provide accessible information and resources to all participants throughout this process.
- ❑ Work with each municipality to understand their existing land use plan, collect local input and coordinate towards developing the new Regional Future Land Use Map.
- ❑ Foster a collaborative environment to build community consensus on the Regional Future Land Use Map.



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Addison County
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

14 Seminary Street
Middlebury, VT 0753

Questions?

Contact:
Katie Raycroft-Meyer,
Adam Lougee
www.acrpc.org

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