

Vermont Planners Association (VPA)

House Committee on General, Housing & Military Affairs, and Senate Government Operations Committee

VPA strongly supports improved planning and coordination across government

In keeping with the state's long-time planning goals (24 V.S.A. § 4302(b)), VPA continues to advocate for (1) coordinated state, regional, and municipal planning, (2) public participation in the planning process, (3) holistic consideration of development impacts at all levels, and (4) creative collaboration between municipalities. Vermont's planning paradigm is supposed to integrate all three levels of government (local, regional, and statewide), but has tended to be bottom-up. This approach has fallen short in addressing broad issues such as climate change, resource protection, hazard mitigation, affordable housing, transportation, and economic development.

Coordinated state planning envisioned :

- 1970 - Act 250
- 1988 - Growth Management Act
- 2006 VT Council on Rural Development - [Vermont By Design](#)
- 2019 Commission on Act 250

Integrated planning between state, regional, and local entities will help Vermont make best use of recovery fund opportunities

As Vermont begins its economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with the projected influx of federal infrastructure funds, coordinated state agency planning and targeted public investments, in consultation with municipalities and regions, will be critical. A State Planning Office would make the most of these investments in a data-driven fashion, avoid duplicate or contrary efforts in different agencies or parts of the state, and amplify the effectiveness of any investments.

VPA strongly supports the goals laid out by H.306/S.96 for a study committee on forming a State Planning Office

Our last State Planning Office (Office of Policy Research and Coordination) was effectively eliminated in the 1990s. The lack of a sustained commitment to a coordinated approach to state-level planning and community development has led to serious gaps in data and analysis on state demographics, infrastructure capacity and other critical topics. This limits our ability to address environmental degradation, infrastructure improvements, housing affordability, climate and energy goals, and struggling rural economies. A State Planning Office will need consistent and adequate support from the Legislature and Administration to help make the state's shared vision a reality, regardless of changes in the political climate.

VPA serves as a resource on H.306/S.96

Based on our interest and ongoing efforts in this area, and our affiliation with the American Planning Association, VPA can provide information and resources that may help inform the committee's work.

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