

**RUTLAND REGIONAL PLAN**

**2026**



**PHASE 1**

**PHASE 2**

**PHASE 3**

**REPORT BACK**

## **RRPC Launches Second Phase of Public Engagement for 2026 Regional Plan**

Phase 2, Report Back, invites you to see how your invaluable feedback from Phase 1, Learn & Assess, has influenced our draft plan policies. Phase 2 aims to achieve two main goals:

**1** Gather your reaction to what we learned from you in Phase 1

**2** Seek your thoughts on the Plan's draft policies

For more information visit: [rutlandrpc.org/plan2026](https://rutlandrpc.org/plan2026)

# Presentation OVERVIEW

## Phase 1: Learn & Assess Recap

Summary of engagement activities completed across the Rutland Region

## Phase 2: Report Back Activities

Summary of engagement activities planned for September through November 2024

## Plan Draft Policies

What we heard in Phase 1 and how it helped inform the Plan's draft policies



Learn & Assess



Report Back

## ***What is the Rutland Regional Plan?***

A comprehensive 8-year (2026-2034) plan to guide and accomplish coordinated and efficient community economic development in the region that balances economic development with social, cultural, and environmental priorities.

***Shape Our Future Together!***

# Phase 1 RECAP

Completed between January and April 2024

During Phase 1, we reached out to you, residents, and stakeholders across all 27 towns in the Rutland Region. Through a dynamic mix of engagement opportunities, we listened closely to your thoughts, concerns, and hopes for the future.



Phase 1 engagement results available at: [rutlandrpc.org/plan2026](https://rutlandrpc.org/plan2026)

*Shape Our Future Together!*

# Phase 2

## ACTIVITIES

We have a robust lineup of engagement opportunities planned. These events are designed to make it easy and convenient for you to participate and share your thoughts.

Scheduled from September through November 2024



Video Presentations available at: [rutlandrpc.org/plan2026](https://rutlandrpc.org/plan2026)

*Shape Our Future Together!*

# Phase 2 GOALS

We're at the mid-point in the plan development process and need your continued engagement to ensure we're on the right track!

## 1 Gather your reaction to what we learned from you in Phase 1

We've summarized the key takeaways from Phase 1 by chapter. We're reporting back to you what we heard and seeking your reaction to what we learned from you....

**Do you agree with the key takeaways?  
Is something missing that we should consider?**

## 2 Seek your thoughts on the Plan's draft policies

The Regional Plan's policies are an expression of how the RRPC will meet the region's goals for community economic development. We want to hear from you about the draft policies....

**Do you agree with the direction of the draft policy?  
Is something missing that we should consider?**

**Shape Our Future Together!**

# Learn More & Share Your Thoughts



[rutlandrpc.org/plan2026](https://rutlandrpc.org/plan2026)



[plan2026@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:plan2026@rutlandrpc.org)

Together we're crafting a collaborative guide for a healthy, equitable, and resilient region with strategies to achieve coordinated and efficient community economic development.

# LAND USE



## GOALS

Maintain historic settlement pattern of compact village-urban center separated by rural countryside

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Focus future growth in downtown districts and village centers.
- Improve the walkability of towns.
- Preserve and conserve the region's natural landscape.
- Expand trail networks in the region.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Increase infill development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of underutilized properties within Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, Transition/Infill Areas, and Enterprise Areas.
- Policy 2: Stop strip development and development of blocks of land that contain: significant natural and agricultural resources, areas of high flood risk, comprise resource industries, and provide outdoor recreation/scenic beauty.
- Policy 3: Most development outside Planned Growth Areas and Village Areas is clustered or otherwise designed to work with the landscape in terms of protection of ecologically sensitive areas, and conservation of farmland and agricultural soils.
- Policy 4: Most public investments are in Planned Growth Areas and Village Areas that are clustered, or area a part of a cluster of buildings.
- Policy 5: Ensure the scale, siting, design, and management of new development is orderly by respecting the character of the natural and built environment.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## GOALS

Provide for a strong and diverse regional economy

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Focus future growth in downtown districts and village centers.
- Attract new businesses and employment opportunities to diversity the tax base.
- Recruit new workers and retain younger adults.
- Expand industrial/manufacturing and trade career opportunities.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Focus future growth in downtown districts and village centers.
- Policy 2: Attract new businesses and employment opportunities to diversify the tax base.
- Policy 3: Recruit new workers and retain younger adults.
- Policy 4: Expand industrial/manufacturing and trade career opportunities.



# CULTURAL RESOURCES



## GOALS

Identify, protect, and promote important historic, cultural, archeological, and scenic features and resources.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Most frequently mentioned resources that people value were Downtown districts, water recreation sites, and parks and trail systems.
- Natural landscape was a frequently noted cultural and scenic resource.
- Strong desire for more annual festivals, especially pride festivals and centers.
- Including certain historic or culturally significant topics in school curriculum was recommended as a way to pass on our region's history.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Preserve and restore historic buildings.
- Policy 2: Strengthen the intra-organizational relationships and volunteer capacity of historical societies in the region.
- Policy 3: Recognize arts and culture as essential infrastructure for healthy, equitable, and resilient communities.
- Policy 4: Prioritize the identification and preservation of scenic resources.

# TRANSPORTATION



## GOALS

Provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient regional transportation systems.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Deep need for increased road maintenance and upkeep.
- Expanded and better maintained sidewalks and bike paths.
- Driving and walking are highly valued.
- Calls for better public transit schedules, routes, and accessibility.
- While many people said they felt safe traveling on roads in the region, they felt safety would be improved by reducing vehicle speeds.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Increase implementation of Complete Streets infrastructure on both Town and State roadways.
- Policy 2: Improve resiliency of regional transportation systems for increased extreme weather events.
- Policy 3: Increase the development of infrastructure that supports transition to electric vehicles.
- Policy 4: Ensure the provision of convenient and cost-effective public transit services that connect residential clusters with rail stations, employment, recreation, medical services, and shopping.
- Policy 5: Apply principles of systemic safety to regional roadway systems.
- Policy 6: Protect airport airspace and runway clearance for Rutland Southern Vermont Regional Airport through local land use and town planning.
- Policy 7: Increase passenger rail ridership and encourage expansion of rail service in the region.
- Policy 8: Increase the share of regional freight tonnage that travels by rail.
- Policy 9: Increase development within existing built-up areas with multimodal infrastructure.

# HOUSING



Provide for high-quality, diverse, safe, affordable, conveniently located, and energy-efficient housing in the region

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Affordable housing and a lack of housing in the region are significant issues.
- Need to address homelessness and the lack of rental units.
- Need to restore old, blighted housing stock.
- Frustrations voiced regarding Act 250 and development restrictions in the state.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Target housing growth, programs, and incentives that result in people spending no more than 30% of their income on housing and not more than 15% on transportation.
- Policy 2: Promote construction and renovation practices, and universal design principles, that result in high-quality, energy-efficient, and safe homes that meet the needs of all.
- Policy 3: Create diverse homes, with varying numbers of bedrooms, and at a price point affordable for households with varying incomes.
- Policy 4: Locate housing growth primarily in Planned Growth and Village Areas.

# FACILITIES & UTILITIES



## GOALS

Broaden access to educational and vocational training; Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities; Plan for, finance, and provide efficient system of public facilities and services; Ensure availability of safe and affordable childcare.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Affordable childcare is one of the most highly desired community facilities.
- Extend and improve connections for hiking and biking trail networks in the region.
- Some support for more indoor and outdoor recreation facilities; more public safety (police, EMS, etc.); more community events and gathering places - such as a movie theater.
- People feel there are limited options for community events and gathering places.
- Improve mental health and substance abuse resource facilities.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: The scale and type of facilities and utilities shall support existing and future development, consistent with the future land use in this Plan.
- Policy 2: Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater utilities shall be expanded, upgraded, and maintained in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner to serve areas designated in this Plan.
- Policy 3: Municipal offices, garages, libraries, and other facilities should be constructed, maintained, or upgraded to serve the diverse needs of the community.
- Policy 4: Municipal shared services and resources should be considered to improve quality and reduce costs.
- Policy 5: Solid waste districts and transfer stations should be coordinated to reduce costs and waste to improve efficiency and sustainability.
- Policy 6: Telecommunications infrastructure and service area shall be expanded to unserved and underserved permanent residents while protecting the scenic and natural resources.
- Policy 7: Energy transmission lines and substations shall be constructed to provide resilient and reliable energy while avoiding critical natural resources.
- Policy 8: The construction, maintenance, and marketing of recreational trails, parks, and water resources is encouraged for all user types.
- Policy 9: School construction, consolidation, and renovation should increase efficiency, reduce tax burdens, and improve equitable education.
- Policy 10: Workforce programming and capacity shall be expanded in critical sectors like education, healthcare, and trades.
- Policy 11: The regional network of childcare facilities and providers should be expanded to meet the current and future workforce needs in areas designated in this Plan.
- Policy 12: Access to healthcare, mental health services, and recovery treatment should be centered on advancing health equity.

# ENHANCED ENERGY



## GOALS

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, provide for renewable energy, and make efficient use of energy.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- There is strong support to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and begin looking at renewable energy options.
- People said it's important to do their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Strong preference for solar energy as compared to other renewable sources.
- Many expressed significant concern for the high cost of energy, followed by concern about the climate impacts of energy use.
- Most desired energy projects among homeowners are weatherization and heat pumps.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Demonstrate regional leadership by implementing efficiency and fuel switching actions.
- Policy 2: Promote adoption of Enhanced Energy Plans to all municipalities in the region.
- Policy 3: Ensure Regional Enhanced Energy Plan is equitable.
- Policy 4: Prevent forest fragmentation and preserve priority forest blocks.
- Policy 5: Educate individuals and organizations about energy conservation.
- Policy 6: Increase building efficiency, climate resilience, and safety.
- Policy 7: Switch from fossil fuels to sustainable alternatives for heating and cooling and transportation.
- Policy 8: Provide education about transportation energy conservation and combustion alternatives.
- Policy 9: Decrease single occupancy vehicle trips.
- Policy 10: Maintain existing and develop new walking and biking infrastructure.
- Policy 11: Ensure energy generation siting adheres to orderly development.
- Policy 12: Review Act 250 permits for energy efficiency and Section 248 applications to meet renewable targets.
- Policy 13: Maximize potential for renewable generation on preferred locations.

# WORKING LANDS



## GOALS

Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- High demand for locally sourced foods, including farmers market, community gardens, and community supported agriculture (CSAs).
- Strong agricultural system in Vermont provides access to locally sourced foods and preserves farmland.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Stop the loss of farmland and forestland to development.
- Policy 2: Ensure that the working landscape (agriculture, forestry, and value-added production) is a strong asset for the region's economy.
- Policy 3: Ensure that the working landscape (agriculture, forestry, and value-added production) improves the health of residents.
- Policy 4: Enhance the health and diversity of the region's ecosystems to benefit local agriculture and forestry.

# NATURAL RESOURCES



## GOALS

Maintain and improve quality of natural resources.  
Provide for wise and efficient use of natural and earth resources.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Protecting the natural landscape was one of the most important and agreed upon topics.
- Water resources and forests are cherished.
- Improve accessibility for beginners and persons with disabilities to natural resource sites.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Safeguard groundwater and other local drinking water sources to ensure they are safe for the public.
- Policy 2: Ensure that all surface waters in the Rutland Region are of high quality, free of pollutants and toxins, and suitable for recreation and aquatic life.
- Policy 3: Attain no net loss of wetland acreage.
- Policy 4: Increase the amount of protected shoreline buffers and riparian areas in the region.
- Policy 5: Maintain water quality to sustain existing aquatic communities and to ensure the natural diversity of aquatic species.
- Policy 6: Create a regional approach to maintaining and restoring the health of forest blocks, forest fragmentation, wildlife corridors, habitats, and biodiversity, and for conserving land in alignment with the Vermont Conservation Plan to protect 30% of the state by 2030 and 50% by 2050.
- Policy 7: Be proactive about local air quality during summer ozone and winter inversion episodes by monitoring the State's data to address those at most risk: people with heart or lung diseases (including asthma), older adults, children, and people of lower socioeconomic status.
- Policy 8: Encourage the reduction of nighttime light levels to improve the health of residents and wildlife and to promote dark sky astro-tourism.
- Policy 9: Promote safe and clean mineral extraction methods if appropriately managed and the public interest is clearly benefitted.

# CLIMATE RESILIENCE



## GOALS

Encourage climate resilient communities.

## Phase 1

### What we heard...

- Many people do not feel the region is prepared for natural disasters.
- Calls for flood prevention infrastructure.
- Concerns over changing winters negatively affecting winter recreation.
- Flooding and temperature fluctuation were the highest climate-related concerns.



### How this input helped inform the Plan's draft policies...

- Policy 1: Assist municipalities in understanding their vulnerabilities and strategies to bolster resilience to climate change.
- Policy 2: Prepare municipalities for longer duration, higher temperature heatwaves.
- Policy 3: Implement more natural systems-based projects that will help moderate the impacts of climate change.
- Policy 4: Increase social cohesion to bolster community resilience during and after extreme weather events or disasters.