

Draft Energy Plan Public Engagement Presentation

Municipal Planning and Energy Planning Interplay

Towns and regions have experience with, and see the direct local impacts of, land use planning. This includes planning for shared and beneficial infrastructure of many kinds, such as roads and industrial and commercial developments. Energy infrastructure, including generators, similarly serves a public purpose, while also creating both costs and benefits that are not distributed evenly. Renewable energy generation as one of the state's largest new land uses, highlights the need for integration of energy planning with land use planning.

Energy planning is not just about electricity generation, however. Over half of Vermont's energy use is for heat and transportation, and local and regional decisions regarding buildings, roads, and other built infrastructure also have significant energy implications.

Energy Regulation in Vermont - Section 248 and Municipal “Due Consideration”

The Vermont General Assembly, by enacting Section 248 of Title 30, established requirements for the approval of in-state electric transmission and generation construction projects. Prior to beginning site preparation or constructing a proposed project, the petitioner must receive a certificate of public good from the Public Utility Commission. Municipal bylaws may not regulate electric generation facilities, energy storage facilities, and transmission facilities regulated under 30 V.S.A. § 248.

When determining whether to grant a certificate of public good for a proposed project, the PUC considers whether the proposed project meets ten statutory criteria. A Section 248 review addresses environmental, economic, and social impacts associated with a particular project. In making its determination, the PUC must give due consideration to the recommendations of municipal and regional planning commissions and their respective plans.

The Supreme Court of Vermont indicated that the PUC only has to give “due consideration to the recommendations of the municipal and regional planning commissions in deciding [if] the project will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region.”

Enhanced Energy Planning - Act 174 and Municipal “Substantial Deference”

Under Act 174 of 2016, towns have the opportunity to submit voluntary enhanced energy plans to the Vermont Public Utility Commission that, if approved, receive “substantial deference” on issues of permitting for energy projects.

Substantial Deference Defined in Statute: “that a land conservation measure or specific policy shall be applied in accordance with its terms unless there is a clear and convincing demonstration that other factors affecting the general good of the State outweigh the application of the measure or policy.” Substantial deference as defined by Act 174, and used in the Section 248 process, provides towns and regions a stronger voice in determining where energy projects should, and should not, be sited.

Other Great Reasons to Energy Plan

Getting these plans right will help determine whether Vermont will reach its goal of getting 90 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2050.

Act 174 Energy Planning Standards

Act 174 establishes a set of optional municipal and regional energy planning standards. The standards will be used by the Department of Public Service to make determinations as to whether regional and municipal plans are consistent with state energy policy including: greenhouse gas reduction goals, renewable energy goals, building efficiency goals and efficiency and renewable energy generation goals.

The standards are divided into three parts: Analysis & Targets, Pathways, and Mapping.

1. Analysis & Targets standards are meant to demonstrate the town's or region's understanding of the magnitude of the changes in the energy sector that will be required to meet the state's energy and climate goals, and to create waypoints between the present and the planned-for future.
2. Pathways, or Implementation Actions, provide an opportunity for the identification of specific strategies and actions to meet targets that are appropriate for regions or towns and consistent with the actions required to meet statewide goals.
3. Mapping turns the attention to the overlap of energy infrastructure planning with land use planning in the context of the targets, including the generation potential for electricity and other useful energy from various sources. Plans are required to identify potential areas for the development and siting of renewable energy resources and are also expected to identify any unsuitable areas. This geographic analysis will enable the comparison of the energy that can be generated on potential and preferred sites with the energy required to meet energy goals over time. Given that siting decisions depend on the independent actions of developers and landowners, plans are expected to show that potential sites significantly exceed the required area to meet state goals.

ANALYSIS AND TARGETS

- Estimate current energy use:
 - Transportation, heating and electric
- Establish targets:
 - Thermal and electric conservation and efficiency
 - Use of renewable energy for transportation, heating and electricity.
 - Electric generation
- Evaluate needs:
 - Conversion of heating sources
 - Transportation/land use changes
 - Electric-sector conservation and efficiency

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Enhanced Energy Plans must:
 - Include “pathways” and recommended actions to achieve energy targets
 - Statements of policy
 - Conservation
 - Transportation
 - Land Use
 - Development and Siting of Renewables
- Some actions may not be applicable or relevant
 - Provide reasonable justification

Why Have an Energy Committee?

Big Picture: Addressing energy in the town plan involves an analysis of energy use, identifying efficiency opportunities, including land use and transportation strategies, and identifying potential renewable energy resources.--> beyond scope of Planning Commission expertise - why we need you!

Tasks/Desired Skills

- Knowledge or interest in the energy field including energy efficiency and conservation, fuel switching, renewable generation,
- Coordinate with planning commission on development of energy plan updates to town plan - specifically all sections other than mapping and land use planning/siting.
- Facilitate any public input needed on proposed plan elements
- Implement all aspects of plan, as duly adopted, except land use planning aspects.

Energy Committee Mission Statement (Proposed)

With the assistance of CVRPC and the EMPC, the Energy Committee will lead the town's energy planning effort by updating the Town Plan with the energy elements required from Act 174 to the Town Plan. Their directive is to work toward the fulfillment of the energy goals and actions as laid out in updates to the Town Plan.

Potential Energy Committee Tasks

Promote adoption of electric vehicles

- Plan and hold EV demonstration fair, allowing townspeople to see current EVs available on the market, talk to local EV owners, distribute information on incentive programs
- Explore feasibility of expanding public charging infrastructure for EVs

Potential Energy Committee Tasks

Promote EV charging at work to align solar power generation times with EV power use

- Conduct outreach campaign with local businesses and schools promoting charge at work
- Identify potential vendors and produce cost estimates of a potential program for school leadership

Potential Energy Committee Tasks

Assess feasibility of powering town diesel vehicles with biodiesel

- Research potential maintenance implications of switching to biodiesel
- Identify potential fuel vendors
- Produce cost estimates for road foreman and Selectboard

Existing Resources

Current EM Energy Plan

Community Energy Planning Guides

Sample Energy Plans from neighboring towns