

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Natural Resources and Energy to which was referred  
3 House Bill No. 809 entitled “An act relating to designation of new town  
4 centers and growth centers” respectfully reports that it has considered the same  
5 and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting  
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 24 V.S.A. § 2791 is amended to read:

8 § 2791. DEFINITIONS

9 As used in this chapter:

10 \* \* \*

11 (11) “New town center” means the area planned for or developing as a  
12 community’s central business district, composed of compact,  
13 pedestrian-friendly, multistory, and mixed use development that is  
14 characteristic of a traditional downtown, supported by planned or existing  
15 urban infrastructure, including curbed streets with sidewalks and on-street  
16 parking, stormwater treatment, sanitary sewers and public water supply.

17 ~~(12)(A) “Growth center” means an area of land that contains the~~  
18 ~~characteristics specified in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (12) and that is~~  
19 ~~located in one or a combination of the following:~~

20 ~~(i) A designated downtown, village center, or new town center;~~

1           (ii) ~~An area of land that is in or adjacent to a designated~~  
2 ~~downtown, village center, or new town center, with clearly defined boundaries~~  
3 ~~that have been approved by one or more municipalities in their municipal plans~~  
4 ~~to accommodate a majority of growth anticipated by the municipality or~~  
5 ~~municipalities over a 20-year period. Adjacent areas shall include those lands~~  
6 ~~which are contiguous to the designated downtown, village center, or new town~~  
7 ~~center. In situations where contiguity is precluded by natural or physical~~  
8 ~~constraints to growth center development, adjacent areas may include lands~~  
9 ~~lying close to and not widely separated from the majority of the lands within~~  
10 ~~the designated growth center. Noncontiguous land included as part of a growth~~  
11 ~~center must exhibit strong land use, economic, infrastructure, and~~  
12 ~~transportation relationships to the designated downtown, village center, or new~~  
13 ~~town center; be planned to function as a single, integrated growth center; and~~  
14 ~~be essential to accommodate a majority of growth anticipated by the~~  
15 ~~municipality or municipalities over a 20-year period.~~

16           (B) ~~A growth center contains the following characteristics:~~

17           (i) ~~It incorporates a mix of uses that typically include or have the~~  
18 ~~potential to include the following: retail, office, services, and other~~  
19 ~~commercial, civic, recreational, industrial, and residential uses, including~~  
20 ~~affordable housing and new residential neighborhoods, within a densely~~  
21 ~~developed, compact area;~~

1           ~~(ii) It incorporates existing or planned public spaces that promote~~  
2           ~~social interaction, such as public parks, civic buildings (e.g., post office,~~  
3           ~~municipal offices), community gardens, and other formal and informal places~~  
4           ~~to gather.~~

5           ~~(iii) It is organized around one or more central places or focal~~  
6           ~~points, such as prominent buildings of civic, cultural, or spiritual significance~~  
7           ~~or a village green, common, or square.~~

8           ~~(iv) It promotes densities of land development that are~~  
9           ~~significantly greater than existing and allowable densities in parts of the~~  
10           ~~municipality that are outside a designated downtown, village center, growth~~  
11           ~~center, or new town center, or, in the case of municipalities characterized~~  
12           ~~predominately by areas of existing dense urban settlement, it encourages in-fill~~  
13           ~~development and redevelopment of historically developed land.~~

14           ~~(v) It is supported by existing or planned investments in~~  
15           ~~infrastructure and encompasses a circulation system that is conducive to~~  
16           ~~pedestrian and other nonvehicular traffic and that incorporates, accommodates,~~  
17           ~~and supports the use of public transit systems.~~

18           ~~(vi) It results in compact concentrated areas of land development~~  
19           ~~that are served by existing or planned infrastructure and are separated by rural~~  
20           ~~countryside or working landscape.~~

1                   ~~(vii) It is planned in accordance with the planning and~~  
2 ~~development goals under section 4302 of this title, and to conform to smart~~  
3 ~~growth principles.~~

4                   ~~(viii) It is planned to reinforce the purposes of 10 V.S.A. chapter~~  
5 ~~151 “Growth center” shall have the same meaning as under section 2793c of~~  
6 ~~this title.~~

7                   (13) “Smart growth principles” means growth that:

8                   (A) Maintains the historic development pattern of compact village  
9 and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

10                  (B) Develops compact mixed-use centers at a scale appropriate for  
11 the community and the region.

12                  (C) Enables choice in modes of transportation.

13                  (D) Protects the State’s important environmental, natural, and historic  
14 features, including natural areas, water quality, scenic resources, and historic  
15 sites and districts.

16                  (E) Serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries and  
17 minimizes conflicts of development with these industries.

18                  (F) Balances growth with the availability of economic and efficient  
19 public utilities and services.

20                  (G) Supports a diversity of viable businesses in downtowns and  
21 villages.

1 (H) Provides for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social  
2 and income groups in each community.

3 (I) Reflects a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not  
4 characterized by:

5 (i) scattered development located outside of compact urban and  
6 village centers that is excessively land consumptive;

7 (ii) development that limits transportation options, especially for  
8 pedestrians;

9 (iii) the fragmentation of ~~farm-~~ farmland and ~~forest-land~~  
10 forestland;

11 (iv) development that is not serviced by municipal infrastructure  
12 or that requires the extension of municipal infrastructure across undeveloped  
13 lands in a manner that would extend service to lands located outside compact  
14 village and urban centers;

15 (v) linear development along well-traveled roads and highways  
16 that lacks depth, as measured from the highway.

17 (14) “Important natural resources” means headwaters, streams,  
18 shorelines, floodways, rare and irreplaceable natural areas, necessary wildlife  
19 habitat, wetlands, endangered species, productive ~~forest-lands~~ forestlands, and  
20 primary agricultural soils, all of which are as defined in 10 V.S.A. chapter 151.

21 \* \* \*

1 Sec. 2. 24 V.S.A. § 2793b is amended to read:

2 § 2793b. DESIGNATION OF NEW TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT

3 DISTRICTS

4 (a) A municipality, by its legislative body, may apply to the State Board for  
5 designation of an area within that municipality as a new town center  
6 development district, provided no traditional downtown or new town center  
7 already exists in that municipality. ~~An application by a municipality shall~~  
8 ~~contain a map delineating the district, evidence that the regional planning~~  
9 ~~commission and the regional development corporation have been notified of~~  
10 ~~the municipality's intent to apply, and information showing the district meets~~  
11 ~~the standards for designation established in subsection (b) of this section.~~

12 (1) The State Board shall not approve an application filed by a  
13 municipality on or after July 1, 2014 unless the municipality has stated in its  
14 town plan that it intends to apply for designation under this section, and the  
15 town plan explains how the designation would further the plan's goals and the  
16 goals of section 4302 of this title.

17 (2) A preapplication meeting shall be held with Department staff before  
18 an application is filed to review the program requirements and to identify  
19 possible designation boundaries. The meeting shall be held in the municipality  
20 unless another location is agreed to by the municipality.

1           (3) An application for designation shall contain a map that delineates the  
2           boundaries of the proposed district and is consistent with the guidelines  
3           produced by the Department under subsection 2792(d) of this title. The  
4           application shall also demonstrate that the proposed district meets the  
5           requirements set forth in subdivision 2791(11) of this title, as well as the  
6           standards for designation established in subsection (b) of this section. The  
7           application shall verify that the regional planning commission and the regional  
8           development corporation have been notified of the municipality’s intent to  
9           apply for designation.

10           (b) Within 45 days of receipt of a completed application, the State Board  
11           shall designate a new town center development district if the State Board finds,  
12           with respect to that district, the municipality has:

13           (1) ~~a~~ A confirmed planning process under section 4350 of this title, ~~and~~  
14           developed a municipal center plan, ~~and regulations to~~ adopted bylaws and  
15           ordinances that implement the plan, including an official map, and a design  
16           review district created under this title; ~~and~~ or other regulations that adequately  
17           control the physical form and scale of development.

18           (2) ~~provided~~ Provided a community investment agreement that has been  
19           executed by authorized representatives of the municipal government,  
20           businesses, and property owners within the district, and community groups

1 with an articulated purpose of supporting downtown interests, and contains the  
2 following:

3 (A) A map of the designated new town center. The total area of land  
4 encompassed within a designated new town center shall not exceed 125 acres.  
5 In a municipality with a population greater than 15,000, the total area of land  
6 encompassed within a designated new town center may include land in excess  
7 of 125 acres provided that the additional area is needed to facilitate the  
8 redevelopment of predominately developed land in accordance with the smart  
9 growth principles defined under subdivision 2791(13) of this title and shall not  
10 exceed 175 acres.

11 (B) Regulations enabling high densities that are greater than those  
12 allowed in any other part of the municipality.

13 (C) Regulations enabling multistory and mixed use buildings and  
14 mixed uses which enable the development of buildings in a compact manner.

15 (D) A capital improvement program, or a capital budget and program  
16 under this title, showing a clear plan for providing public infrastructure within  
17 the center, including facilities for drinking water, wastewater, stormwater,  
18 public space, lighting, and transportation, including public transit, parking, and  
19 pedestrian amenities.

20 (E) A clear plan for mixed income housing in the new town center.



1           (F) Evidence that civic and public buildings do exist, or will exist in  
2 the center, as shown by the capital improvement plan or the capital budget and  
3 program, and the official map.

4           (G) ~~[Deleted.]~~ [Repealed.]

5           (H) Evidence that any private or municipal sewage system and  
6 private or public water supply serving the proposed new town center are in  
7 compliance with the requirements of 10 V.S.A. chapters 47 and 56, and that  
8 the municipality has dedicated a portion of any unallocated reserve capacity of  
9 the sewage and public water supply necessary to support growth within the  
10 proposed new town center. Any municipality proposing a municipal sewage  
11 system and public water supply to serve the proposed new town center shall  
12 provide evidence to the ~~state board~~ State Board of a commitment to construct  
13 or maintain such a system and supply in compliance with requirements of  
14 10 V.S.A. chapters 47 and 56, or a commitment to construct, as applicable, a  
15 permissible potable water supply, wastewater system, indirect discharge, or  
16 public water supply within no more than ten years. A commitment to construct  
17 does not relieve the property owners in the new town center from meeting the  
18 applicable regulations of the Agency of Natural Resources regarding  
19 wastewater systems, potable water supplies, public water supplies, indirect  
20 discharges, and the subdivision of land. In the event a municipality fails in its  
21 commitment to construct a municipal sewage system or public water supply, or

1 both, the State Board shall revoke designation, unless the municipality  
2 demonstrates to the State Board that all good faith efforts were made and  
3 continue to be made to obtain the required approvals and permits from the  
4 Agency of Natural Resources, and failure to construct was due to  
5 unavailability of sufficient State or federal funding.

6 (c)(1) Upon designation by the State Board under this section as a new  
7 town center, a new town center and projects in a new town center shall be  
8 eligible for the authority to create a special taxing district, pursuant to chapter  
9 87 of this title, for the purpose of financing both capital and operating costs of  
10 a project within the boundaries established through new town center  
11 designation.

12 (2) Whenever the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services or  
13 other State officials in charge of selecting a site are planning to lease or  
14 construct buildings suitable to being located in a new town center after  
15 determining that the option of utilizing existing space in a downtown  
16 development district, pursuant to subdivision 2794(a)(14) of this title, is not  
17 feasible, the option of utilizing existing space in a designated new town center  
18 shall be given thorough investigation and priority, in consultation with the  
19 community.

20 (d) The ~~state board~~ State Board shall review a new town center designation  
21 every five years and may review compliance with the designation requirements

1 at more frequent intervals. The State Board may adjust the schedule of review  
2 under this subsection to coincide with the review of a related growth center. If  
3 at any time the State Board determines the new town center no longer meets  
4 the standards for designation established in subsection (b) of this section, it  
5 may take any of the following actions:

6 (1) ~~Require~~ require corrective action;

7 (2) ~~Provide~~ provide technical assistance through the Vermont  
8 Downtown Program;

9 (3) ~~Limit~~ limit eligibility for the benefits pursuant to subsection (c) of  
10 this section without affecting any of the new town center's previously awarded  
11 benefits; or

12 (4) ~~Remove~~ remove the new town center's designation without affecting  
13 any of the town center's previously awarded benefits.

14 Sec. 3. 24 V.S.A. § 2793c is amended to read:

15 § 2793c. DESIGNATION OF GROWTH CENTERS

16 (a)(1) Definition. As used in this section, "growth center" means an area of  
17 land that:

18 (A) is within or adjoining a downtown, village center, or new town  
19 center designated under this chapter; and

1           (B) has clearly defined boundaries that can accommodate a majority  
2           of commercial, residential, and industrial growth anticipated by the  
3           municipality or municipalities over a 20-year period.

4           (2) Development and redevelopment within any growth center shall  
5           support Vermont’s traditional land use pattern of compact centers separated by  
6           rural lands and shall meet the requirements set forth in subsection (b) of this  
7           section.

8           (b) Requirements. To achieve the purposes and goals set forth in section  
9           4302 of this title and conform to smart growth principles, a growth center shall  
10           meet each of the following requirements:

11           (1) Size. The size of the growth center shall be sufficient to  
12           accommodate a majority of the projected development within each applicant  
13           municipality over a 20-year planning period, and:

14           (A) shall be no larger than the area necessary to accommodate:

15           (i) 150 percent of the projected dwelling units in the municipality  
16           over the period; and

17           (ii) no more than 100 percent of the projected commercial and  
18           industrial development in the municipality;

19           (B) shall not encompass an excessive area of land that would involve  
20           the unnecessary extension of infrastructure to service low-density development  
21           or automobile-dependent strip development; and

1           (C) may include undevelopable land and land planned for green  
2 space or open space, as well as areas designed for infill and redevelopment.

3           (2) Location. The area of land proposed for the growth center shall be  
4 located within or shall adjoin, a designated downtown, village center, or new  
5 town center. If the growth center is to be adjoining, then the applicant shall  
6 demonstrate that an existing designated downtown, village center, or new town  
7 center located within each applicant municipality reasonably cannot  
8 accommodate the growth proposed to occur in the growth center.

9           (3) Uses. The growth center shall support and reinforce any existing  
10 designated downtown, village center, or new town center located in the  
11 municipality or adjacent municipality by accommodating concentrated  
12 residential neighborhoods and a mix and scale of commercial, civic, and  
13 industrial uses that are consistent with the anticipated demand for those uses  
14 within the municipality and region. The growth center shall incorporate a mix  
15 of uses that typically includes or is planned to include the following: retail,  
16 office, services, and other commercial, civic, recreational, industrial, and  
17 residential uses, including affordable housing and new residential  
18 neighborhoods, within a densely developed, compact area.

19           (4) Density, design, and form. The municipality shall adopt municipal  
20 plan policies and implementing bylaws and ordinances applicable to the

1 growth center that conform with design guidelines developed by the  
2 Department pursuant to subdivision 2793c(d)(3) of this title, and that:

3 (A) allow net residential densities within the growth center greater  
4 than or equal to four single-family detached dwelling units per acre, exclusive  
5 of accessory dwelling units, or no fewer than the average existing density of  
6 the surrounding neighborhood, whichever is greater;

7 (B) ensure that all investments contribute to a built environment that  
8 enhances the existing and planned character and supports pedestrian use;

9 (C) ensure sufficient density, building heights, and building coverage  
10 or sufficient floor area ratio. A municipality may use bylaws that regulate  
11 adequately the physical form and scale of development to demonstrate  
12 compliance with this requirement;

13 (D) minimize the required lot sizes, setbacks, and parking and street  
14 widths;

15 (E) organize the proposed growth center development around one or  
16 more central places or focal points that will establish community identity and  
17 promote social interaction, such as prominent buildings of civic, cultural, or  
18 spiritual significance or a village green, common, or square; and

19 (F) prohibit linear, automobile-dependent strip development along  
20 heavily traveled roads within and extending outside the growth center.

1           (5) Capital budget. The applicant has adopted, in accordance with  
2           section 4430 of this title, a capital budget and program that includes existing  
3           and planned wastewater treatment, water, stormwater, and transportation  
4           infrastructure; public spaces; other infrastructure necessary to support growth  
5           center development; and a reference map.

6           (6) General infrastructure. The existing and planned infrastructure shall  
7           be adequate to implement the growth center and meet the municipality's  
8           20-year growth needs. The municipality shall have adopted policies on the  
9           extension of water and wastewater lines that include a defined service area and  
10           allocation plan to support the growth center.

11           (7) Public spaces. The growth center shall incorporate existing or  
12           planned public spaces that promote social interaction, such as public parks,  
13           civic buildings such as a post office or municipal offices, community gardens,  
14           and other formal and informal places to gather.

15           (8) Transportation. Existing or planned transportation infrastructure  
16           -serving the growth center shall be adequate to implement growth center  
17           development over the 20-year period, and shall conform with "complete  
18           streets" principles as described under 19 V.S.A. § 309d; shall establish  
19           multi-modal access to the downtown, village center, or new town center;  
20           incorporate, accommodate, and support the use of public transit systems; and  
21           shall encompass a circulation system that is conducive to pedestrian and other

1 nonvehicular traffic. The applicable municipal plans and bylaws shall include  
2 provisions that will result in street connectivity and aim to create a  
3 comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.

4 (9) Natural resources within growth centers. The growth center shall  
5 avoid or minimize the inclusion of important natural resources and identified  
6 flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas. If an applicant includes an  
7 important natural resource or flood hazard or fluvial erosion hazard area within  
8 a proposed growth center, the applicant shall identify the resource or area,  
9 explain why the resource or area was included, describe any anticipated  
10 disturbance to the resource or area, and describe how the municipality's land  
11 use bylaws will avoid or minimize impacts to the resource or area. If impacts  
12 to the resource or area are necessary to achieve growth center goals, the  
13 applicant shall provide justification for why the disturbance cannot be avoided  
14 or minimized.

15 (10) Natural resources outside growth centers. Municipalities applying  
16 for growth center designation shall ensure that the approved local plan,  
17 implementing bylaws, and other programs serve to minimize conflicts of  
18 development with agricultural and forest industries; minimize the conversion  
19 and fragmentation of farmland, forestland, or significant areas of habitat  
20 connectivity; and minimize impacts on important natural resources  
21 located outside the proposed growth center.



1           (11) Historic resources. The growth center shall be compatible with and  
2 reinforce the character of sites that are listed or eligible for listing on the  
3 National or State Register of Historic Places, and other significant cultural and  
4 historic resources identified by local or State government in or adjacent to the  
5 growth center.

6           (c) Application for designation of a growth center.

7           (1) Before submitting a complete application to the Board, the municipal  
8 legislative body shall vote to apply for growth center designation according to  
9 the procedure established under sections 1972 and 1973 of this title.

10          (2) The application for designation as a growth center shall:

11           (A) be based on a 20-year plan for growth that is reflected in the  
12 municipal plan of the municipality involved;

13           (B) include regional and local growth projections and shall identify  
14 targets for 20-year growth in various sectors;

15           (C) include an inventory map and analysis of growth and  
16 development potential in the designated downtown, village center, or new  
17 town center that connects to the proposed growth center; and

18           (D) quantify the type and amount of development and land area  
19 needed to support the proposed growth center beyond what is available in the  
20 designated downtown, village center, or new town center.

1           (3) Each municipality involved in the application shall have a duly  
2 adopted and regionally approved municipal plan that describes the proposed  
3 growth center and a planning process that is confirmed in accordance with  
4 section 4350 of this title.

5           (4) Each municipality involved in the application shall have adopted  
6 bylaws and regulations under sections 4414, 4418, and 4422 of this title and  
7 nonregulatory programs that will support and implement the growth center  
8 requirements of subsection (b) of this section.

9           (5) Each application for designation as a growth center shall include:

10           **(A) a description from the regional planning commission in**  
11 **which each applicant municipality is located of the role of the proposed**  
12 **growth center in the region, and the relationship between the proposed**  
13 **growth center and neighboring communities;**

14           **(B) written confirmation from the applicable regional planning**  
15 **commission that the proposed growth center conforms with the regional**  
16 **plan for the region in which each applicant municipality is located;**

17           **(C) a concept plan depicting the character of the streets and public**  
18 **spaces within the growth center, and depicting the size and placement of**  
19 **buildings envisioned in the municipal plan; and**

1           (D) one or more maps that accurately delineate the boundaries of the  
2 growth center, and an official map, if one is adopted, of the growth center. The  
3 map or maps shall identify:

4                   (i) growth center boundaries in relation to the associated  
5 designated downtown, village center, or new town center;

6                   (ii) important natural resources, identified flood hazard and fluvial  
7 erosion hazard areas, National Register Historic Districts, National or State  
8 Register Historic Sites, and other significant cultural and natural resources  
9 identified by local or State government within the municipality;

10                   (iii) existing slopes of 25 percent or greater; and

11                   (iv) existing and planned public facilities, including public  
12 buildings, public spaces, wastewater and water services, roads, sidewalks,  
13 paths, transit centers, parking areas, parks, and schools within the growth  
14 center boundaries.

15           (d) Designation process.

16                   (1) Preliminary application and meeting process.

17                   (A) Before submitting an application pursuant to subsection (c) of  
18 this section, a municipality shall submit a preliminary application to the  
19 Department, consisting of a draft growth center map, and a brief explanation of  
20 the planning and implementation policies the municipality plans to enact prior  
21 to submitting an application under subdivision (B) of this subdivision (1).

1 These planning and implementation policies will be used to guide  
2 development within the growth center and preserve the rural character of  
3 the surrounding area.

4 (B) The Department shall solicit comments on the preliminary  
5 application from State agencies and regional planning commissions. The  
6 Department shall evaluate the preliminary application for compliance with the  
7 requirements of subsection (b) of this section, identify potential issues related  
8 to the growth center boundary and implementation tools, and make  
9 recommendations to address those issues through adjustment of the growth  
10 center boundaries and revised or alternative implementation plans.

11 (C) The Department shall schedule and conduct a preapplication  
12 meeting with the applicant.

13 (2) Regional planning commission technical planning assistance.  
14 Regional planning commissions, pursuant to section 4345a of this title, are  
15 uniquely positioned to assist municipalities with growth center planning. To  
16 this end, at the request of a municipality contemplating growth center  
17 designation, the regional planning commission shall provide technical  
18 assistance in support of that designation.

19 ~~(A)~~ (A) Technical support shall include:

20 ~~(A)(i)~~ (i) preparing population, housing, and employment growth  
21 projections for a period of not less than 20 years;

1           ~~(B)(ii)~~ GIS mapping, including identification of development  
2           capacity, land use, existing and planned infrastructure and service areas,  
3           important natural resources and historic resources, and physical constraints to  
4           development and associated features; and

5           ~~(C)(iii)~~ build-out analyses for potential growth centers to document  
6           analysis of whether the geographic area of proposed growth centers will  
7           accommodate a majority of the projected growth over a 20-year period ~~in a~~  
8           ~~manner that is consistent with the definition under subdivision 2791(12) of~~  
9           ~~this title.~~

10           ~~(2)(B)~~ These projections and build-out analyses may be prepared on a  
11           municipal or regional basis.

12           ~~(b) Growth center designation application assistance.~~

13           ~~(1) A subcommittee of the State Board, to be known as the Growth~~  
14           ~~Center Subcommittee, shall develop and maintain a coordinated preapplication~~  
15           ~~review process in accordance with this subdivision (1). The members of the~~  
16           ~~Growth Center Subcommittee shall be the members of the State Board~~  
17           ~~described under subdivisions 2792(a)(1), (6), (7), (9), and (10) of this title and~~  
18           ~~the member designated by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns under~~  
19           ~~subdivision 2792(a)(8) of this title. The Growth Center Subcommittee shall~~  
20           ~~elect a chair from among its members. In carrying out its duties, the Growth~~

1 ~~Center Subcommittee shall have the support of the staff of the Department of~~  
2 ~~Housing and Community Development and of the Natural Resources Board.~~

3 ~~(A) The purpose of the Growth Center Subcommittee is to:~~

4 ~~(i) ensure consistency between regions and municipalities~~  
5 ~~regarding growth centers designation and related planning;~~

6 ~~(ii) provide municipalities with a preapplication review process~~  
7 ~~early in the local planning process;~~

8 ~~(iii) encourage coordination of State agency review on matters of~~  
9 ~~agency interest; and~~

10 ~~(iv) provide the State Board with ongoing, coordinated support~~  
11 ~~and expertise in land use, community planning, and natural resources~~  
12 ~~protection.~~

13 ~~(B) Under the preapplication review process, a municipality shall~~  
14 ~~submit a preliminary application to the growth center subcommittee, consisting~~  
15 ~~of a draft growth center map and a brief explanation of planning and~~  
16 ~~implementation policies that the municipality anticipates it will enact prior to~~  
17 ~~submission of an application under subsection (d) of this section in order to~~  
18 ~~guide development inside the growth center and maintain the rural character of~~  
19 ~~the surrounding area, to the extent that it exists. This preapplication review~~  
20 ~~process shall be required prior to filing of an application under subsection (d)~~  
21 ~~of this section. The growth center subcommittee shall solicit comments from~~

1 ~~State agencies regarding areas of respective agency interest; evaluate the~~  
2 ~~preliminary application for conformance with the requirements of this section;~~  
3 ~~identify potential issues related to the growth center’s boundary and~~  
4 ~~implementation tools; and provide recommendations for addressing those~~  
5 ~~issues through adjustment to the growth center’s boundary, revisions to~~  
6 ~~planned implementation tools, or consideration of alternative implementation~~  
7 ~~tools. Preliminary review shall be available to municipalities while they are~~  
8 ~~engaged in the municipal planning process so that recommendations may be~~  
9 ~~considered prior to the adoption of the municipal plan and associated~~  
10 ~~implementation measure~~

11 ~~(2)(3) Planning manual. After consultation with the growth center~~  
12 ~~subcommittee and the Natural Resources Board, the The Commissioner of~~  
13 ~~Housing and Community Development or designee shall prepare a “municipal~~  
14 ~~growth centers planning manual and implementation checklist” to assist ensure~~  
15 ~~that the planning manual prepared under section 4304 of this title provides~~  
16 ~~guidelines for municipalities and regional planning commissions to plan~~  
17 ~~planning for growth center designation.~~ The ~~implementation~~ manual shall  
18 identify State resources available to assist municipalities and shall include a  
19 checklist indicating the issues that should be addressed by the municipality in  
20 planning for growth center designation.

1           (A) The manual shall address ~~other relevant topics~~ in appropriate  
2 detail, ~~such as:~~

3                   (i) methodologies for conducting growth projections and ~~build-out~~  
4 analyses;

5                   (ii) the methodology for determining the appropriate size and  
6 location of a growth center boundary;

7                   (iii) the methodology for calculating residential density in a  
8 growth center; and

9                   (iv) the methodology for determining the adequacy of  
10 infrastructure needed to support anticipated growth within a growth center.

11           (B) The planning manual shall address defining appropriate  
12 boundaries that are not unduly expansive; enacting plan policies and  
13 implementation bylaws that accommodate reasonable densities, compact  
14 settlement patterns; and an appropriate mix of uses within growth centers;  
15 planning for infrastructure, transportation facilities, and open space; avoiding  
16 or mitigating impacts to important natural resources and historic resources; and  
17 strategies for maintaining the rural character and working landscape outside  
18 growth center boundaries.

19           ~~(3)(4) Assistance by Department. In consultation with the Growth~~  
20 ~~Center Subcommittee, the~~ The Commissioner of Housing and Community  
21 Development or designee shall provide ongoing assistance to the State Board



1 to review applications for growth center designation, including coordinating  
2 review by State agencies on matters of agency interest and evaluating  
3 applications and associated plan policies and implementation measures for  
4 conformance with ~~the definition under subdivision 2791(12) of this title and~~  
5 ~~any designation requirements established under subsection (e) of this section.~~

6 ~~(4)~~(5) Planning grants. The Vermont Municipal Planning Grant  
7 Program, pursuant to section 4306(2) of this title, shall make funding for  
8 activities associated with growth centers planning a priority ~~funding activity,~~  
9 and the Vermont Community Development Program shall make funding for  
10 activities associated with growth centers planning a priority ~~funding activity~~  
11 under the planning grant program.

12 (6) Designation decision. Within 90 days of the receipt of a completed  
13 application, after providing notice as required in the case of a proposed  
14 municipal plan or amendment under subsection 4384(e) of this title, and after  
15 providing an opportunity for the public to be heard, the State Board formally  
16 shall designate a growth center if the State Board finds, in a written decision,  
17 that the growth center proposal meets the requirements of subsection (b) of this  
18 section. An application that complies with all of the requirements of  
19 subsection (b) of this section other than the size requirement set forth in  
20 subdivision (b)(1) may be approved by the State Board if the applicant presents  
21 compelling justification for deviating from the size requirement and provided

1 that at least ~~80 percent~~ **two-thirds** but no fewer than seven of the members of  
2 the State Board present vote in favor of the application.

3 (7) Conditions of designation. The Board, as a condition of growth  
4 center designation, may require certain regulatory changes prior to the  
5 effective date of designation. In addition, the growth center designation may  
6 be modified, suspended, or revoked if the applicant fails to achieve the  
7 required regulatory changes within a specified period of time. As an option,  
8 municipalities applying for growth center designation may make certain  
9 regulatory changes effective and contingent upon formal designation.

10 (8) Request for reconsideration. Within 21 days of a growth center  
11 designation under subdivision (1) of this subsection, a person or entity that  
12 submitted written or oral comments to the State Board during its consideration  
13 of the application for the designated growth center may request that the State  
14 Board reconsider the designation. Any such request for reconsideration shall  
15 identify each specific finding of the State Board for which reconsideration is  
16 requested and state the reasons why each such finding should be reconsidered.  
17 The filing of such a request shall stay the effectiveness of the designation until  
18 the State Board renders its decision on the request. On receipt of such a  
19 request, the State Board shall promptly notify the applicant municipality of the  
20 request if that municipality is not the requestor. The State Board shall convene

1 at the earliest feasible date to consider the request and shall render its decision  
2 on the request within 90 days of the date on which the request was filed.

3 ~~(e) Public involvement and review. Any decision to apply for growth~~  
4 ~~center designation shall be made by vote of the municipal legislative body,~~  
5 ~~subject to the process established under sections 1972 and 1973 of this title.~~

6 ~~(d) Application and designation requirements. Any application for~~  
7 ~~designation as a growth center shall be to the State Board and shall include a~~  
8 ~~specific demonstration that the proposed growth center meets each provision of~~  
9 ~~subdivisions (e)(1)(A) through (J) of this section. In addition to those~~  
10 ~~provisions, each of the following shall apply:~~

11 ~~(1) In the event that a proposed growth center lacks one or a portion of~~  
12 ~~one of the characteristics listed in subdivision 2791(12)(B) of this title, the~~  
13 ~~application shall contain an explanation of the unique circumstances that~~  
14 ~~prevent the growth center from possessing that characteristic and why, in the~~  
15 ~~absence of that characteristic, the proposed growth center will comply with the~~  
16 ~~purposes of this chapter and all other requirements of this section.~~

17 ~~(2) Any demonstration that an application complies with subdivision~~  
18 ~~(e)(1)(C) of this section shall include an analysis, with respect to each existing~~  
19 ~~designated downtown or village or new town center located within the~~  
20 ~~applicant municipality, of current vacancy rates, opportunities to develop or~~  
21 ~~redevelop existing undeveloped or underdeveloped properties and whether~~

1 ~~such opportunities are economically viable, and opportunities to revise zoning~~  
2 ~~or other applicable bylaws in a manner that would permit future development~~  
3 ~~that is at a higher density than existing development.~~

4 ~~(3) A map and a conceptual plan for the growth center.~~

5 ~~(4) A build-out analysis and needs study that demonstrates that the~~  
6 ~~growth center meets the provisions of subdivision (e)(1)(J) of this section.~~

7 ~~(5) An explanation of all measures the applicant has undertaken to~~  
8 ~~encourage a majority of growth in the municipality to take place within areas~~  
9 ~~designated under this chapter. In the case of a growth center that is associated~~  
10 ~~with a designated downtown or village center, the applicant shall also explain~~  
11 ~~the manner in which the applicant's bylaws and policies will encourage growth~~  
12 ~~to take place first in its designated downtown or village center and second in~~  
13 ~~its proposed growth center.~~

14 ~~(e) Designation decision.~~

15 ~~(1) Within 90 days of the receipt of a completed application, after~~  
16 ~~providing notice as required in the case of a proposed municipal plan or~~  
17 ~~amendment under subsection 4384(e) of this title, and after providing an~~  
18 ~~opportunity for the public to be heard, the State Board formally shall designate~~  
19 ~~a growth center if the State Board finds, in a written decision, that the growth~~  
20 ~~center proposal meets each of the following:~~

1           ~~(A) The growth center meets the definition of a growth center~~  
2           ~~established in subdivision 2791(12) of this title, including planned land uses,~~  
3           ~~densities, settlement patterns, infrastructure, and transportation within the~~  
4           ~~center and transportation relationships to areas outside the center. In the event~~  
5           ~~that a proposed growth center lacks one or a portion of one of the~~  
6           ~~characteristics listed in subdivision 2791(12)(B) of this title, the State Board~~  
7           ~~shall not approve the growth center proposal unless it finds that the absence of~~  
8           ~~that characteristic will not prevent the proposed growth center from complying~~  
9           ~~with the purposes of this chapter and all other requirements of this section.~~  
10          ~~This subdivision (A) does not confer authority to approve a growth center that~~  
11          ~~lacks more than one characteristic listed in subdivision 2791(12)(B) of this~~  
12          ~~title.~~

13           ~~(B) The growth center will support and reinforce any existing~~  
14          ~~designated downtown, village center, or new town center located in the~~  
15          ~~municipality or adjacent municipality by accommodating concentrated~~  
16          ~~residential neighborhoods and a mix and scale of commercial, civic, and~~  
17          ~~industrial uses that are consistent with the anticipated demand for those uses~~  
18          ~~within the municipality and region.~~

19           ~~(C) The growth that is proposed to occur in the growth center cannot~~  
20          ~~reasonably be achieved within an existing designated downtown, village~~  
21          ~~center, or new town center located within the applicant municipality.~~

1           ~~(D) In the case of a growth center that is associated with a designated~~  
2           ~~new town center, the applicable municipal bylaws provide that areas within the~~  
3           ~~growth center that will be zoned predominantly for retail and office~~  
4           ~~development will be located within the new town center.~~

5           ~~(E) In the case of a growth center that is associated with a designated~~  
6           ~~downtown or village center:~~

7                     ~~(i) the applicant has taken all reasonable measures to ensure that~~  
8                     ~~growth is encouraged to take place first in the designated downtown or village~~  
9                     ~~center and second in the proposed growth center; and~~

10                    ~~(ii) the applicable municipal bylaws provide that, with respect to~~  
11                    ~~those areas within the growth center that will be located outside the designated~~  
12                    ~~downtown or village center and will be zoned predominantly for retail and~~  
13                    ~~office development:~~

14                             ~~(I) such areas will serve as a logical expansion of the~~  
15                             ~~designated downtown or village center through such means as sharing of~~  
16                             ~~infrastructure and facilities and shared pedestrian accessibility; and~~

17                             ~~(II) such areas will be subject to enacted land use and~~  
18                             ~~development standards that will establish a development pattern that is~~  
19                             ~~compact, oriented to pedestrians, and consistent with smart growth principles.~~

1           ~~(F) The applicant has identified important natural resources and~~  
2           ~~historic resources within the proposed growth center and the anticipated~~  
3           ~~impacts on those resources, and has proposed mitigation.~~

4           ~~(G) The approved municipal plan and the regional plan both have~~  
5           ~~been updated during any five year plan readoption that has taken place since~~  
6           ~~the date the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets has developed~~  
7           ~~guidelines in compliance with 6 V.S.A. § 8, have been used to identify areas~~  
8           ~~proposed for agriculture, and have been designed so as to avoid the conversion~~  
9           ~~of primary agricultural soils, wherever possible.~~

10           ~~(H)(i) The applicant has a regionally confirmed planning process and~~  
11           ~~an approved municipal plan, pursuant to section 4350 of this title;~~

12           ~~(ii) The approved plan contains provisions that are appropriate to~~  
13           ~~implement the designated growth center proposal;~~

14           ~~(iii) The applicant has adopted bylaws in conformance with the~~  
15           ~~municipal plan that implement the provisions in the plan that pertain to the~~  
16           ~~designated growth center, including:~~

17           ~~(I) bylaw provisions that ensure that land development and use~~  
18           ~~in the growth center will comply with smart growth principles; and~~

19           ~~(II) with respect to residential development in the growth~~  
20           ~~center, bylaw provisions that allow a residential development density that is:~~

21           ~~(aa) at least four dwelling units per acre; and~~

1                   ~~(bb) a higher development density if necessary to conform~~  
2                   ~~with the historic densities and settlement patterns in residential neighborhoods~~  
3                   ~~located in close proximity to a designated downtown or village center which~~  
4                   ~~the growth center is within or to which the growth center is adjacent under~~  
5                   ~~subdivision 2791(12)(A)(i) or (ii) of this title; and~~

6                   ~~(iv) The approved plan and the implementing bylaws further the~~  
7                   ~~goal of retaining a more rural character in the areas surrounding the growth~~  
8                   ~~center, to the extent that a more rural character exists, and provide reasonable~~  
9                   ~~protection for important natural resources and historic resources located~~  
10                  ~~outside the proposed growth center.~~

11                  ~~(I) The applicant has adopted a capital budget and program in~~  
12                  ~~accordance with section 4426 of this title, and that existing and planned~~  
13                  ~~infrastructure is adequate to implement the growth center.~~

14                  ~~(J) The growth center:~~

15                   ~~(i) is of an appropriate size sufficient to accommodate a majority~~  
16                   ~~of the projected population and development over a 20 year planning period in~~  
17                   ~~a manner that is consistent with the definition under subdivision 2791(12) of~~  
18                   ~~this title;~~

19                   ~~(ii) does not encompass an excessive area of land that would~~  
20                   ~~involve the unnecessary extension of infrastructure to service low density~~



1 development or result in a scattered or low density pattern of development at  
2 the conclusion of the 20 year planning period; and

3 (iii) using a 20 year planning period commencing with the year of  
4 the application, is sized to accommodate each of the following:

5 (I) an amount of residential development that is no more than  
6 150 percent of the projected residential growth in the municipality; and

7 (II) an amount of commercial or industrial development, or  
8 both, that does not exceed 100 percent of the projected commercial and  
9 industrial growth in the municipality.

10 (2) The Board, as a condition of growth center designation, may require  
11 certain regulatory changes prior to the effective date of designation. In  
12 addition, the growth center designation may be modified, suspended, or  
13 revoked if the applicant fails to achieve the required regulatory changes within  
14 a specified period of time. As an option, municipalities applying for growth  
15 center designation may make certain regulatory changes effective and  
16 contingent upon formal designation.

17 (3) Within 21 days of a growth center designation under subdivision (1)  
18 of this subsection, a person or entity that submitted written or oral comments to  
19 the State Board during its consideration of the application for the designated  
20 growth center may request that the State Board reconsider the designation.  
21 Any such request for reconsideration shall identify each specific finding of the

1 ~~State Board for which reconsideration is requested and state the reasons why~~  
2 ~~each such finding should be reconsidered. The filing of such a request shall~~  
3 ~~stay the effectiveness of the designation until the State Board renders its~~  
4 ~~decision on the request. On receipt of such a request, the State Board shall~~  
5 ~~promptly notify the applicant municipality of the request if that municipality is~~  
6 ~~not the requestor. The State Board shall convene at the earliest feasible date to~~  
7 ~~consider the request and shall render its decision on the request within 90 days~~  
8 ~~of the date on which the request was filed.~~

9 ~~(4) Except as otherwise provided in this section, growth center~~  
10 ~~designation shall extend for a period of 20 years. The State Board shall review~~  
11 ~~a growth center designation no less frequently than every five years, after~~  
12 ~~providing notice as required in the case of a proposed municipal plan or~~  
13 ~~amendment under subsection 4384(e) of this title, and after providing an~~  
14 ~~opportunity for the public to be heard. For each applicant, the State Board may~~  
15 ~~adjust the schedule of review under this subsection so as to coincide with the~~  
16 ~~review of the related and underlying designation of a downtown, village center,~~  
17 ~~or new town center. If, at the time of the review, the State Board determines~~  
18 ~~that the growth center no longer meets the standards for designation in effect at~~  
19 ~~the time the growth center initially was designated, it may take any of the~~  
20 ~~following actions:~~

21 ~~(A) require corrective action;~~

1           ~~(B) provide technical assistance through the coordinated assistance~~  
2 ~~program; or~~

3           ~~(C) remove the growth center’s designation, with that removal not~~  
4 ~~affecting any of the growth center’s previously awarded benefits.~~

5           ~~(5) At any time a municipality shall be able to apply to the State Board~~  
6 ~~for amendment of a designated growth center or any related conditions or other~~  
7 ~~matters, according to the procedures that apply in the case of an original~~  
8 ~~application.~~

9           (e) Length of Designation.

10           (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, growth center  
11 designation shall extend for 20 years. The State Board shall review a growth  
12 center designation no less frequently than every five years, after providing  
13 notice as required in the case of a proposed municipal plan or amendment  
14 under subsection 4384(e) of this title, and after providing an opportunity for  
15 the public to be heard. For each applicant, the State Board may adjust the  
16 schedule of review under this subsection so as to coincide with the review of  
17 the related and underlying designation of a downtown, village center, or new  
18 town center.

19           (2) The five-year review shall include, at a minimum, an updated  
20 five-year capital plan that funds infrastructure improvements necessary to  
21 implement growth center development, updated development projections, a

1 summary of growth within and outside the growth center to date, and any  
2 changes to the municipal plan, bylaws, or maps since the original growth  
3 center application or any previous review.

4 (3) If, at the time of the review, the State Board determines that the  
5 growth center no longer meets the standards for designation in effect at the  
6 time the growth center initially was designated, the State Board may:

7 (A) require corrective action;

8 (B) provide technical assistance through the coordinated assistance  
9 program; or

10 (C) remove the growth center’s designation, with that removal not  
11 affecting any of the growth center’s previously awarded benefits.

12 (4) At any time, a municipality shall be able to apply to the State Board  
13 for amendment of a designated growth center or any related conditions or other  
14 matters, according to the procedures that apply in the case of an original  
15 application.

16 (f) Review by the Natural Resources Board and issuance of Act 250  
17 findings of fact and conclusions of law. Subsequent to growth center  
18 designation by the State Board, an applicant municipality may submit a request  
19 for findings of fact and conclusions of law under specific criteria of 10 V.S.A.  
20 § 6086(a) to the Natural Resources Board for consideration in accordance with  
21 the following:

1           (1) In requesting findings of fact, the applicant municipality shall  
2           specify any criteria for which findings and conclusions are requested and the  
3           nature and scope of the findings that are being requested.

4           (2) The ~~panel~~ Natural Resources Board shall notify all landowners of  
5           land located within the proposed growth center, entities that would be accorded  
6           party status before a district commission under 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1)(C) and  
7           (D), and all owners of land adjoining the proposed growth center of a hearing  
8           on the issue. The ~~panel~~ Natural Resources Board may fashion alternate and  
9           more efficient means of providing adequate notice to persons potentially  
10          affected under this subdivision. Persons notified may appear at the hearing and  
11          be heard, as may any other person who has a particularized interest protected  
12          by 10 V.S.A. chapter 151 that may be affected by the decision.

13          (3) The ~~panel~~ Natural Resources Board shall review the request in  
14          accordance with and shall issue findings of fact and conclusions of law under  
15          the applicable criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a) which are deemed to have been  
16          satisfied by the applicant's submissions during the formal designation process,  
17          any additional submissions, as well as associated municipal plan policies,  
18          programs, and bylaws. Findings and conclusions of law shall be effective for a  
19          period of five years, unless otherwise provided. The ~~panel~~ Natural Resources  
20          Board, before issuing its findings and conclusions, may require specific  
21          changes in the proposal, or regulatory changes by the municipality, as a

1 condition for certain findings and conclusions. These findings and conclusions  
2 shall be subject to appeal to the Environmental Division pursuant to 10 V.S.A.  
3 chapter 220 within 30 days of issuance.

4 (4) During the period of time in which a growth center designation  
5 remains in effect, any findings and conclusions issued by the Natural  
6 Resources Board or any final adjudication of those findings and conclusions  
7 shall be applicable to any subsequent application for approval by a district  
8 commission under 10 V.S.A. chapter 151 and shall be binding upon the district  
9 commission and the persons provided notice in the Natural Resources Board  
10 proceeding, according to the rules of the Natural Resources Board, provided  
11 the proposed development project is located within the designated growth  
12 center.

13 (5) In any application to a district commission under 10 V.S.A. chapter  
14 151 for approval of a proposed development or subdivision to be located  
15 within the designated growth center, the district commission shall review de  
16 novo any relevant criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a) that are not subject to  
17 findings of fact and conclusions of law issued by the Natural Resources Board  
18 pursuant to this section.

19 (6) The decision of the State Board pursuant to this section shall not be  
20 binding as to the criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a) in any proceeding before the  
21 panel or a district commission.

1 (g) Review by district commission. In addition to its other powers, in  
2 making its determinations under 10 V.S.A. § 6086, a district commission may  
3 consider important resources within a proposed growth center that have been  
4 identified in the designation process and the anticipated impacts on those  
5 resources, and may require that reasonable mitigation be provided as an  
6 alternative to permit denial.

7 (h) Concurrent designation. A municipality may seek designation of a  
8 growth center concurrently with the designation of a downtown pursuant to  
9 section 2793 of this title, the designation of a village center pursuant to section  
10 2793a of this title, or the designation of a new town center pursuant to section  
11 2793b of this title.

12 (i) Benefits from designation. A growth center designated by the State  
13 Board pursuant to this section is eligible for the following development  
14 incentives and benefits:

15 (1) Financial incentives.

16 (A) A municipality may use tax increment financing for  
17 infrastructure and improvements in its designated growth center pursuant to the  
18 provisions of Title 32 and this title. A designated growth center under this  
19 section shall be presumed to have met any locational criteria established in  
20 Vermont statutes for tax increment financing. The State Board may consider

1 project criteria established under those statutes and, as appropriate, may make  
2 recommendations as to whether any of those project criteria have been met.

3 (B) Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) incentives  
4 shall be provided to designated growth centers.

5 (2) State assistance and funding for growth centers.

6 (A) It is the intention of the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly to  
7 give the highest priority to facilitating development and growth in designated  
8 downtowns and village centers whenever feasible. The provisions in this  
9 section and elsewhere in law that provide and establish priorities for State  
10 assistance and funding for designated growth centers are not intended to take  
11 precedence over any other provisions of law that provide ~~state~~ State assistance  
12 and funding for designated downtowns and village centers.

13 (B) On or before January 15, 2007, the Secretary of Administration,  
14 in consultation with the Secretaries of Natural Resources, of Transportation, of  
15 Commerce and Community Development, and of ~~agriculture, food and markets~~  
16 Agriculture, Food and Markets, shall report to the General Assembly on the  
17 priorities and preferences for State assistance and funding granted in law to  
18 downtown centers, village centers, and designated growth centers, and the  
19 manner in which such priorities are applied.

20 (3) State infrastructure and development assistance.



1           (A) With respect to State grants and other State funding, priority  
2           should be given to support infrastructure and other investments in public  
3           facilities located inside a designated growth center to consist of the following:

4                   (i) Agency of Natural Resources funding of new, expanded,  
5                   upgraded, or refurbished wastewater management facilities serving a growth  
6                   center in accordance with the Agency’s rules regarding priority for pollution  
7                   abatement, pollution prevention, and the protection of public health and water  
8                   quality.

9                   (ii) Technical and financial assistance for brownfields remediation  
10                  under the Vermont brownfields initiative.

11                  (iii) Community development block grant (CDBG) program  
12                  implementation grants.

13                  (iv) Technical, financial, and other benefits made available by  
14                  statute or rule.

15           (B) Whenever the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services  
16           or other State officials in charge of selecting a site are planning to lease or  
17           construct buildings suitable to being located in a designated growth center after  
18           determining that the option of utilizing existing space in a downtown  
19           development district pursuant to subdivision 2794(a)(13) of this title or within  
20           a designated village center pursuant to subdivision 2793a(c)(6) of this title or  
21           within a designated new town center pursuant to subdivision 2793b(c)(2) of

1 this title is not feasible, the option of locating in a designated growth center  
2 shall be given thorough investigation and priority in consultation with the  
3 legislative body of the municipality.

4 (4) State investments. The State shall:

5 (A) Expand the scope of the downtown transportation fund, as funds  
6 are available, to include access to downtowns with the first priority being  
7 projects located in designated downtowns, the second priority being projects  
8 located in designated village centers, and the third priority being projects  
9 located in designated growth centers.

10 (B) Extend priority consideration for transportation enhancement  
11 improvements located within or serving designated downtowns, village  
12 centers, and growth centers.

13 (C) Grant to projects located within designated growth centers  
14 priority consideration for State housing renovation and affordable housing  
15 construction assistance programs.

16 (5) Regulatory incentives.

17 (A) Master plan permit application. At any time while designation of  
18 a growth center is in effect, any person or persons who exercise ownership or  
19 control over an area encompassing all or part of the designated growth center  
20 or any municipality within which a growth center has been formally designated  
21 may apply for a master plan permit for that area or any portion of that area to

1 the district commission pursuant to the rules of the Natural Resources Board.  
2 Municipalities making an application under this subdivision are not required to  
3 exercise ownership of or control over the affected property. The district  
4 commission shall be bound by any conclusions or findings of the Natural  
5 Resources Board, or any final adjudication of those findings and conclusions,  
6 pursuant to subsection (f) of this section but shall consider de novo any of the  
7 criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a) that were not subject to the final issuance of  
8 findings and conclusions by the Natural Resources Board pursuant to that  
9 subsection. In approving a master permit, the district commission may set  
10 forth specific conditions that an applicant for an individual project permit will  
11 be required to meet.

12 (B) Individual project permits within a designated growth center.

13 The district commission shall review individual Act 250 permit applications in  
14 accordance with the specific findings of fact and conclusions of law issued by  
15 the Natural Resources Board under this section, if any, and in accordance with  
16 the conditions, findings, and conclusions of any applicable master plan permit.  
17 Any person proposing a development or subdivision within a designated  
18 growth center where no master plan permit is in effect shall be required to file  
19 an application with the district environmental commission for review under the  
20 criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).

1 Sec. 4. 24 V.S.A. § 4302(c) is amended to read:

2 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific  
3 goals:

4 (1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern  
5 of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

6 (A) Intensive residential development should be encouraged  
7 primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along  
8 highways should be discouraged.

9 (B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated  
10 growth areas, ~~or~~ employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or  
11 both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter  
12 76A of this title.

13 (C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of  
14 infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth  
15 patterns of the area.

16 (D) Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart  
17 growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.

18 \* \* \*

19 Sec. 5. 24 V.S.A. § 4304 is amended to read:

20 § 4304. PLANNING AND LAND USE MANUAL

1           (a) The ~~agency of commerce and community development~~ Commissioner  
2           of Housing and Community Development shall prepare, maintain, and  
3           distribute from time to time to all municipalities a manual setting forth:

4                   (1) ~~A~~ a copy of this chapter, together with all amendments thereof;

5                   (2) ~~Examples~~ examples of land planning policies, and maps and  
6           documents prepared in conformance with plan requirements;

7                   (3) ~~An~~ an explanation and illustrative examples of bylaws, capital  
8           programs ~~and~~, budgets, and procedures authorized in this chapter; and

9                   (4) ~~Other~~ other explanatory material and data which will aid  
10          municipalities in the preparation of plans, capital budgets ~~and~~, programs, and  
11          the administration of bylaws authorized in this chapter.

12          (b) The ~~agency of commerce and community development~~ Commissioner  
13          of Housing and Community Development shall, from time to time, confer with  
14          interested persons with a view toward ~~insuring~~ ensuring the maintenance of  
15          such manual in a form most useful to those regions and municipalities making  
16          use of it.

17          (c) Sections of this manual may be cited in any plan or ~~by-law~~ bylaw in the  
18          same manner as citations of this chapter, and may be incorporated by reference  
19          in any plan ~~by-law~~ bylaw.

1 Sec. 6. 24 V.S.A. § 4382 is amended to read:

2 § 4382. THE PLAN FOR A MUNICIPALITY

3 (a) A plan for a municipality may be consistent with the goals established  
4 in section 4302 of this title and compatible with approved plans of other  
5 municipalities in the region and with the regional plan and shall include the  
6 following:

7 (1) A statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality  
8 to guide the future growth and development of land, public services, and  
9 facilities, and to protect the environment;

10 (2) **A land use plan;**

11 **(A) consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective**  
12 **land uses, indicating those areas proposed for forests, recreation,**  
13 **agriculture (using the agricultural lands identification process established**  
14 **in 6 V.S.A. § 8), residence, commerce, industry, public, and semi-public**  
15 **uses and open spaces reserved for flood plain, wetland protection, or other**  
16 **conservation purposes; and**

17 **(B) setting forth the present and prospective location, amount,**  
18 **intensity, and character of such land uses and the appropriate timing or**  
19 **sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of**  
20 **necessary community facilities and service; and**







1 Sec. 8. 24 V.S.A. § 4404 is added to read

2 § 4404. STATE DESIGNATION; IMPLEMENTATION OF MUNICIPAL

3 PLAN

4 A municipality, to implement its municipal plan, may apply for State

5 designation of an existing or planned municipal growth center, downtown,

6 village center, new town center, or neighborhood development area as

7 necessary for eligibility to receive associated benefits pursuant to chapter 76A

8 of this title.

9 Sec. 9. PLANNING MANUAL; REVISIONS

10 On or before November 15, 2015, the Commissioner of Housing and

11 Community Development shall revise the planning manual under 24 V.S.A.

12 § 4304 to conform to the provisions of this act.

13 Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on passage.

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18 (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative [surname]

FOR THE COMMITTEE