



Mission

Through research, education, collaboration and advocacy VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character and unique sense of place, and prepares the state for future challenges and opportunities.

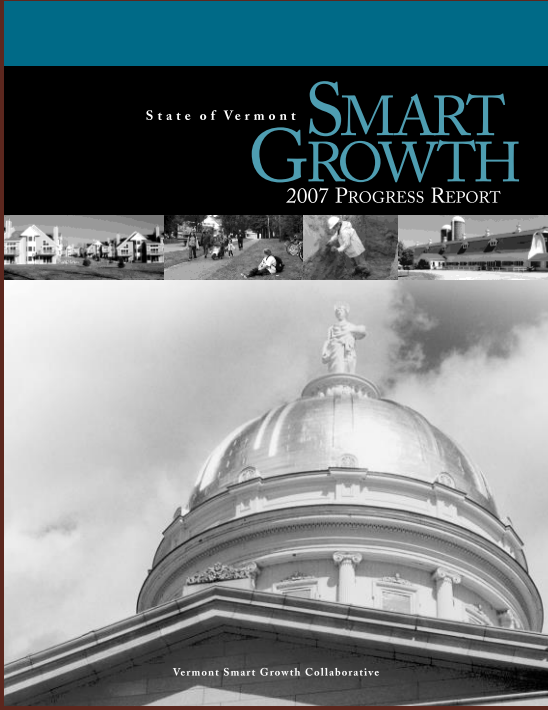
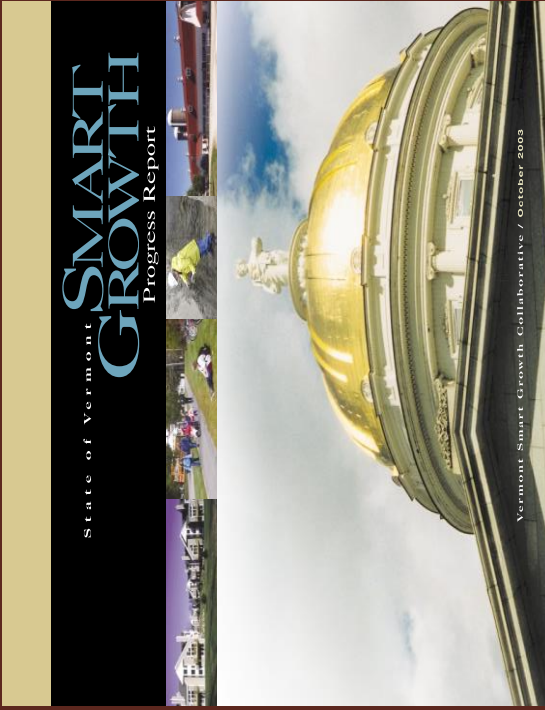
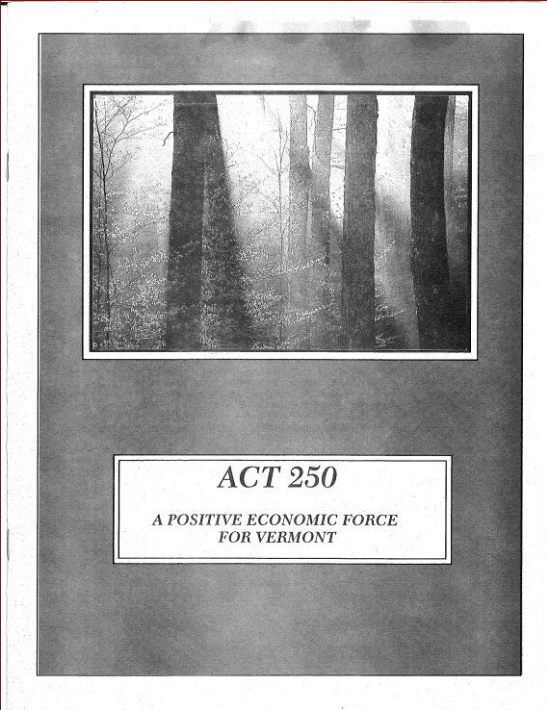


About VNRC



With the support of our members and activists, VNRC works across four program areas to promote policies and practices that:

- Support **sustainable communities**, healthy downtowns and the working landscape
- Keep Vermont's **water** pure, public and plentiful
- Protect Vermont's natural areas and keep our **forests** wild, working and whole
- Promote a clean, green and efficient **energy** future



Act 250: Vision

- Act 250 was created to serve the people and communities of Vermont by protecting our common interests, natural resources and unique character.
- Outcomes were intended to be measured as resources protected and quality of life maintained, not percentage of applications approved and length of the review process.
- The process was intended to be fair and efficient, overseen at the regional level by Vermonters from all walks of life, and accountable to Vermonters.

Act 250: Goals for Modernization

- ❑ Maintain an inclusive review process that is fair and accessible to all interests, including citizens and neighbors.
- ❑ Maintain current level of natural resource protection with updates to address contemporary or emerging environmental concerns.
- ❑ Ensure that Act 250 furthers Vermont's Planning & Development Goals and related policies.
- ❑ Better address location/development context.
- ❑ Better address the cumulative impacts of incremental development

Act 250: Jurisdiction

- ❑ Continue efforts to promote smart growth through state designation programs.
- ❑ Improve effectiveness in addressing incremental development of state's working lands and natural areas.
- ❑ Consider designating areas of critical state concern that should be given Act 250 protection regardless of scale of development.

VNRC Subdivision Study

- Reviewed records of subdivisions in 22 case study towns
- Total subdivision activity, by zoning district, from 2002 through 2009
- When land is subdivided...
 - How many lots are created?
 - What size are the lots created?

Informing Land Use Planning and Forestland Conservation Through Subdivision and Parcelization Trend Information



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How many lots were created?

- ❑ 2,749 lots created from 925 subdivisions affecting a total of 70,827 acres of land.
- ❑ On average, each subdivision resulted in 2-4 lots.
- ❑ Only 1% - 2% of subdivisions in the case study towns were large enough to trigger Act 250.
- ❑ Based on spatial analysis in four communities, between 50% and 68.8% of the subdivided acres were located within wildlife habitat blocks mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources.

Act 250: Criteria

- ❑ Address contemporary or emerging environmental issues (e.g., climate change, energy).
- ❑ Address landscape-scale resources and cumulative impacts of incremental development (e.g., habitat connectivity, flood resilience).
- ❑ Evaluate relationship to ANR programs that address issues related to Act 250 criteria (recognizing different permitting processes).
- ❑ Update “community impact” criteria (i.e., 6, 7 & 9s) to improve clarity and efficacy.

Act 250: Process

- ❑ Maintain accessible district commission process; ensure that everyone with a reasonable interest in a project is allowed party status.
- ❑ Maintain inclusive, relatively informal district commission process; don't formalize process to establish a record for appeals.
- ❑ Compare the timing and costs of appeals between Environmental Board and Court; consider creating an administrative board that would combine best aspects of E-Board and the Court.