



Intro:

Vermont Planners Association is a non-profit advocacy and educational organization with nearly 200 planners and related professionals, including municipal and regional planners, state agency staff, and private land use consultants. Dedicated to the advancement of community planning in Vermont at the local, regional, and state levels.

Recommendations

- 1. Capability and Development Plan** – The Vermont Planners Association have long held the view that the primary policy guide for Act 250, the Capability and Development Plan, as established in 10 V.S.A. § 6042, offers the best vehicle for updating and aligning Act 250 with Vermont’s other land use policies and programs. A Capability and Development Plan was adopted immediately after Act 250 went into effect in the 1970’s and disabled shortly after. Since then, Act 250 has functioned without a plan to guide its legislative, administrative, and regulatory decision-making. Development of an updated Capability and Development Plan would provide consistent statewide data and mapping related to resource protection and development potential; and help the state define where we want to protect and preserve and where we want our vibrant communities to thrive. This overarching view guides VPA’s recommendations on Act 250 reform. A full position statement on the Capability and Development Plan can be found [here](#).
- 2. Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Designation** – VPA supports the proposed changes, and further supports the NDA amendments in S.226.
- 3. Forest Blocks** – Absent the development of an updated Capability and Development Plan, the mapping and rule-making proposed in Section 9 of the bill is essential. The definition of forest blocks is too broad. VPA strongly supports further refinement of the “size, location, and function” of forest blocks.
- 4. Road Rule** – VPA does not support the road rule as a new jurisdictional trigger. Rather than create this new jurisdictional trigger, VPA recommends a study of the overall jurisdiction and exemptions in relation to State planning goals (24 V.S.A. § 4302), and as informed by an updated Capability and Development Plan.
- 5. Governance** - VPA supported H.492 (re-establishment of the Environmental Review Board) in testimony provided on 2/14/22 to House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife [this testimony can be found [here](#)]. If H.492 doesn’t get enacted, VPA supports the study committee recommended in S.234.
- 6. One-acre towns** – VPA supports the clarification of one-acre town jurisdiction. In addition, VPA recommends a study of the overall jurisdiction and exemptions in relation to State planning goals (24 V.S.A. § 4302), and as informed by an updated Capability and Development Plan.
- 7. Designation Program Study** – As originally proposed in H.511, VPA strongly supports a study of the state designation programs; and a \$150,000 appropriation for it.

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VPA is a non-profit advocacy and educational organization of nearly 200 planners and related professionals. We are dedicated to the advancement of community planning in Vermont at the local, regional, and state levels, to foster vibrant communities and a healthy environment.

Our membership is diverse, including municipal planners, regional planning commission staff, private planning consultants, state planning professionals, etc. We also work to coordinate VPA's advocacy and education with other groups involved in planning policy such as VAPDA (VT Association of Planning & Development Agencies), VLCT, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.



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