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APPENDIX 4 - ENERGY PLANNING BY STATE AGENCIES, REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS, AND TOWNS

Energy planning at the state, regional, and local levels has been strongly impacted by Act 200 and Act 250. Under Act 200, state agencies and Regional Planning Commissions are required (and Municipal Planning Commissions are encouraged) to create land use development plans that meet a number of goals related to historic preservation, environmental quality, economic vitality, energy efficiency, and others. Under Act 250, developers are granted a permit for commercial and residential developments after showing that the development will meet standards related to environmental quality, infrastructure requirements, congruence with town and regional plans, and others. Both Act 250 and 200 have increased awareness and planning of energy issues at all levels of Vermont's government.

I. STATE AGENCY PLANS

Since January 1991, all state agencies have been required to prepare and adopt State Agency Plans as a result of Act 200. The Council of Regional Commissions reviews State Agency Plans to assure that the coordinated planning process that is at the heart of Act 200 is being followed and that statutory requirements are met. Several of the Act 200 goals relate to energy and efficiency, and the current set of State Agency Plans addresses these energy efficiency in various ways. Some agencies' efforts improve energy efficiency in their operation and activities are summarized below.

- Agency of Administration produces the *Vermont State Agency Plan* which reports progress in state government toward energy efficiency, identifies areas that need attention, presents the life cycle costing process, and highlights energy efficiency efforts underway in state buildings and transportation planning.
- Department of Education encourages the installation of cost-effective energy efficiency measures through its review process for new school construction and funds cost-effective energy efficiency programs in the state's schools.
- Department of Buildings and General Services holds energy efficiency as a priority in the design, siting, and operation of state buildings. Currently, conservation programs are being implemented in 50 of the 250 state owned buildings. These conservation programs include fuel switching, cogeneration use, and wood heating use where cost effective.
- Department of Public Service's plan seeks to advance the planning goals of Act 200 and to strengthen the compatibility of regional, municipal, and state planning with respect to statewide planning and policies for energy resources, in accordance with least cost planning principles, and addressing environmental impacts of energy use and opportunities to implement new technologies along with renewable and sustainable resources.

II. REGIONAL PLANS

Vermont has 12 Regional Planning Commissions which, among other duties, create and implement Regional Plans; assist towns in preparing plans and in implementing recommendations; appear before District Environmental Commissions to participate in the Act 250 permitting process; and appear before the Public

Service Board to participate in rulings about energy purchases, facilities construction, or transmission issues of electric or gas utilities (see 24 V.S.A. §4345 for information about their other duties).

Act 200 Regional Plans provide extensive information about the particular region and present the set of 16 goals, established in 30 V.S.A. §4302, and Regional Commission's goals, policies, actions, and recommendations for achieving them. These Regional Plans, once approved by the Council of Regional Commissions, serve as models for the member Municipal Planning Commissions as they prepare their Act 200 Plans, which are similarly based on the Act 200 goal set.

Each Regional and Municipal Plan has an energy section. In addition to addressing the Act 200 goal - to encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources, the energy section typically contains a discussion of types of energy that have been and are available, with general projections about what the energy situation looks like in the future. Energy related issues are also covered in the sections about natural resources, air quality, transportation, and public facilities.

Eleven Regional Plans are currently in effect, and one has expired and is in an extended process of revision and eventual readoption. (See Table A4.1.) Regional Planning Commissions have made a major contribution to energy planning by researching and publishing pertinent energy data for their region and its communities, including information about the types of energy currently available, future resources, energy use broken up by end use and sector, and projections about future energy use. The Regional Plans set out clear and ambitious goals, policies, and recommendations to direct future energy use in the region. Every one of the Regional Plans strongly encourages educating the public and encouraging public participation in the planning process. This recommendation is being taken very seriously by DPS as restructuring the electric utility industry is before the General Assembly.

III. MUNICIPAL PLANS

Currently there are 72 Vermont cities, towns, and villages with Municipal Plans that have both been adopted by the community and have obtained approval from the respective Regional Planning Commission. (See Table A4.1 for a listing of Regional and Municipal Plans.)

Local concerns about energy, air quality, utility facilities, and transportation issues are discussed in the Municipal Plans. The energy section of these plans typically includes an assessment of current energy use and a projection of future expectations. There is a wide variance in the scope and detail of the energy sections in the Town Plans; however, including an energy section in the plans has led to a more and more thorough assessment of current and projected energy use and development of preferred policies and scenarios.

Implementing the goals and policies of both the Regional and Municipal Plans depends on cooperative efforts of communities and local, regional, state, and sometimes federal agencies involved with land use and planning activities. For Municipal Plans to be effective, the plans of adjacent towns must be coordinated and consistent with each another. When development decisions will significantly impact residents and communities outside an individual community's jurisdiction, the Regional Commission acts as review agency in cooperation with town officials and other interested parties. Towns can implement their approved plans by:

- Instituting bylaws, including zoning and subdivision regulations, official map and shoreland bylaws, and flood hazard area bylaws (24 V.S.A. section 4401).
 - Directing local public investment to implement the goals and policies in the Municipal Plan. Through the capital budget and program, towns can determine the pace of growth, the location of development, and changes in utility services and public facilities (24 V.S.A. 4404(a))
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- Imposing impact fees, in which the beneficiaries of new development must pay their share of the costs of capital projects which benefit them (24 V.S.A. section 5203).
- Designing and implementing special projects for downtown revitalization, community development, conservation, housing, or economic development.

Table A4.1 Regional and Municipal Plans

<u>Regional Plan & Date</u>	<u>Municipal Plan</u>	<u>Adopted by Town</u>	<u>Approved by RPC</u>
Addison Co.; Apr. 1994	Middlebury	Feb. 1994	May 1994
	Addison	Jan. 1996	July 1996
	Weybridge	Sept. 1996	July 1996
Bennington: Amended 1/93 to be readopted in 1997	Dorset	June 1992	Jan. 1993
	Bennington	Oct. 1993	May 1995
	Landgrove	June 1994	May 1995
Central Vermont: May 1993	Warren	Jan. 1995	Feb. 1996
	Montpelier	June 1995	Dec. 1995
	Orange	June 1993	Oct. 1993
	Waitsfield	Sept. 1993	Jan. 1994
	Middlesex	Sept. 1995	Apr. 1996
	Duxbury	May 1996	Oct. 1996
	Roxbury	July 1996	Oct. 1996
Chittenden Co.; Sept. 1996	Williston	July 1995	Dec. 1995
	Charlotte	Mar. 1995	Mar. 1996
	Essex Town	Mar. 1993	June 1995
	Jericho	Dec. 1991	May 1992
	Westford	Dec. 1992	Jan. 1994
	So. Burlington	Sept. 1995	Apr. 1995
	Huntington	Feb. 1995	Dec. 1995
	Milton	Apr. 1993	May 1996
	Underhill	Mar. 1994	Feb. 1996
	Colchester	Mar. 1996	Oct. 1996
Northwest (formally Franklin/Grand Isle)(1)	Swanton	June 1994	Sept. 1994
	South Hero	Aug. 1994	Jan. 1995
	Richford	May 1995	June 1995
	St. Albans Town	Sept. 1993	Oct. 1995
	Sheldon	Jan. 1994	Jan. 1996
	Georgia	July 1995	Nov. 1995
	Richford Village	June 1996	June 1996
	Grand Isle	June 1996	Aug. 1996
Lamoille Co.; Nov. 1996	Stowe	Mar. 1995	Feb. 1996
	Morrisville	Mar. 1995	Apr. 1995
	Wolcott	Nov. 1995	Mar. 1996
	Cambridge	Dec. 1995	Sept. 1996
	Hyde Park	Feb. 1995	May 1996
Northeastern Vermont (NVDA); Jan. 1995	Unincorp. towns	July 1992	Sept. 1992
	Greensboro	Nov. 1992	Jan. 1993
	Stannard	Oct. 1992	Jan. 1993
	Danville	Nov. 1992	Apr. 1993
	Peacham	Sept. 1993	July 1993

<u>Regional Plan & Date</u>	<u>Municipal Plan</u>	<u>Adopted by Town</u>	<u>Approved by RPC</u>
	Burke	Feb. 1994	Apr. 1994
	Derby	Nov. 1993	Apr. 1994
	Ryegate	Sept. 1994	Oct. 1994
	Barnet	Aug. 1994	June 1995
	Brunswick	May 1995	
Rutland; Sept. 1994	West Rutland	June 1994	Apr. 1994
	Rutland Town	Dec. 1993	Dec. 1994
	Brandon	Jan. 1994	Jan. 1997
	Pawlet	Oct. 1994	Jan. 1997
South Windsor; Apr. 1992	West Windsor	May 1994	Apr. 1995
Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee; June 1996	Tunbridge	June 1994	Dec. 1994
	Bethel	Oct. 1994	Apr. 1995
	Randolph	Dec. 1994	Apr. 1995
	Braintree	Dec. 1994	Dec. 1995
	Brookfield	Mar. 1995	Dec. 1995
	Hancock	Sept. 1992	Dec. 1995
	Sharon	Apr. 1995	Dec. 1995
	Corinth	Oct. 1993	Jan. 1996
	Granville	Jan. 1995	Jan. 1996
	Strafford	May 1996	Sept. 1996
	Bridgewater	July 1996	Oct. 1996
	Pomfret	Apr. 1996	Oct. 1996
	Royalton	Mar. 1997	Mar. 1997
	Rochester	Dec. 1996	May 1997
	Woodstock	Feb. 1996	May 1997
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee; 1996	Thetford	May 1993	June 1994
	Hartford	July 1993	Dec. 1995
Windham; Sept. 1996	Grafton	Nov. 1992	Mar. 1993
	Newfane	Dec. 1992	Feb. 1993
	Readsboro	Aug. 1992	Jan. 1993
	Brookline	May 1994	Jan. 1994
	Somerset	Feb. 1993	Jan. 1995
	Halifax	Mar. 1995	Feb. 1995
	Whitingham	June 1992	Feb. 1995
	Rockingham	Nov. 1994	May 1995
	Putney	Oct. 1995	Oct. 1995
	Townshend	Dec. 1992	Oct. 1995
	Marlboro	Jan. 1996	April 1996
	Wilmington	not yet	Dec. 1996
	Londonderry	not yet	Jan. 1997

(1) Northwest Regional Planning Commission is revising its Plan for re-adoption in 1997.

Source: Vt. Agency of Commerce & Community Dev; Dept of Housing & Community Affairs, 6/97.