

VERMONT'S UNIQUE STRATEGIES and/or POLICIES PROMOTING "SMART GROWTH"

Act 250 (1970): ten criteria (with many "sub-criteria") guiding regulatory review by citizen boards of larger development, including:

Criterion 9(A) Impact of growth, 9(H) Costs of scattered development, 9(K) Development affecting public investments, 9(L) Rural growth areas and criterion 10... conformance with duly adopted local or regional plan.

Land Gains Tax (1973, amended 1987): enacted to discourage short-term speculation in land.

A tax on the profit of a land sale, graduated to discourage short-term ownership of 6 years or less. In 1987, the law was amended to further target land acquisition and sale occurring within 4 months.

Act 200 (1988) added the municipal, regional and state planning framework of (then) 12 goals, including:

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

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

(B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, or employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both.

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

Housing & Conservation Trust Fund (1987): Providing for protection/conservation of open lands, historic properties and affordable housing, resulting in:

- \$264 million appropriated with, on average, each dollar leveraging four more (over a billion dollars)
- providing for almost 11,000 affordable housing units, 75% of which are located in traditional downtowns, including rehabilitation of 57 historic buildings
- 600 farms comprising about 150,000 acres, and
- more than 250,000 acres of natural areas and important recreation land...

Growth Centers Pilot Project (1993-95): recommended changes in state policy, including the following since achieved:

HUD Consolidated Plan (1995): includes priorities on applying both HOME and CDBG funds to projects in downtowns and planning for downtowns, village centers and growth centers

Vermont Highway Standards (1997): flexible design standards (primarily focused on lane and shoulder

widths) with greater sensitivity to the adjacent environment

Access Management (1998): criteria to consider in granting permits for curb cuts on state highways was broadened to include consistency with the state's land use goals and conformance with state agency plans, any regional plan and approved municipal plan.

Property Tax Reform (1998): enacted in response to court decision concerned with unequal local educational resources, but the tax sharing provisions will affect local land use decisions.

The Vermont Downtown Program (1994 initially with later amendments): State program to enhance and protect the vitality of Vermont's downtowns. Provides training and technical assistance to communities, helping them develop skills and strategies for downtown revitalization. In 1998, the Downtown Development Act provided benefits to communities whose downtowns were designated by meeting thresholds, ensuring community investment in downtown revitalization. In 2002, "new town centers" and "village centers" were defined and added to expand some benefits of the downtown program to other densely-settled, mixed-use areas outside the downtown definition.

Growth Centers and New Neighborhoods (2006-8): Decisions on designation made by the Downtown Board, on applications by municipalities, to plan for compact settlement within a boundary to accommodate the majority of commercial and residential development anticipated for the next 20 years in that community, meeting a set of criteria. Incentives include A250 relief and increased access to financial tools. New Neighborhoods builds on this to create affordable housing projects meeting a minimum 4 dwelling units/acre density.

State Board of Education Rules on School Buildings and Sites (1998): Provides flexibility for the Commissioner in determining adequacy of site size, in order to encourage re-use of historic schools in downtowns and village centers. Implements policy adopted in 1997.

Interstate Interchange Policy (1999) and Interstate Interchange Executive Order (2001): to encourage development and/or conservation of land at the interchanges to be consistent with state land use goals. The 2002 Order was formal action by the Governor to guide state agency decisions on planning for and responding to development proposed at Vermont's interchanges.

Infrastructure Funding Rules and Growth Center Guidance Document (2002): In order to be eligible for wastewater treatment funding from the EPA funded State Revolving Fund administered by the Agency of Natural Resources, municipalities must show the proposed project will only serve a locally designated growth center. Funding of projects outside planned growth centers will occur only if severe health and environmental problems exist.

Complete Streets (2011): To ensure Vermont's roads are designed to be safe for all users -- motorists, bicyclists, public transportation users and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

