

**Hartford Planning Commission Workshop
Agenda**

Monday, November 24, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Hartford Town Hall, Room 2, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction

This will be a hybrid meeting (in-person with remote access available).

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1. Model Hybrid Public Meeting Script & Roll Call
2. Public Comments
3. Review of the November 10, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop Minutes
4. Review & Discussion of the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission Future Land Use Map for Hartford
5. Date for Next Workshop
6. Adjournment

Hartford Planning Commission Workshop
Draft Minutes
November 10, 2025

Planning Commission Chair John Reid called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. He followed by reading the hybrid meeting script and conducting a roll call.

The following individuals attended the meeting which was held at the Hartford Town Hall in Room 2 at 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction on Monday, November 10, 2025. The meeting was also available remotely but no one attended that way.

Planning Commission: Colin Butler, Toby Dayman, John Heath, Dylan Kreis, Bruce Riddle and chair John Reid.

Staff: Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield and Planner Matt Osborn.

Others: Dave Brown.

Chair John Reid called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. He proceeded to read the hybrid meeting script followed by roll call.

- 1. Public Comments:** Dave Brown of 614 Bliss Road was present to discuss the Public Utility Commission (PUC) application by SBA to increase the height of an existing telecommunication facility on Bliss Road. Dave is an abutting property owner. He stated that the Town Plan notes that “telecommunication facilities shall be the minimum height necessary to achieve coverage.” He felt the Planning Commission should have asked for a lower height than the proposed 120’ tower. He presented a handout. Lori Hirshfield noted that the Town no longer has authority regarding telecommunication facilities. The Town has an advisory role only. John Reid stated that he recalls the need for a taller tower to accommodate additional telecommunication providers. Dave stated that to get answers, the Planning Commission needs to ask questions from the PUC. Colin asked if the Planning Commission asked questions. John Reid responded yes. Dave concluded by stating that the Planning Commission decisions have an impact on the community.
- 2. Review of the Draft Minutes of October 20, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop:** John Reid asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 10/20/25. Being none, Bruce Riddle made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/20/25 as written. The motion was seconded by Colin Butler and approved unanimously.
- 3. Discussion of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission Future Land Use Map for Hartford:** Matt Osborn started by noting that the new mapping requirements of Act 181 stem from the housing crisis and the need to streamline development. It results in changes to Act 250 that can provide benefits to Hartford and the development community. Matt noted that there are ten land use categories for all Vermont communities regardless of their size or region. Lori noted that the categories are prescriptive. Matt pointed out the existing Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for Hartford. The Act 181 categories are a change from the current TRORC FLUM and categories for Hartford. Matt noted the Act 181 categories:

- Downtown Center
- Village Center
- Village Area
- Planned Growth Area
- Enterprise
- Transition
- Resource-based recreation
- Rural General;
- Rural Agriculture and Forestry; and
- Rural Conservation.

Bruce stated that he spent a lot of time reviewing the TRORC Draft FLUM for Hartford and thinks that the Planning Commission should make changes to the Draft FLUM. The following are some of his concerns:

- Areas along the White River should be designated as rural conservation.
- Areas north of the railroad tracks in West Hartford should not be designated as village center.
- Not sure Hartford Village has the correct designations.

Lori noted that most properties would not trigger Act 250. It doesn't negate adherence to all town regulations.

Staff and the PC reviewed the FLU Map. Discussion ensued.

Bruce noted that Hartford hasn't provided detailed maps showing boundaries of the five villages. He thinks the Town should define the boundaries. Matt responded that there is wide range of ideas from the community about those boundaries. Lori noted the village center initiative is underway. She suggested that the stakeholders weigh in on village boundaries.

Matt noted that the map identifies the predominant use in the area and does not isolate individual properties. As an example, Matt noted the Quechee Lakes golf course and ski hill are identified as Resource-based Recreation and the areas include adjacent condominiums.

Matt noted the state housing targets identified for 2030. Since Hartford is the region's largest community and has four villages with Town water and sewer and access to an interstate highway. The Town is projected to have 21.4% of the region's share; 780 units out of 3,600 by 2030.

Colin noted that TRORC expects Hartford to complete our review of the map by the end of the year. He stated that he would have preferred more time to review the maps. Others agreed.

4. **Next Workshop:** Matt asked if PC members are available for a workshop on Monday, November 24th at 6:00 p.m. All members except Dylan Kreis are available. There was consensus to hold the workshop on Monday 11/24 at 6:00 p.m. The PC requested that staff comments about the Draft FLU Map be sent ahead of the workshop. Matt asked the PC to review the land use categories and to review the FLU Map for the 11/24 workshop. Matt asked the PC to keep Monday, December 8th

open if another workshop is needed. If needed, that meeting would take place at 6:30 p.m. since staff have a 5:00 p.m. meeting that night.

5. **Adjournment:** Colin Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Heath seconded the motion which was approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.
6. **Planning Commission Member Terms:** Dillon Bianchi, 9/1/28, Colin Butler, 6/24/27, Toby Dayman, 6/24/27, John Heath, 3/11/27, Dylan Kreis, 6/26/26, Bruce Riddle, 2/3/28 and Chair John Reid, 2/5/27.

MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Matt Osborn, AICP, Planner

SUBJECT: Staff Comments on the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission Proposed Future Land Use Map for Hartford

DATE: November 21, 2025

1. Hartford has several overlay districts (Rural Lands Overlay District, Agriculture Overlay District and the Wildlife Connector Overlay District. Will these be affected by the proposed Regional Land Use designations ? **TRORC Response:** Staff reviewed the overlay districts with Kyle Katz of TRORC and there was consensus that there isn't a conflict.
2. Christian St. Agricultural Overlay area is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF) & Rural General (RG). As an agricultural overlay district, clustered development is allowed. In the Town Plan Future Land Use Plan, the area is identified as Residential. Currently, the area is not served by Town water & sewer. Without it, density is one dwelling unit per acre. **TRORC Response:** One dwelling unit per acre is consistent with the Rural General category. TRORC changed the designation of a section of RAF lots along the west side of Christian Street to Rural General. The east side of Christian Street was already designated as Rural General. Staff recommends changing a larger section of RAF lots to Rural General to be consistent with the R-3 zoning boundary.
3. The area west of Route 5 and south of I-89 (across from the Upper Valley Aquatic Center) is proposed by TRORC as Rural General and Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF). The Town Future Land Use Map designates the area as residential. The zoning is R-3 and further west is FC. *Since Town water and sewer are nearby, staff recommends it be changed to Transition.*
4. Quechee Lakes Section 5C (7-83 & 7-83-1) is slated for development under the Quechee Lakes Master Plan. TRORC is proposing Rural Conservation. In the Town Plan, it is identified as Rural Residential. **TRORC Response:** TRORC only changed a portion of 5C to Rural General since it is a high priority wildlife connector and forest block. *Since it is clear that the 1988 Quechee Lakes Master Plan designates the area as residential development, there is a conflict that should be addressed in the letter to TRORC.*

5. The Resource-based Recreation area proposed by TRORC around Lake Pinneo and the Golf Course includes many condo complexes. Should those areas be changed? **TRORC Response:** The map identifies the predominant use (substantial majority use) in the area and does not isolate individual properties. Kyle Katz indicated that it doesn't change what can be done related to housing.
6. Quechee Lakes Polo Field 13-93-Q-POLO (site of Polo events, golf driving range and Scottish Festival) is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF). It might be more appropriate to classify as Resource-based Recreation. **TRORC Response:** TRORC changed to Rural General as the predominant use in the adjacent area. It does not impact events on the site.
7. Quechee Interstate Interchange area is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF) or Rural General (RG). In the Town Plan Future Land Use Plan, the area is identified as Gateway Commercial. **TRORC Response:** TRORC changed the RAF area to Rural General. The only restriction would be principal retail.
8. Several properties in Hartford have conservation easements on them. Most are proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF) or Rural General (RG). Is that intentional? Examples include Hemlock Ridge (RAF), Hazen Brookside Farm, (RG), Maanawaka Conservation Area (RG), Hillside Road Conserved Land (RAF), Safford Road Conserved Land (RAF & RC). **TRORC Response:** TRORC changed several of these properties to Rural Conservation if they were adjacent to Rural Conservation areas. Others are classified as RAF.
9. The Town GCR zoning district across from the VA Hospital was rezoned in 2022 to allow for mixed-use development. The GCR district is located in the growth center. Since then, one of the hotels was converted to multi-family housing. We hope to see additional housing and mixed-use in this district. The proposed Regional land use designation for this area is Enterprise. We think this area should be designated as Transition. **TRORC Response:** TRORC changed the area to Transition.
10. Wright's Sawmill property is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF). In the Town Plan Future Land Use Plan, the area is identified as Gateway Commercial. **TRORC Response:** TRORC changed a small portion of the property from RAF to Enterprise. The existing Regional Plan Future Land Use Map designated half of the property to rural and the other half mixed-use. Staff recommends changing the entire parcel to Enterprise.

11. Route 5 South consists of the Maxfield Sports Complex (14-109), Northern Nurseries (14-94 & 14-108), the Army National Guard (14-109-1), the Hartford Transfer Station (14-103 & 14-106) and the Leisure Living Mobile Home Park & Sales Office (16-12 & 16-13). Zoning in the area is either RC-2 or RL-10. The area is designated in the Town Future Land Use Map as either Rural or Mixed-use. The Regional Plan proposes the area as Rural General. **TRORC Response:** TRORC believes that Rural General is the most appropriate category for this area. The only restriction would be on principal retail or large-scale development.

12. Is any development allowed in the Rural Agriculture & Forest and Rural Conservation areas?

TRORC Response: Yes.

13. What about existing commercial operations that are located in areas proposed as Rural General? Are they allowed to expand?

- a. Nott Excavating, Parcel 8-21, 2591 Route 14 Zoned IC.
- b. CBQ Auto Repair, 8-129, 421 Route 14 zoned RL-3.
- c. Merchand Auto Repair, 14-36, 917 N. Hartland Road zoned R-3.
- d. Klampert Dentist Office 14-33, 1049 N. Hartland Road zoned R-3.
- e. Casella 8-187, 1544 Woodstock Road zoned RC-2.
- f. Quechee Service Center 12-138, 8727 Woodstock Road zoned RL-3.

TRORC Response: Yes, as long as they don't have principal retail or trigger substantial regional impact which is identified in Chapter 13 (Implementation) of the Regional Plan.

14. Under Rural Agriculture and Forestry, it refers to regional goals. What are TRORC regional goals for this category? **TRORC Response:** Agricultural & forest-based resources and no principal retail.

TRORC Regional Future Land Use Mapping Methodology

Settlement Areas

Downtown Center: Has water and wastewater, floodplain regulation, zoning/subdivision, sidewalks. Regional hospitals and other regional services are located.

Planned Growth Area: Location planned for medium-high density residential development and expansion of the downtown core. Can include mixed use, but are predominantly civic and residential. Sidewalk access is important in these areas!

-Towns with Downtown Centers, being Tier1A eligible, shall be planned to accommodate 65% of the town Housing Target in their Core Settlement Areas.

Village Center (Urban): Can serve as the core of the Village Area, containing the mixed use commercial/office/residential/municipal buildings along a main street or core area. This is the designation if the town has some but not all the requirements to be considered a "Downtown".

Village Area: Neighborhoods, primarily residential/civic, surrounding the center.

-Towns with Village Areas, being Tier1B eligible, shall be planned to accommodate 60% of the town Housing Target in their Core Settlement Areas.

Transition Area: Prime for denser mixed use development. They are meant to break up the creation of "strip commercial" areas along state highways. For towns that have services but not regulations, Transition can also serve as a residential growth area.

Village Center (Rural) : Village Centers are required by statute, to exist in every town. These areas will include the existing settlement, all commercial, mixed use, municipal, and other community buildings in its near vicinity. Where the town does not have all the regulations and water or wastewater, this will be the sole settlement designation. Rural Village centers may be larger than urban centers due to this fact but can be changed in the future depending on if the municipality develops services and ordinances.

- These areas shall be planned to accommodate 55% of the town Housing Target

Rural Areas

- The Substantial Majority Use in the Area Determines the Area

Hamlet Area : Primarily residential, municipal, and minimal, if any existing commercial. These areas may be considered a village in town zoning/planning but are not prime for large scale denser future growth. They may be on a crossroads and have historical significance, but do not meet the requirements for a rural Village Center.

Rural General Area: The substantial majority use in this area is rural residential, with some working land in the mix. They will buffer Village Centers or growth areas, where parcel size and uses allow, and will be prime for future rural residential development or agriculture. This is a “catch-all” area that is purely rural – but not significant enough for large scale Agriculture, and does not have significant regional natural resources, usually due to parcelization. While parcels of all sizes are in this area, on average parcels are between 5 and 20 acres.

Rural Agriculture / Forestry Area: The Rural Agriculture/Forestry area will take precedence if there are multiple farms, or large parcels 20+ acres in size bordering each other. The substantial majority use of this area will be agricultural and will have prime potential for future agricultural or forestry operations. This area will also serve as a buffer between Rural Conservation and Rural General areas where applicable. Rural Residential uses also exist in this area, though generally this area is along class 3 dirt roads and may serve as a buffer between Rural General and Rural Conservation. Priority Forest Blocks are also considered when looking at this area.

Rural Conservation Area: This area is reserved for protected state and federal lands, large interior parcels that are inaccessible from town highways, and large parcels, 100+ acres, that cover highest priority forest block and wildlife connectors. This area will also include lands that are of highest conservation potential, including unbroken forest block. Since forestry is an exempt use from Act250, this area will also include large parcels owned by forestry companies if other indicators are met.

Other Areas

Enterprise Area: This area is reserved for intensive uses that are not included in village areas. Dense Industrial or dense commercial uses where residential infill is not acceptable or feasible will be included in this area. This area may border settlement areas if the town has the area zoned for industrial uses.

Resource Based Recreation Area: This area will be sparingly used in our area, primarily only used for the central base of large scale lakeside resorts or Ski Areas.

Housing Target Allocation

Downtown Center/Planned Growth Area (31%): This portion of the regional housing target is allocated to Hartford and Randolph.

Hartford: 21%

Randolph: 10%

Village Center – Urban (39%): This portion of the regional housing target is allocated to large towns with Village Areas and Transition areas. They have municipal water, and many have municipal sewer services, allowing for higher density than more rural towns.

Village Areas: 31%

- **Norwich (7%)**
- **Bradford (6%)**
- **Woodstock (5%)**
- **Newbury (5%)**
- **Bethel (4%)**
- **Rochester (2%)**
- **Fairlee (2%)**

Transition Areas: 8%

- **Royalton (6%)**
- **Chelsea (2%)**

Village Centers – Rural (30%) : This portion of the regional housing target is allocated to towns that do not have municipal water, and as such, only have village center designations for their settlement areas.

Village Centers on Highway Exits: 13%

- **Hartland (6%)**
- **Thetford (4%)**
- **Sharon (3%)**

Rural Village Centers: 17%

- **Corinth, Tunbridge, Brookfield, Bridgewater, Topsham, Strafford, Braintree, Pomfret, Barnard, West Fairlee, Vershire, Stockbridge, Plymouth, Pittsfield, Hancock, Granville**

Mapping Considerations:

General Rules (Smoothing)

- Clipped to Roads, streams, or parcel lines
- Will be exceptions to the rules when one small parcel may be isolated from other related parcels, preventing a solid block from forming
- If area is smaller than one parcel, it is absorbed by the surrounding use
- If the area is smaller than ____ parcels, it is absorbed by an entirely surrounding use

Settlement Areas:

- Commercial, Residential, Mixed Use, Municipal, or Multiple Uses
 - Will contain the town's primary commercial uses, and can be further designed by town Zoning
- Population Center of the Town
 - Can be the baseline for Growth Areas (including Village Area)
- Boundaries exist at edge of reasonable growth area
 - Land is under 35* Slope, will not expand further into floodplain or wetland, where possible
 - Parcels are generally smaller than 10 acres.
 - Area will be clipped to parcel boundaries
 - Existing residential is close to main roads
 - Farmland and forest block where the majority use is not purely dense residential will determine the border of the settlement

Hamlet Areas:

- Primarily residential, municipal, and minimal, if any existing commercial
- Will be denser residential than surrounding rural uses, mostly clustered around a crossroads, identified as points on a map
 - Where parcels and residential structures are more numerous and smaller than the surrounding area
 - Parcels generally smaller than 10 acres, houses much closer to the road than in Rural General
- Not considered a growth area
- Does not occupy space as a polygon, is considered rural general on a regional level

Rural General Areas:

- Exist in the absence of Village or other rural areas
- Medium sized parcels, roughly 5-30 acres
- Includes Farmland and forest block where smaller parcels and more residential development has split the landscape
 - Parcelization may have split a farm field or forest block, making it less permanent into the future, and less suitable for future conservation or agricultural use
 - Existing agricultural fields may exist across several residential parcels
 - A single farm field or current use farm may exist within a neighborhood or surrounded by small residential lots – not enough for an “Ag” area
 - Forest block may end at the road, but houses and lawns break up the tree canopy, causing the area to end at the parcel boundary instead of the road.

Rural Forestry and Agriculture Areas:

- Designated current use farms
 - Large parcels that are clearly identified as farms not in current use, whose primary land use is agriculture. This may include hayfields, croplands, and pastures where parcel size and forest block allow
- Farms that are clearly in current agricultural use using satellite imagery or knowledge of the area, and neighbor other farms.
 - Includes clearly active farms not in current use if bordering other farms, or have parcel sizes larger than 20 acres
- Large parcels in priority or highest priority forest block (20+ acres)
 - Small parcels may exist in this zone, if they are surrounded by larger parcels fitting this category
 - Parcels owned by forestry companies and are near or bordering roads
 - Near to conserved parcels to act as connectivity blocks or buffers between General and Conservation.
- Conserved resource management lands not in conservation area
 - To prevent checkerboarding, wetlands, state lands, land easements, and town protected lands may fall under this category if within or contiguous to working lands instead of as conservation.
- Woodland lots where parcels are not in conservation, or not bordering large conserved lots.

- These lots would then become rural conservation if bordering larger conservation areas.
 - Interior parcels (cut off from town roads) that are not highest priority forest block or are cut off from conservation areas, and are not permanently inhabited.
- Is a buffer between rural general and conservation where parcel sizes are moderate and border-maintained town or state roads.
 - Class IV roads may denote where Working lands and Conservation land borders are.
 - Can also serve as wildlife connector blocks and cover wetlands as a bridge between two Rural Conservation areas.
- Can still allow for low density residential where it does not conflict with ag or forestry uses

Rural Conservation Areas:

- All parcels containing land above 2,500ft
- Woodland where parcel size is greater than 100 acres and bordering larger untouched parcels, in high and highest priority forest blocks
 - Interior conserved parcels
- Includes most or all indicators :
 - Highest priority forest block
 - Highest priority wildlife connector
 - No access to town highway
 - Large wetlands
 - Large parcels with misc., camp, seasonal, or woodland uses
 - Small residential parcels surrounded by rural conservation

