



City of Barre, VT
Regular Meeting of the
Barre City Planning Commission

Thursday, May 9, 2024 AT 5:30 PM

Participation: REMOTE VIA ZOOM ONLY

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89301594299?pwd=MXkyVmV6VnVhUC9Obk1GaVhNMFFKUT09>

Meeting ID: 893 0159 4299

Passcode: 815236

Agenda

1. Call to order - 5:30 PM
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
3. Public comment (for something not on the agenda)
4. Approval of Minutes for the April 11, 2024 meeting
5. Old Business
 - a. Interim Zoning Changes Discussion – review of final zoning language and Interim or Regular bylaw change
6. New Business
 - a. Review of Introduction section of the Municipal Plan
7. Confirm date of next meeting – June 13, 2024
8. Staff updates – as needed
9. Roundtable
10. Adjourn

Barre City Planning Commission

April 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Becky Wigg (Vice Chair), Joe Reil (Secretary), Rosemary Averill, Caitlin Corkins (arrived at 5:54 pm), Raylene Meunier

Absent: None

Staff: Janet Shatney (Director of Planning, Permitting & Assessing)

Visitors: None

1. Call to Order.

5:30pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

Reil suggested discussing recent Council agenda, where the Planning Commission was discussed, Sichel notes this will be incorporated into later agenda items.

Agenda corrected to show previous meeting as February 8.

3. Approval of Minutes.

a. February 8, 2024.

Wigg notes an error in Draft Minutes, "Averill" misspelled as "Averall".

Meunier moves to approve, with revision, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.

4. Public comment (for something not on the agenda).

None.

5. Old Business.

a. Interim Zoning Changes Discussion

Shatney summarizes changes. To meet new State of Vermont requirements (S.100) only lot sizes (MU3 and R4) need to change. Discussing elimination of density, may result in more duplexes/apartment buildings.

Shatney suggests removing density and seeing where that leads us. Also provided sample of Montpelier zoning; allowing up to a certain number of units per lot as long as other requirements are met; and suggested we may

use something similar. Consensus was to try something similar, as it would have a similar practical effect and would be simpler. There was further discussion around the number of units to allow and consensus for six.

Sichel brought up setback requirements to discuss more in future, suggesting having some language about 'character of neighborhood' to avoid radically different setbacks may be worthwhile.

Suggestion to leave density alone, add a clause similar to Montpelier, and change lot sizes.

Reil moves to recommend discussed changes to City Council, Menieur seconds, unanimous in favor.

6. New Business.

a. Flood Hazard Regulations: proposed changes

Shatney discusses FHR, normally handled similar to Zoning changes. We need to follow same process as for Zoning and can be handled as interim changes.

Suggested change to remove \$50K clause to be in compliance with FEMA regulations (this is the value of the structure only).

Fuel tanks, FEMA standard is to prevent flotation (can be anchored OR raised above flood levels). Current Barre City regulations say "and", should be updated to "or" to be in compliance with FEMA.

Homeowner can submit appraisal to show actual value to determine eligibility if previous appraisal is out of date. Sichel suggests adding language to indicate this should be at the homeowner's expense.

Wigg asks if this could be handled retroactively if someone could have benefited if the change were done earlier? Shatney reports that this isn't possible, it will be effective from the date implemented.

Corkins moves to make the changes presented by Shatney and with Sichel's suggested revisions, Wigg seconds, unanimous in favor.

b. Meeting Schedule discussion

We have been meeting once a month with several recent meetings cancelled. City has insufficient staffing to hold more meetings.

The City Council had some discussion about how to address this. One suggestion discussed was to meet once a month with staff support and to have a second meeting without staff support, more of a work session. More work would be needed from Commission members.

Reil was in favor of this as a temporary measure. Averill and Meunier had concerns with time commitments.

Another suggestion was discussed, to possibly establish the fourth Thursday as a standing back-up if the regular meeting needs to be canceled.

Wigg suggests having some guided learning sessions to review regulations and documents so we can gain a better understanding may be useful. Some specifics were discussed, Zoning Regulations, City Plan, etc.

Sichel notes that the Plan was adopted in 2020 and needs to be revised in eight years. Some options and ideas were discussed.

Sichel suggests starting by adding a standing agenda item for discussing a chapter of the Municipal Plan and that this can be deferred if needed. There was consensus to begin during next month's meeting with the Introduction.

7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- a. May 9, 2024.

8. Staff Updates.

- a. Prospect Heights development off Prospect St. Barre City applied to be invited to participate in a grant for up to \$3 million.

Sichel notes that he serves on the board of Prospect Heights Commission and BADC to inform of possible conflict of interest in future discussions.

The City currently has the option to purchase the property, good for up to one year.

Downstreet is getting started on Ward 5 School and Brummer Apartments.

A small developer who owns a lot off 6th Street, wants to put a 17 unit building in. Act 250 interfering. Looking at regulation changes to help it go forward and the state of project is unclear.

9. Round Table.

Summer St. Plan and Bylaw Modernization grants were discussed. Shatney is discussing the Summer St. Plan with consultants and the Bylaw Modernization project is still looking for consultant and will expire in December of 2024.

10. Adjourn.

07:00pm, **Corkins moves to adjourn, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.**

Janet Shatney

From: Garrett Baxter <gbaxter@vlct.org>
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2024 11:31 AM
To: Janet Shatney
Subject: RE: Legal Stance on the use of Interim zoning

Good morning Janet,

Thank you for your email. I apologize for the issues you've been having with our MAP system. I've notified our tech people and hopefully they'll have them remedied soon.

Generally speaking, interim bylaws are adopted as an emergency measure in order to protect the public, health, safety and general welfare and to provide for the orderly growth of the community. Due to their nature, interim bylaws warrant an expedited adoption process. In contrast to a regular zoning proposal/amendment/repeal which requires both notice and hearings to be held by both the Planning Commission and Selectboard in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §§ 4441, 4442, interim bylaws may be adopted after only public notice and one hearing of the Selectboard. See 24 V.S.A. § 4415: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/117/04415>

I should note however that interim bylaws are also predicated on the town conducting or taking action to conduct studies, or having held or holding a hearing for the purpose of considering a bylaw or an addition to a bylaw. We would recommend that the selectboard be prepared to create a legislative record to demonstrate how such the interim bylaws would "protect the health, safety and general welfare" of the town's residents and/or how it would "provide for orderly physical and economic growth in the town." 24 V.S.A. 4415(a). Given the fact that an interim bylaw is adopted as an 'emergency measure' by the selectboard, the implication is that it will take effect immediately upon adoption. Interim bylaws are limited in duration to two years from their effective date and can only be extended for a one-year period thereafter.

Since an application vest under an existing regulation at the time it is filed [Smith v. Winhall Planning Commission, 140 Vt. 178 (1981)], an application received after the adoption of an interim bylaw would be reviewed under the interim bylaw.

To address your specific concerns, so long as the above conditions are satisfied, a town could always move to adopt interim bylaws and while at the same time pursuing the adoption of more permanent bylaws by adhering to the statutorily prescribed adoption/amendment/repeal process. That's likely a conversation you as Planning Director should have with the Selectboard and Planning Commission Chairs so as to coordinate their strategic approach to tackling this issue.

I hope this helps. All the best.

Sincerely,

Garrett A. Baxter



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Pronouns: he, him, his
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2004.C **Materially Similar Uses.** The Zoning Administrator may make a written determination that a proposed use not listed on the use table (see [Section 2115](#)) as permitted or conditional in any district is materially similar to a use listed as permitted or conditional in the applicable zoning district and that it should be allowed to the same extent and subject to the same standards as that permitted or conditional use if it has:

- (1) Similar impacts on the neighborhood such as traffic, noise and lighting as that listed use; and
- (2) Similar characteristics such as building type, site arrangement, floor area, number of employees, customer traffic, equipment use, hours of operation, parking, vehicle trips and signage as that permitted or conditional use.

2004.D **Multiple and Mixed Uses.** A landowner may use a lot or structure for any combination of uses allowed in the applicable zoning district.

2004.E **Accessory Uses.** A landowner may establish accessory uses on a lot in accordance with the standards below:

- (1) The total area occupied by accessory uses must not exceed 40% of the total area occupied by the associated principal use. For principal uses conducted primarily indoors, this calculation will be based on total gross floor area. For principal uses conducted primarily outdoors, this calculation will be based on total lot area.
- (2) An accessory use must be a permitted or conditional use in the applicable zoning district, or it must be specifically authorized as an allowed accessory use to the applicable principal use in this ordinance (see [Section 3006](#)).
- (3) The standards of this subsection do not apply to accessory dwellings, home occupations, home businesses and family childcare homes.

2005 Dimensional Standards

2005.A **Applicability.** Development must conform to the dimensional standards for the applicable zoning district (see [Section 2116](#)) unless:

- (1) A subject lot or structure is a nonconformity and the proposed development is in conformance with the requirements of [Subpart 100](#);
- (2) The applicant receives a waiver ([Section 4404](#)) or variance ([Section 4405](#)) from the Development Review Board; or
- (3) The proposed development will be approved as a planned unit development in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance.

2005.B **Principal Buildings.** Landowners may locate more than one principal building on a lot in accordance with the standards below:

- (1) The total amount of development on the lot must not exceed the maximum

density allowed in the district;

- ~~(2) There must not be more than 2 detached single or 1 two family dwelling on any lot unless approved as part of a planned unit development in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance;~~
- (3) Each principal building must meet the applicable dimensional standards of the zoning district;
- (4) The distance between new principal buildings or between a new principal building and an existing principal building must not be less than twice the side setback required in the zoning district, unless they are attached; and
- (5) Approval of multiple principal buildings on a lot will not constitute a right to separately convey those structures unless:
 - (a) The subject lot will be lawfully subdivided in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance; or
 - (b) The building will be lawfully converted to condominium ownership, which may include the subdivision of footprint lots.

2005.C **Accessory Structures.** Landowners may locate accessory structures on a lot in accordance with the standards below:

- (1) Unless otherwise specified in this ordinance, accessory structures must meet the front setback requirements for the applicable zoning district (see [Section 2116](#));
- (2) Accessory structures must be located at least 8 feet from any other structure unless they are attached to that structure;
- (3) Unless otherwise specified in this ordinance, accessory structures must not exceed a maximum height of 36 feet or the height of the associated principal building, whichever is less; and
- (4) Unless otherwise specified in this ordinance, accessory structures:
 - (a) With a footprint of not more than 120 square feet and a height of not more than 10 feet must be set back at least 4 feet from rear and side property lines, or the minimum setback requirements for the district in which they are located, whichever is less; or
 - (b) With a footprint in excess of 120 square feet or a height in excess of 10 feet be set back at least 12 feet from rear and side property lines, or the minimum setback requirements for the district in which they are located, whichever is less.

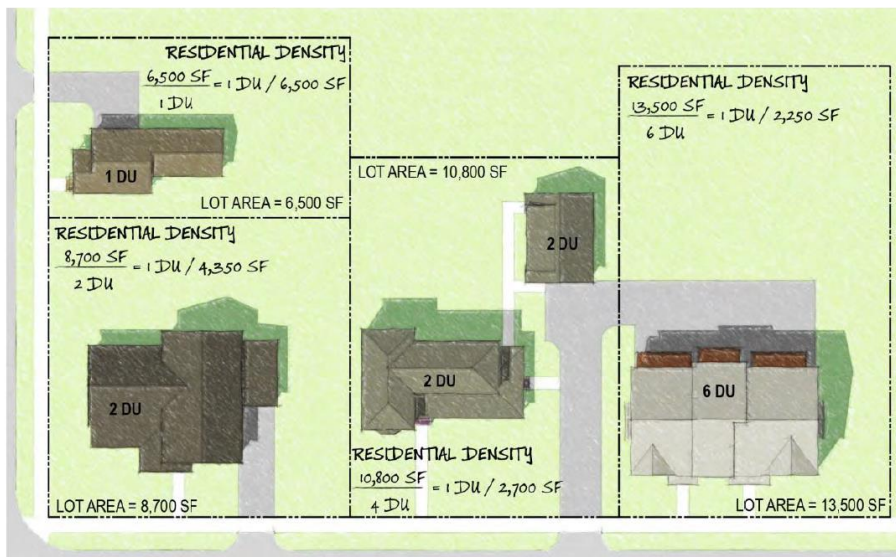
2005.D **Lot Size or Area.** Lot size will be regulated in accordance with the following:

2006 Residential Density Standards

2006.A The number of dwelling units on a lot must not exceed the maximum density specified in the applicable zoning district except:

- (1) Accessory dwellings approved under [Section 3202](#) will not count as a dwelling unit for the purposes of calculating density.
- (2) A pre-existing small lot may be developed in accordance with [Section 1303](#) irrespective of whether it will comply with the residential density standard for the applicable district.
- (3) Maximum residential density shall be based on a parcel's total acreage or square footage.
- (4) At a minimum, any parcel served by city water and sewer may be approved for up to ~~four~~ six (46) dwelling units irrespective of the district lot size provided that all other applicable standards of these regulations are met. And, any parcel served by water and sewer services may be subdivided such that up to six dwelling units are on a conforming parcel irrespective of the district density provided all other applicable standard of these regulations are met.
- (5) Calculating Lot size: each base zoning district establishes the minimum lot size required for a parcel. This standard shall be calculated in square feet of a parcel area where 1 acre equals 43,560 square feet as shown in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2- 3: Residential Density Calculation



2116 Dimensional Table

USE & DEFINITION	UC-1	UC-2	UC-3	MU-1	MU-2	MU-3	R-16	R-12	R-8	R-4	GB	IN	CIV	CON
LOTS														
Minimum lot size Inclusive of all land within the property boundaries, but excluding any land within a street right-of-way.	2,000 sf	3,000 sf	3,000 sf	4,000 sf	4,000 sf	40,800 8,712 sf	4,000 sf	4,000 sf	5,400 sf	40,800 8,712 sf	10,000 sf	20,000 sf	20,000 sf	40,000 sf
Minimum lot frontage On a maintained public or private street, excluding any frontage on limited access highways, or Class 4 roads or unimproved rights-of-way.	15 ft	30 ft	45 ft	30 ft	30 ft	60 ft	30 ft	30 ft	45 ft	60 ft	60 ft	90 ft	90 ft	180 ft
Maximum lot coverage Total amount of impervious surface as a percentage of total lot area.	100%	90%	80%	80%	80%	50%	80%	70%	60%	50%	80%	80%	40%	20%
SETBACKS														
Minimum front setback Measured from the edge of the street right-of-way, or if no right-of-way from the front lot line. For accessory structures, also see Section 3005 .	0 ft	0 ft	8 ft	8 ft	8 ft	12 ft	8 ft	12 ft	16 ft	16 ft	12 ft	16 ft	20 ft	40 ft
Minimum side setback Measured from the side lot lines. For accessory structures, also see Section 3005 .	0 ft	8 ft	8 ft	8 ft	8 ft	12 ft	8 ft	8 ft	12 ft	16 ft	12 ft	16 ft	20 ft	40 ft
Minimum rear setback Measured from the rear lot line. For accessory structures, also see Section 3005 .	0 ft	8 ft	8 ft	12 ft	12 ft	16 ft	12 ft	16 ft	16 ft	16 ft	12 ft	16 ft	20 ft	40 ft
BUILDINGS														
Build-to-line Measured as a line drawn the specified distance from and parallel to the street right-of-way.	8 ft	16 ft	24 ft	24 ft	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minimum build-to-line coverage Percentage of the build-to-line that must be covered by a principal building.	80%	65%	50%	50%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minimum principal building height Measured from the average finished grade at the base of a principal building to the eaves or the roof deck if roof is flat.	18 ft	18 ft	18 ft	18 ft	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maximum structure height Measured from the average finished grade at the base of the structure to the highest point of the structure, excluding architectural and roof-top elements listed in Paragraph 2005.G(3). For accessory structures, also see Section 3005 .	72 ft	60 ft	48 ft	36 ft	36 ft	36 ft	36 ft	36 ft	36 ft	36 ft	48 ft	48 ft	36 ft	30 ft
DENSITY														
Maximum residential density Measured as number of dwelling units per square foot of total lot area, except that accessory dwellings in accordance with Section 3202 will not be included.	no maximum	1 du per 1,200 sf no maximum	1 du per 1,800 sf	1 du per 2,100 sf	1 du per 2,700 sf	1 du per 40,800 8,712 sf	1 du per 2,700 sf	1 du per 3,600 sf	1 du per 5,400 sf	1 du per 40,800 8,712 sf	1 du per 2,100 sf	n/a	n/a	n/a

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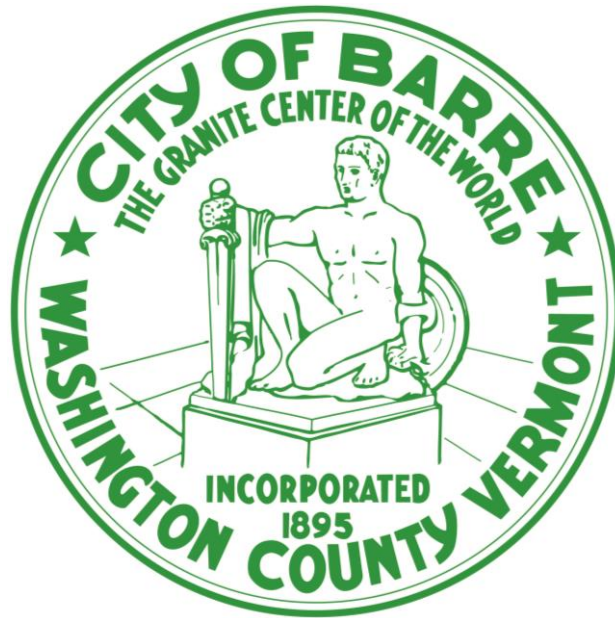
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use(s) in accordance with the following:

- (1) **Minimum Number of Spaces.** The minimum number of spaces will be as specified below unless the applicant submits a professionally prepared parking study establishing the amount of parking needed:
 - (a) **Residential Uses:** ~~2 per detached single family dwelling. For all other dwellings, 1 per unit plus 0.2 for each bedroom in excess of one (i.e., 1.2 for a two bedroom unit, 1.4 for a three bedroom unit, etc.).~~ 1 space per dwelling unit.
 - (b) **Lodging Uses:** 1.2 per guest room.
 - (c) **Commercial Uses:** 1 per 500 square feet of gross floor area (does not include outdoor use areas).
 - (d) **Industrial Uses:** 1 per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area (does not include outdoor use areas).
 - (e) **Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Civic and Community Uses:** 1 per 5 seats or 1 per 500 square feet of gross floor area if no seats.
- (2) **Maximum Number of Spaces.** The maximum number of parking spaces will be twice the minimum number of spaces based on the applicable ratio in Paragraph (1), above, unless the applicant submits a professionally prepared parking study establishing the amount of parking needed.
- (3) **Calculation of Number of Spaces.** The Zoning Administrator will determine which ratio in Paragraph (1), above, applies to a proposed use. When calculating the total number of spaces, any decimal will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. On lots with multiple units or uses, the number of spaces for all units and/or uses may be added together before rounding up any decimal.
- (4) **Modification of Number of Spaces.** The Development Review Board may increase or decrease the amount of off-street parking required if:
 - (a) The applicant submits a parking study prepared by a qualified professional demonstrating the amount of parking that will be needed;
 - (b) The applicant meets the requirements for shared parking in Subsection (D) below; or
 - (c) The applicant demonstrates that there is adequate on-street or public parking available within 1,000 feet (as measured along the sidewalk) of the proposed development to meet all or a portion of the demand.

3104.D **Shared or Off-Site Parking.** The Development Review Board may approve a cooperative parking plan to allow parking to be shared by two or more uses and/or to be provided off-site in accordance with the following:

City of Barre, Vermont



2020 City Municipal Plan

**Adopted by the
Barre City Council on September 15, 2020**

www.barrecity.org

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE & VISION

our plan for a healthy future

Why should we plan for a healthy future? Health and well-being is the common theme that emerged as we developed and updated this plan. The health of our economy, environment, neighborhoods, and city government have direct and indirect effects on the physical and mental health of city residents. And conversely, the health of residents affects many other aspects of our city. Promoting physical, mental and social health in Barre City is an investment in our future economic prosperity and revitalization efforts.

Barre City faces many challenges in planning for the future. While these may be daunting, they are not insurmountable given the assets we have to draw upon. The City has land, buildings, infrastructure, transportation systems, and an available workforce. Our community has a tradition of entrepreneurship and a strong manufacturing heritage. The Main Street reconstruction project has already built on those assets, and is injecting a positive new energy into our city, along with the construction of City Place and the redevelopment of Enterprise Aly.

To overcome the challenges facing Barre, we need to build and strengthen the connections between our many community assets. In isolation, each element of our community may be wonderful, but our community will only be more than the sum of its parts if we make it possible for our places and amenities to strengthen one another.

In practice, that means making more “places” (spaces designed for people to be in and enjoy), and reducing the number and impact of “non-places” (spaces designed for people to pass through as a means to and end). It means drawing connections between nearby assets, by making them visible to one another and making the space between them inviting to exploration. It means prioritizing connections that encourage physical, mental, and social health.

If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.

~Fred Kent

Barre City’s success depends on the support and participation of an engaged citizenry. At the core, these efforts are about investing in all of us so we can achieve our goals and improve our lives. For that reason, the over-arching purpose of this plan is to improve the health and well-being of those who live and work in Barre City.

Where are we headed? Our plan for a healthy future recognizes that Barre City needs:

- To attract and retain businesses that pay a living wage, provide health insurance benefits, and match existing levels of workforce education or provide job training.
- To attract and retain residents, particularly households with moderate to higher incomes.
- A transportation system that enables all residents to conveniently and safely travel around the community, accessing homes, jobs, schools, parks, shopping and services.
- A system of public utilities that is reliable and well maintained, that has affordable rates, and that is capable of supporting growth.
- Access to reliable, affordable and clean sources of energy.

- A quality school system that prepares students for higher education, employment and life-long learning.
- To provide the community services and amenities that foster an attractive quality of life without placing an excessive burden on taxpayers.
- Air that is safe to breathe, water that is safe to drink, land that is safe to use, and access to green spaces, parks and undeveloped areas where residents can recreate and enjoy nature.

What is the role of this city and this plan? City policies and actions can play a significant role in creating a healthy community that provides a high quality of life for all residents. Protecting public health, safety and welfare is at the core of many city policies and actions, yet previous plans did not directly address the topic.

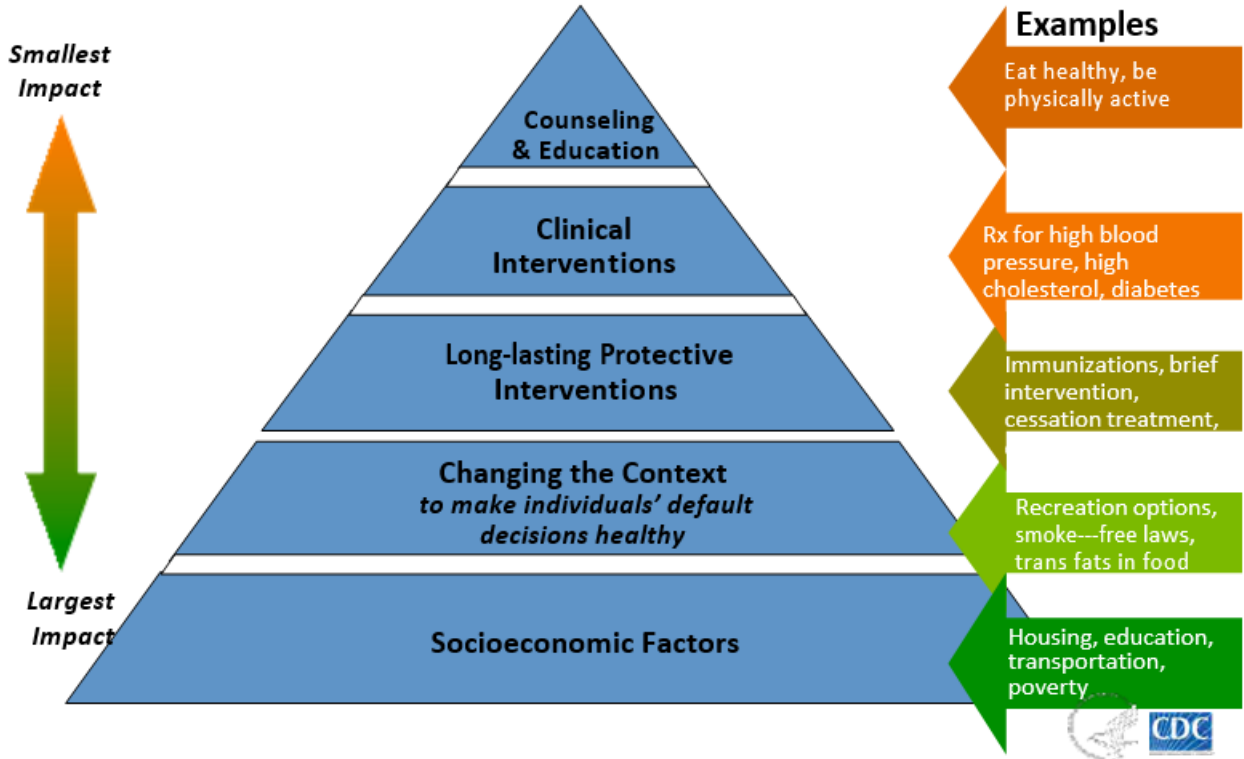
In this plan, we will continue to highlight connections between city policies and actions, and the health and well-being of residents. We have presented measurable benchmarks that can be used to evaluate how we are progressing towards our vision of a healthy future for Barre City.

Why focus on health? Health is an ongoing concern at the individual, municipal and state level. The City has recognized this focus by adding programs in the Recreation Department such as Stick and Puck, and Open Gym. Renovations to the City's pool will have great benefits for allowing a more diverse group of people, especially with a zero-entry area that will benefit seniors and the physically challenged. There is the annual Granite City 5K run, updates to the smoking policy that show the added focus. Our population includes a much higher proportion of individuals and families living below the poverty line. Barre City also has many other residents who face health disparities, including those who are elderly, disabled, and recent immigrants. Barre has seen an increase in individuals experiencing addiction, homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system. All of these groups have a greater need for healthcare and related services. The challenges we face make our city an excellent barometer of the effectiveness of initiatives and programs aimed at improving health outcomes.

Vermont ranks as one of the healthiest states in the nation, but the average Barre City resident fares less well on common measures of health than the average Vermont resident. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Health Impact Pyramid (shown on the next page) clearly shows that "Socioeconomic Factors" and "Changing the Context" have the largest impact on population health. It is these very factors that are addressed in this plan. By working to create a community with safe and affordable housing, educational opportunities and excellence, pedestrian-friendly streets, and ample recreation opportunities, for example, we can have a profound impact on the health of city residents.

What are best ways to influence the 90% non-clinical determinants of health?

CDC Health Impact Pyramid



FRAMEWORK & PROCESS

the framework for our plan

This plan includes three elements:

- **Introduction** that: presents our vision of a healthy future for Barre City; establishes the framework within which the plan was developed, and describes our planning process; and provides a snapshot of the city.
- **Strategic Plan** that: summarizes the key points about our present condition; identifies the issues and challenges we face, as well as our strengths and opportunities; establishes goals and strategies; identifies specific actions to implement the goals and strategies; and sets benchmarks by which we can measure our progress towards achieving our vision of a healthy future for Barre City.
- **Community Profile**, which serves as the foundation for the plan and which: inventories and analyzes current conditions in Barre City; and projects future trends and needs. A variety of plans, studies, maps and data are interspersed throughout the community profile.

This plan is intended to be a guide for the achievement of short-term and long-term community goals through public investments, regulations and other implementation programs. Through this plan, Barre City residents and government seek to:

- Define our vision for the city's future.
- State our shared community values.
- Balance competing interests and demands.
- Address both current and long-term needs.
- Promote appropriate revitalization, growth and development.
- Reflect regional conditions and consider regional impacts.
- Be consistent with statewide goals and policies.
- Offer specific guidance while retaining enough flexibility to be useful when faced with unforeseen circumstances.

This plan also serves as a thorough research document of the community's present condition — our issues, challenges, strengths and opportunities. While updating this plan, we inventoried existing resources and conditions, and assessed likely future trends and needs in the city, region and state. Factors we considered included the:

- Capability of land to support revitalization, growth and development in the city.
- Availability of community facilities and services necessary to support revitalization, growth and development in the city.
- Need to improve undesirable conditions, revitalize neighborhoods, and improve our built environment.
- Interrelationship and compatibility of envisioned changes with existing conditions and development patterns.
- Potential effects of envisioned changes on other policies of the city and region.

This plan follows the framework for municipal plans established in state law (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117). The strategic plan and community profile both incorporate the required elements (land use, energy, transportation, utilities and facilities, housing, economic development, rare natural and historic resources, educational facilities, and flood resiliency). Our strategic plan includes:

- Statement of objectives and policies.
- Recommended program for the implementation the stated objectives and policies.

This introduction addresses the compatibility of our plan with the plans of neighboring communities and the region, and describes our planning process. The plan is also consistent with Vermont's 14 planning goals.

our planning process

The citizens and government of Barre City have a long history of planning for the future of our city. For five decades, we have had an adopted municipal plan, which has been regularly revised and updated.

During the most recent planning process, the Planning Commission tabled at the weekly Farmer's Market in Currier Park, hosted a questionnaire on the City website, and posted regular updates on the City website, along with sharing information through traditional means and social media. The Planning Commission also reached out to existing committees, organizations, city staff and officials, and other stakeholders for direct input while updating this plan.

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing the plan, distributing the plan, holding public hearings on the plan, and submitting it to the City Council for consideration. The City Council is required to hold at least two additional hearings before adoption.

Bringing plans to reality can be achieved by passing and enforcing ordinances (regulatory) and by providing services and making public improvements (non-regulatory). Zoning and subdivision regulations are two important mechanisms for implementing the vision for revitalization, growth and development set forth in the city plan. Barre City has had a zoning law in place for more than 60 years. Our land use regulations were rewritten in 2019 that combined the zoning and subdivision ordinances into a single Unified Development Ordinance.

Barre City has also has a long history of non-regulatory actions that support the vision for revitalization, growth and development set forth in the city plan. Most recently, the city has:

- Installed energy-efficient boilers in City Hall.
- Undertook various brownfield assessments and clean-up of polluted sites, such as Enterprise Aly and the Keith Avenue site that resulted in redeveloped parking lots.
- Received grant funds that helped the Harrington Avenue neighborhood with flood resiliency by removing a total of 5 houses and expanded the floodplain in that area.
- Removed 2 at-risk homes on Hilltop Avenue that were sliding due to the increased rains received over the years.

This plan recommends additional regulatory and non-regulatory actions to continue the substantial progress we have made in recent years towards revitalizing our city (see Section 2).

our plan in a regional context

While the primary purpose of this plan is to guide future revitalization, growth and development of Barre City, we recognize that our community is part of a larger region. Our decisions can affect our neighbors, and likewise their decisions can affect Barre City.

Any application for development that is required to obtain an Act 250 permit from the Natural Resources Board must demonstrate conformance with the City's Plan, which allows us to achieve our goals of this Plan. While only a few Act 250 permits are issued or amended each year within our borders, the Barre City Council and Barre City Planning Commission are statutory parties and may participate in the permit process to ensure larger developments complement our public utilities, economy, historic buildings, neighborhoods, transportation and community needs and conforms with the municipal plan's goals and policies.

Development of public utility facilities within the City of Barre are required to obtain a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Utility Commission, otherwise referred to as the Section 248 process. Unlike Act 250, these types of development are not subject to the local permit approval process. The Barre City municipal plan is given "due consideration" in this permitting process and like Act 250 the City Council and Planning Commission are granted interested party status in the permit proceedings. The City of Barre may, however, choose to seek a Determination of Energy Compliance for the Barre City Municipal Plan from the regional planning commission, providing the City with a stronger voice ("Substantial Deference") in state permitting process which is tasked with determining where energy projects should and should not be sited.

Notwithstanding other provisions of this plan, developments in neighboring municipalities subject to Act 250 review will not be found consistent with this plan to the extent that such developments would have an undue adverse impact upon municipal utilities, facilities, or services in the City of Barre or the quality of life of principally residential streets within the city, including but not limited to impacts from low density and trip-generating residential and non-residential streets instead of State routes. The City may request that such developments take appropriate measures to ensure that any increased volume of vehicular traffic on City streets does not adversely impact street maintenance, air quality, levels of noise, speeding, or property values.

As critical links to the Interstate Highway System, it is further in the interest of the City of Barre's economic well-being to maintain State Routes 62 and 63 as free-flowing limited access highways between the City limits and US Interstate Highway 89 by discouraging the addition of new intersections and encouraging necessary improvements to maintain the functionality of existing intersections. Developments in neighboring municipalities will not be found to be consistent with this plan to the extent that such developments would have an undue adverse impact on the functionality of Routes 62 and 63. The City may request that such development stake appropriate measures to ensure a high level of service to and from the City.

As part of updating this plan, the Barre City Planning Commission considered the Berlin Town Plan, the Barre Town Plan and the Central Vermont Regional Plan. No inconsistencies among these plans and our plan for Barre City appear to exist.

Berlin Town Plan. Berlin is west of Barre City. Route 302 and Route 62 connect the two municipalities, and the Stevens Branch of the Winooski River flows from Barre City into Berlin. The forested hillside south of Route 62 continues across the city line into Berlin.

The Berlin Town Plan was most recently revised and readopted in 2018. Both plans recognize the forested hillside south of Route 62 as a sensitive natural resource through planning areas the recommend low-density residential, conservation or recreation uses. Both plans share a similar concern about poorly-managed highway commercial businesses along the Route 302 corridor, and recommend actions to revise regulations to facilitate appropriately-scaled and -designed development. Both plans also speak to the critical need to maintain and restore the natural floodplain along the Stevens Branch near the municipal boundary. Berlin similarly looks to aggressively plan for economic growth, and seeks to be more pedestrian friendly, with walkable neighborhoods that bring together commerce and community.

Barre Town Plan. Barre Town surrounds most of the city, reflecting the fact the city was separated out from the town in 1895. Route 302 and Route 14 serve as major transportation routes between our two communities. In addition, numerous side streets and neighborhoods extend over municipal lines.

Our two communities have a long history of sharing resources including wastewater, water, stormwater utilities and school operations. Many residents have lived in both communities and many facilities, services and amenities located in Barre City are used by both town and city residents.

Most of the land in Barre Town that adjoins the city is zoned residential, with the transportation corridors of retail, commercial or industrial. Barre Town recently updated and adopted their Municipal Plan on June 23, 2020, and it recommends that most of the land along the city line continue in its present use as low density residential neighborhoods. Along the highway corridors this plan recommends a reduction in the density and intensity of use closer to the city line.

Central Vermont Regional Plan. Barre City is an active member of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, which includes 23 municipalities in Washington and Orange counties. CVRPC staff reviewed this plan before it was adopted and found it to be compatible with the regional plan and state planning requirements. A central theme of the 2016 Regional Plan is the “preservation and enhancement of the quality of life for all Central Vermont residents,” which aligns with our focus on a “healthy future for Barre City.”

OVERVIEW OF BARRE CITY

Barre City, formed and separated out from Barre Town in 1895, is a community of four square miles and 8,500 residents located in Central Vermont. Our city developed and became known as the “Granite Center of the World” in the late-19th century when the arrival of the railroad in 1875 spurred the rapid growth of the granite industry. Between 1880 and 1890, Barre’s population more than tripled as stoneworkers from around the world migrated here with their families. These skilled craftsmen extracted, cut, shaped, polished and sculpted our “Barre gray” granite into building materials, monuments and memorials that were exported around the country and world. The booming granite industry fueled the development of Barre City. As is the case with many American cities that relied on a single industry, our once vibrant community faced a challenging period of economic decline and stagnation when the granite industry began to contract in the mid-20th century.

Barre City is located at the junction of two valleys, carrying the Stevens and Jail Branches of the Winooski River. The Stevens Branch runs through our downtown, with the rail line and Route 302 sharing the relatively narrow valley. The valley floor is densely developed with residential neighborhoods extending up into the flat-topped, gently rolling hills surrounding downtown Barre City. To the north and west, where the terrain is steeper, the hillsides remain largely undeveloped and forested. The southwestern edge of the city has a more rural character, with farmland extending over the city line from a portion of Barre Town that remains largely agricultural.

Barre City is a 10-minute drive from both Exits 6 and 7 on Interstate 89, and is 15 minutes from Montpelier. U.S. Route 302, a major east-west route through New England brings travelers through downtown Barre City where the highway serves as our main street. These two access points in and out of the City allow for great flow of travelers to and from Barre. Vermont Rail runs through Barre City to Montpelier where it connects to New England Central Railroad. Many of our industrial properties abut the rail line and have the potential for rail service. The regional Knapp Airport is located four miles outside the city. There is public transit service linking Barre City to neighboring communities. The city’s wastewater treatment plant has 900,000 gallons per day of uncommitted capacity, and our water treatment facility has nearly 2 million gallons per day of excess capacity.

Barre City continues its revitalization efforts for future growth and development, and we are actively working to encourage private investment in our city. We completed a \$17.5 million reconstruction of North Main Street in 2011, that replaced the public infrastructure below and above ground in our downtown business district. This project was a complete face-lift for downtown Barre City and is the cornerstone of our revitalization plans. And it is working – only a few months after work was completed on North Main Street, construction of City Place which houses VTrans with a 15-year lease agreement, and rehabilitation of the Blanchard Block, that tenants include retail, medical and dental office, lawyers and accountants. Our successful pursuit of a TIF (tax increment financing) district in 2012 has made it possible for the city to fund other critical improvements downtown and keep our revitalization efforts moving forward.

Staff Updates – Week ending May 3, 2024

- The Development Review Board met and approved the 2 requests at their hearing last week, for a façade improvement at 168 N Main Street (formerly Coins and Hobbies building); and a partial demolition of a garage at 16 Merchant Street.
- There is one application for the June DRB hearing for a second curbcut request for a property off Berlin Street.
- The assessors and reappraisers are very busy doing work at properties throughout the city.
- The permitting office continues to be very busy with applications –the usual decks, porches and sheds are trickling in. Many incoming requests for information on fencing as well.
- I continue to work on Buyout application paperwork with several properties throughout the city. There is one program that could expedite 3 properties through the buyout process much quicker, called the Swift Current Program. Otherwise, of the total 26 properties (including 5 landslide properties) that the owners have been approached by the City Manager regarding a potential buyout, I have received the 3 Swift Current, and 16 regular hazard mitigation buyouts. Last week one day was spent taking photographs of all of the properties that I could, and submitting those with the applications previously forwarded.
- Between the Executive Director of BADC and me, we were able to submit a full application for the utilities development of the 34-acre parcel now known as the Prospect Heights Development for a total funding request of \$2,875,870; we submitted on Wednesday afternoon. We are one of many entities applying the Northern Borders Regional Commission for the Spring 2024 Catalyst Program. We now wait for review of applications and who gets awarded.