

Springfield Planning Commission Report on the proposed 2024 Springfield Town Plan

The Springfield Town Plan was last adopted by the Selectboard on November 11, 2019. Under Vermont law, town plans are effective for eight years, when they will automatically expire unless updated by the Planning Commission and readopted by the Selectboard.

Over the last two years, the Springfield Planning Commission has met monthly and worked on the town plan update. The update incorporates new data, eliminates outdated content, and revises chapters to reflect current conditions and new directions. Readers of the updated town plan will recognize much of the basic format and writing and easily understand this is an update, not a new document. A few caveats.

- The town plan was last adopted a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic and all the ensuing demographic and economic changes we have witnessed over the last five years. This version of the town plan recognizes concepts like remote work, people migrating from cities to rural Vermont, and other pandemic-amplified economic and social trends impacting Springfield.
- The town plan does not include the Energy Chapter but references the 2019 Town Plan Enhanced Energy Chapter. Springfield planners are waiting for renewable energy datasets expected to be released in 2024. Once we receive these data, the Planning Commission will collaborate with the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission to create an updated Energy Plan (not chapter). Moving forward, it is assumed the town plan and energy plan will be updated on a different schedule.
- The town plan overhauled the chapter recommendations reducing the total number of goals and objectives, being more precise in defining those goals and objectives, and setting specific target dates for implementation. The town plan update emphasizes realistic goal-setting and accountability.
- The town plan is aligned with the goals and objectives listed in the Selectboard and Town Manager's 2023 Strategic Plan. The strategic plan establishes the direction of our community leaders and the proposed 2024 Town Plan supports that work.

This town plan update does not propose changing anything that could positively or negatively alter the tax base and property values or change public facility needs.

This town plan is consistent with the goals listed in state statute under 24 V.S.A. § 4302. The updated town plan emphasizes progress toward attaining all these goals. There is no goal, as codified in the state statute, that the Planning Commission felt was irrelevant or unattainable.

Once adopted, the town plan will continue to enable the town to seek project grants, enroll in various state and federal programs, and change its land-use development regulations.

Copies of the proposed town plan and this report, as Vermont law requires, may be obtained by visiting the Planning & Zoning Office, the Town Clerk's Office, or the Town website at springfieldvt.gov. Anyone with questions or comments about the town plan update may contact Planning & Zoning (376.6102 / toszoning@vermontel.net).

January 12, 2024