



Project Review Committee Purpose & Objective Statement

The purpose of the Project Review Committee (a WRC standing committee) is set out in the Commission Bylaws: to monitor staff work related to project application reviews identified as having potential Regional Importance or Substantial Regional Impact, to recommend positions to the Executive Board and full commission on policy matters, and to develop and recommend action on applications. The Committee reviews applications submitted under, but not limited, to Act 250, §248, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Consistent with this purpose, the Committee's objective and statutory responsibilities include:

A. Nature of Projects and Proposals Reviewed

1. Review of proposals and project applications identified by the Committee as having potential Regional Importance, as defined in the Windham Regional Plan, such projects being those that require regional resources, services, facilities, or that because of their size, location, or type will:

- Benefit the region as a whole;
- Be necessary to the well-being of the region;
- Be responsible for impacts to regional resources, services or facilities;
- Affect more than one town; or
- Have cumulative regional impacts as the result of multiple projects or ongoing development.

2. Review projects identified by the Committee as having issues related to Regional Plan Conformity, as defined in the Windham Regional Plan. These would include developments of Regional Importance, both public and private, including:

- Those that are located outside the region but affect it in some manner
- Those that continue to cause ongoing concern to the region or its communities.

3. Projects identified by the Committee as having potential Substantial Regional Impact, as yet not defined in the Windham Regional Plan but required by 24 VSA 4345a(17).

4. Projects identified by the Committee as being potentially precedent-setting.

B. Nature and Scope of Reviews.

1. Review staff work for proposals and project applications determined to have Regional Importance and make determinations as needed to implement the guidelines for development review as set out in the Regional Plan and reproduced with this statement. (Development Review, 2014 Regional Plan pages 57-59)

2. Recommend position statements to the Executive Board for major projects or issues when the Committee determines that the Commission's staff testimony should have the support of the Executive Board.
3. The Project Review Committee can recommend the need for cumulative impact reviews to the District Environmental Commission and can facilitate such reviews by undertaking or assisting with impact studies and coordinating review with affected member towns.
4. Review issues resulting from conflicts between a municipal plan and the Regional Plan, and where a development proposal, if implemented, will cause the implementation of one plan to significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the other plan. In such cases all position statements or testimony asserting "Substantial Regional Impact" shall be authorized by a vote of the full Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Regional Plan and in accord with 24 V.S.A. §4345a(17).

C. Administrative.

1. Identify improvements to the Regional Plan to better effect its implementation and administration.
2. Identify and recommend policy or procedural changes and/or improvements to the appropriate regulatory body relating to applications and issues brought before the Committee.

Operating Procedures:

Some proposed projects may be directed to the Committee for review by WRC staff or accepted for review at the request of a member town. Also, prior to filing an Act 250 application or other project proposal, a developer contemplating a project of Regional Importance may request a meeting with WRC staff, the Committee Chair and, upon recommendation, with the full Committee, for the purpose of discussing the project's concept, potential regional impacts and issues related to project conformance to the Regional Plan and any applicable Municipal Plan(s). Once an application or proposal is filed, staff and the Committee will rely solely on the information included in the application to conduct the review and will notify the applicant, District Environmental Commission, or other reviewing entity, if additional information is needed in order to complete the formal review process.

1. Following initial presentation by staff and consideration by the Committee Chair, the Committee Chair shall make a preliminary determination on potential Regional Impacts of a proposed project and set it as an agenda item. The Committee shall inform and solicit comments from WRC Commissioners and other officials from the town(s) where the project is proposed as well as those from other potentially affected town(s). Time permitting, and at the discretion of the Committee Chair, members of the public may participate.
2. Review all projects and applications according to the guidelines for development review set out in the Windham Regional Plan.

3. WRC testimony on all applications shall be presented by the Executive Director or the staff person designated by the Executive Director.
4. The Committee may make site inspections during the course of its work.
5. The Committee will operate by consensus unless a Committee member calls for a formal vote. In such cases, voting will be by those Regional Commissioners in attendance, who have annual appointments to the Committee.
6. Staff is responsible for presenting initial analysis and opinions for Committee review and formation of conclusions.
7. The Committee meets periodically on call of the Committee Chair in consultation with the staff.

Reviewed and updated: December 7, 2021
Approved by the Executive Board: January 11, 2022