



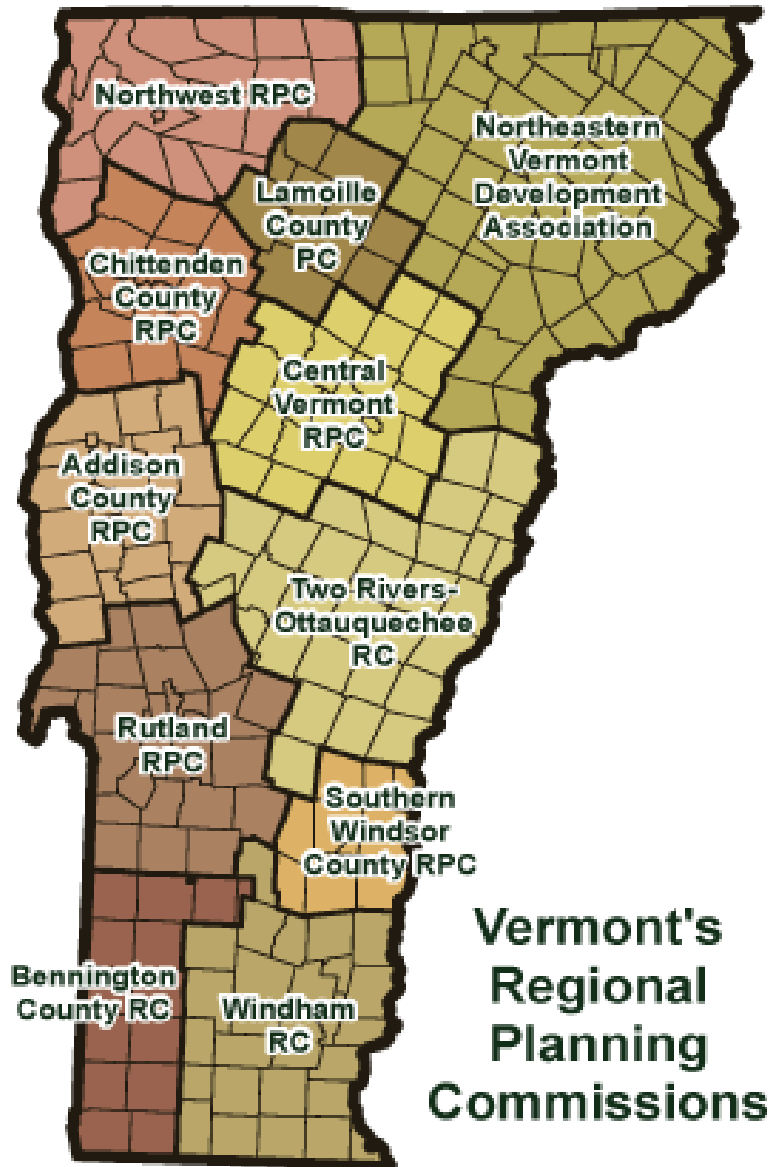
2026 Windham Regional Plan Update

Public Informational Meetings

May 20, 2026

Windham Regional Commission

- Serve 27 towns in Windham, Bennington, and Windsor Counties
- Assist towns to provide effective local governance and work collaboratively with them to address regional issues
- Technical resource for all areas of planning, grant management, and assistance in meeting state and federal requirements



Best known for town technical assistance & administrative support.

- Town plan updates
- Town zoning updates
- Brownfield assessment & remediation
- Bridge & culvert inventories
- Speed & traffic studies
- Bicycle & pedestrian counts
- Town emergency preparedness & emergency management director education
- Road foremen meetings/education
- Town energy planning support
- Town local hazard mitigation planning & project development/application
- Town flood hazard bylaw updates & floodplain administrator education
- GIS & mapping
- Town natural resource planning
- Town infrastructure planning
- Support for town project grant administration
- Town disaster recovery support
- Town Act 250 & Section 248 engagement support

What is the Windham Regional Plan?

- Last adopted on July 29, 2025
- Provides policy guidance on growth and development in the region
- Establishes basis for WRC actions and work program priorities
- Serves as a policy basis for WRC participation in reviewing Act 250 and Section 248 projects that are regionally significant
- **Advisory only: WRC has no permitting or regulatory authority. Regional plans have same standing as town plans in Act 250 and Section 248 proceedings.**



WINDHAM REGIONAL PLAN

Adopted September 30, 2014



Windham Regional Commission
139 Main Street, Suite 505
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 257-4547
www.windhamregional.org



Act 181 and Regional Plans

- Act 181 passed in 2024 and makes major changes to Vermont's land use planning and regulatory requirements
- Required updates to Regional Plans:
 - Statewide future land use categories
 - Regional and municipal housing targets
 - Consider environmental benefits and burdens
- Updated plans must be adopted by 12/31/2026
- Plans reviewed and approved by the new State Land Use Review Board



Act 181 FAQs

- Regional Land Use Map does not relate to Tier 3 or the Road Rule. The Land Use Review Board is responsible for mapping Tier 3 areas and the rulemaking process.
- Areas mapped as “Rural – Conservation” are not the same as Tier 3 areas and it does not mean these areas must be conserved.
- Regional future land use map is not regulatory and does not change or supersede municipal land use regulations.



Act 181 Proposed Reforms

- Senate Bill 325 - passed Senate 3/27/26
 - Delays implementation of Road Rule & Tier 3 until 2030
- Passed by House 5/6/26
 - Latest version would fully repeal Road Rule & Tier 3 provisions
 - Appears to be support in Senate for this version

Role of the regional plan in WRC engagement in Act 250 applications.

- Like towns, we are included in all notices about Act 250 regardless of project size.
 - The regional plan sets the standard by which the WRC evaluates projects for Substantial Regional Impact.
 - This determination influences how we engage in Act 250 & Section 248 applications.
- Projects of Substantial Regional Impact are 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;
 - Be located outside the region but affect it in some manner;
 - Affect more than one town;
 - Continue to cause ongoing concern to the region or its communities; or
 - Have cumulative regional impacts as the result of multiple projects or ongoing development.

WRC Engagement in Act 250 & Section 248

- Project Review Process

<https://windhamregional.org/programs/project-review-program/>

- Project Review Committee – agendas & minutes

<https://windhamregional.org/committees/project-review-committee/>

- Act 250 Database

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/anr/act250/default.aspx>

- Vermont Public Utility Commission – ePUC

<https://epuc.vermont.gov/>

2026 Regional Plan Updates

Land Use Chapter Updates

- Updated existing future land use district descriptions to use the new Act 181 regional future land use categories.
- Updated regional future land use map using new categories and held meetings with towns to review draft maps and make revisions as needed.
- Added background information on Act 181 and explanation on the connection between regional future land use map and Act 250 jurisdiction and State Designation Program
- Land use goals and policies from 2025 Plan remain mostly unchanged

Act 181 Regional Future Land Use Areas



- Downtown and Village Centers
- Planned Growth Areas
- Village Areas
- Transition and Infill Area
- Resource-Based Recreation Areas
- Enterprise
- Hamlet
- Rural – General
- Rural - Agricultural and Forestry
- Rural - Conservation



Downtown Centers and Village Centers

Mixed-use historic town centers that include commercial, residential and civic uses.



Planned Growth Areas & Village Areas

Existing settlement and future growth areas adjacent to downtown and village centers with higher concentrations of population, housing, and employment.



Enterprise Areas

Locations of high economic activity and employment, such as industrial parks.



Resource-Based Recreation Areas

Large-scale recreational facilities often concentrated around ski resorts with infrastructure, jobs, and housing to support recreational activities.



Transition and Infill Areas

Areas of existing or planned commercial, office, mixed-use development outside of downtown or village centers. Must have water or wastewater infrastructure or plans to extend services to these areas.



Rural – General

Low density residential areas that can also include commercial development that is compatible with existing character, productive lands, and natural areas.



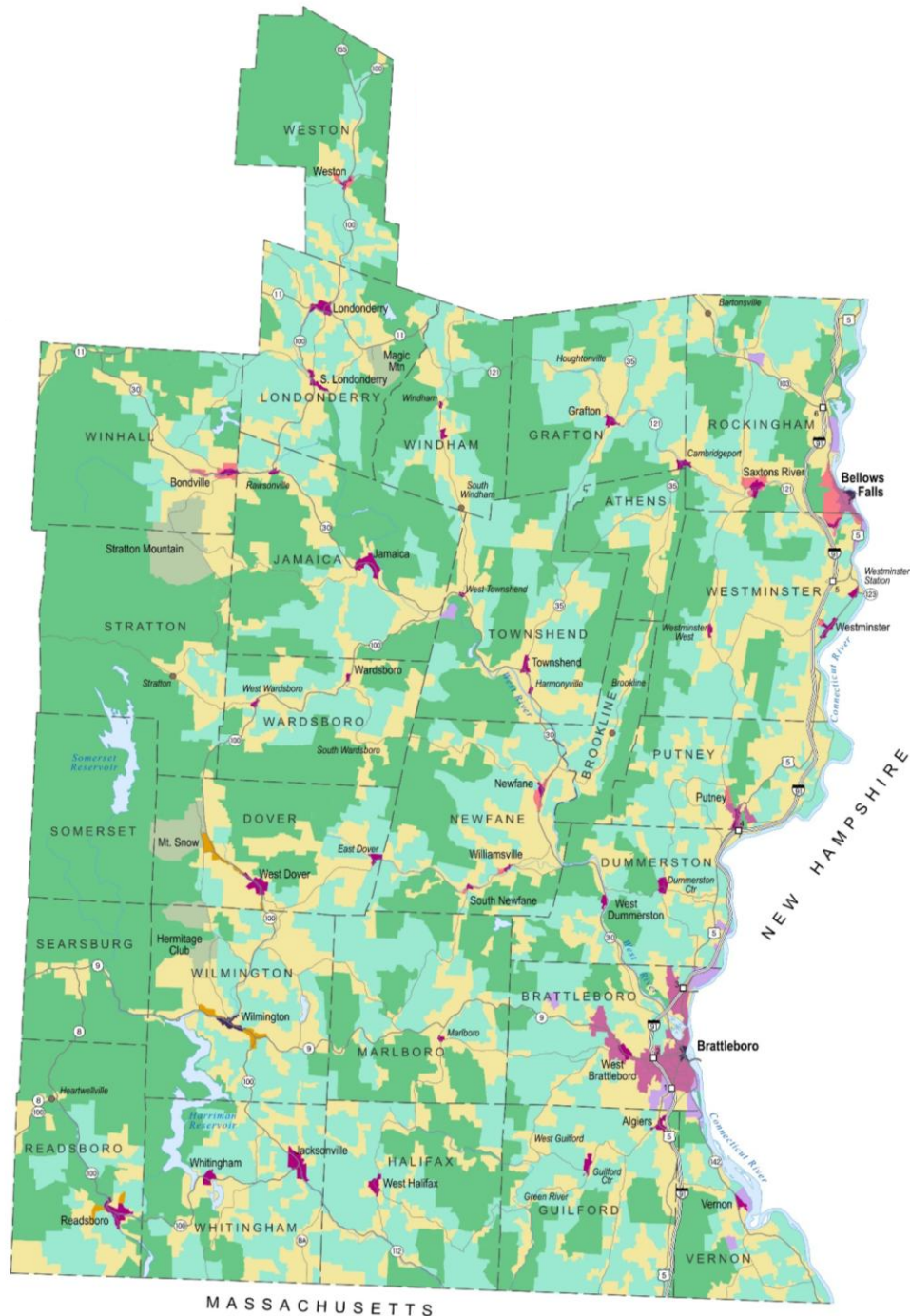
Rural - Agricultural and Forestry

Blocks of forest or farmland that sustain resource industries. Also can include low and very low density residential uses.



Rural – Conservation

Lands with ecological value and require special protection due to their uniqueness, fragility, or ecological importance. Any development in these areas should have a minimal impact on natural resources. ****Not the same as Tier 3***



MASSACHUSETTS

Future Land Use

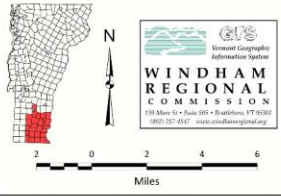
DRAFT PROPOSED 5/15/2026

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown Center Village Center Planned Growth Area Village Area Transition or Infill Area Enterprise Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource-based Recreation Area Rural General Rural Agriculture and Forestry Rural Conservation Hamlet |
|--|---|

Mapping Considerations

- Statute definitions and criteria for the different future land use districts
- Mapping methodology developed by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Natural resources and other development constraints
- Existing development patterns and infrastructure availability
- Current 2025 Windham Regional Future Land Use Map
- Town Plan Future Land Use Maps and Zoning Maps

2025 Windham Regional Plan



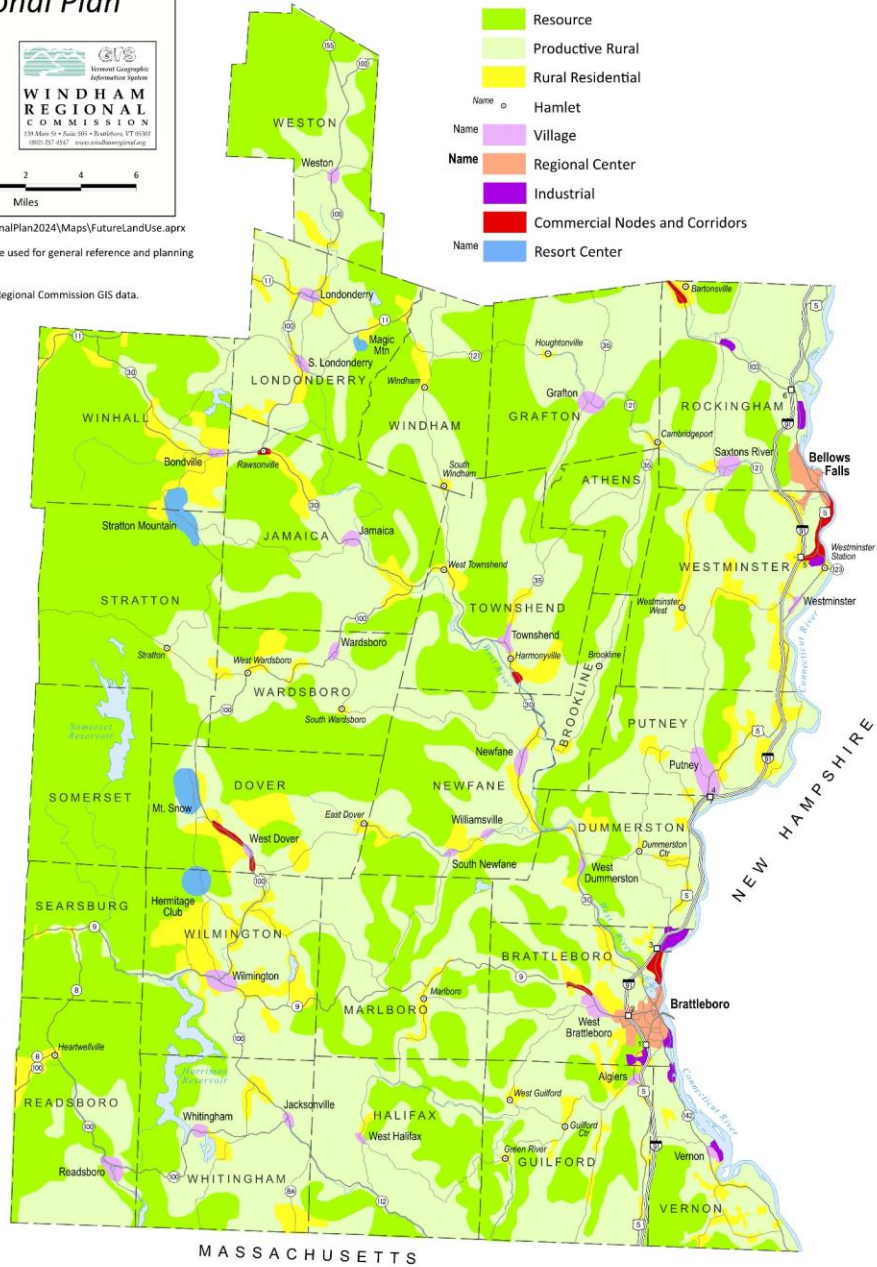
August 2024; u:\GIS\RegionalPlan2024\Maps\FutureLandUse.aprx

Note: This map should be used for general reference and planning purposes only.

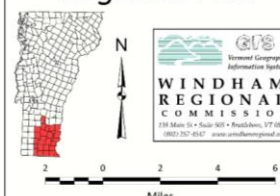
Data source: Windham Regional Commission GIS data.

Proposed Land Use

- Resource
- Productive Rural
- Rural Residential
- Name ○ Hamlet
- Name ○ Village
- Name ○ Regional Center
- Industrial
- Commercial Nodes and Corridors
- Resort Center



2026 Windham Regional Plan



May 2026; U:\GIS\regional_plan_2026\Maps\FutureLandUse.aprx:

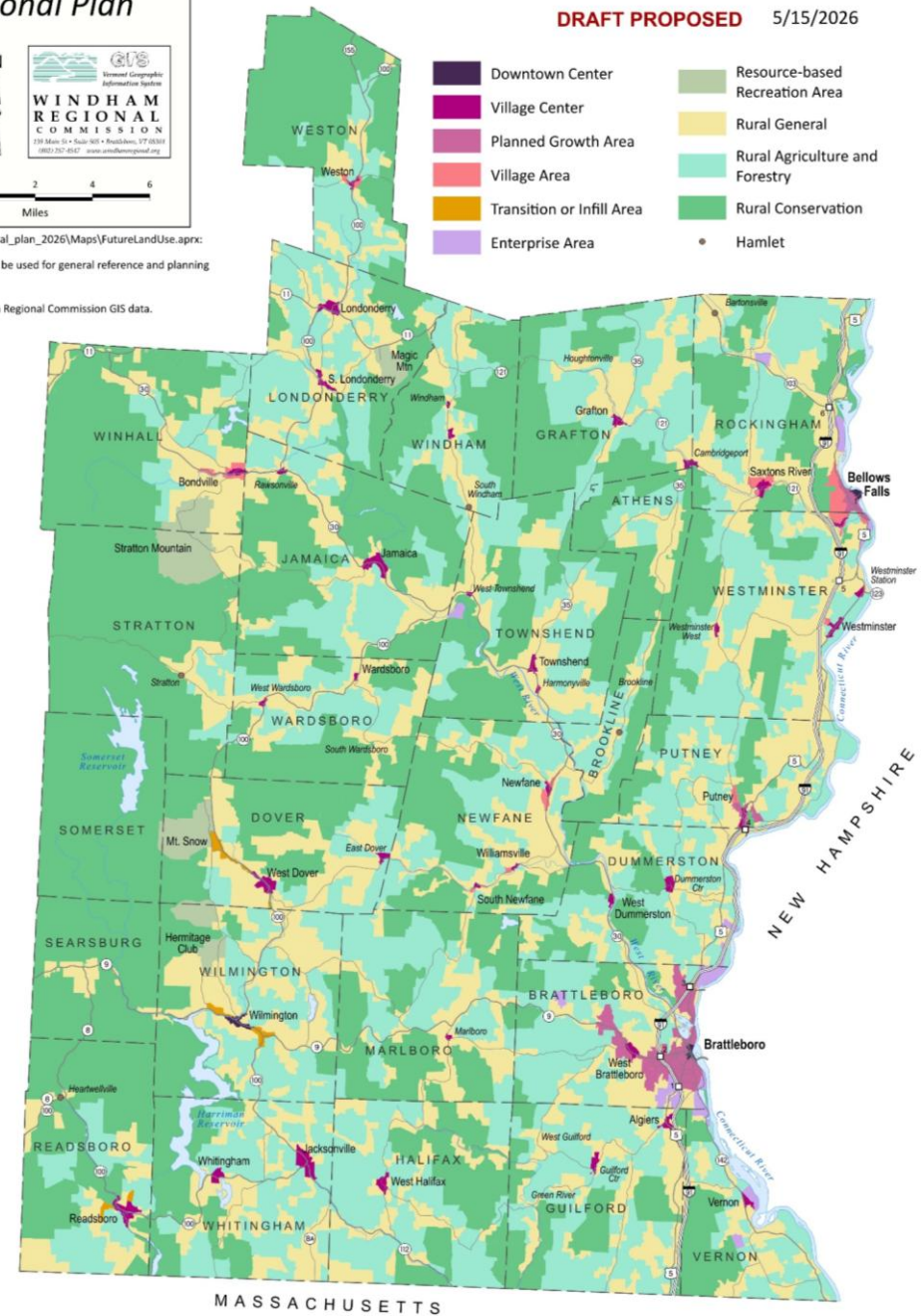
Note: This map should be used for general reference and planning purposes only.

Data source: Windham Regional Commission GIS data.

Future Land Use

DRAFT PROPOSED 5/15/2026

- Downtown Center
- Village Center
- Planned Growth Area
- Village Area
- Transition or Infill Area
- Enterprise Area
- Resource-based Recreation Area
- Rural General
- Rural Agriculture and Forestry
- Rural Conservation
- Name ○ Hamlet



Act 250 - Tiers and Responsibilities

Regional Planning Commissions

Tier 1

- ✓ RPCs mapping includes Tier 1A & 1B eligible areas: Centers, Planned Growth Area, Village Area
- ✓ Tier 1B provides 50-unit exemption
- ✓ Tier 1A provides full exemption

LURB

Tier 2

- ✓ Tier 2 is generally “status quo”
- ✓ Road rule – rulemaking by LURB

LURB

Tier 3 (critical natural resources)

- ✓ The Land Use Review Board is responsible for Tier 3 mapping and rulemaking

State Designation Program

CENTERS: Downtown Centers and Village Centers

NEIGHBORHOODS:

Planned Growth Areas and Village Areas

BENEFITS:

- Tax credit funding
- State grant funding priority
- Water/Wastewater permit fee reduction



Act 181 Framework

Land Use Plans / Designation & Investment / Act 250 Regulation



This table represents land use, designation, and Act 250 jurisdiction categories, not land area acreage or percentage of land area.

2026 Regional Plan Updates

Housing Chapter Updates

- Regional housing targets from Vermont Housing & Finance Agency
 - Housing affordability
 - Unit size
 - Geographic location
- Municipal housing targets
 - WRC disaggregated regional targets to each town based on existing population and dwelling units, and infrastructure capacity
 - Municipal targets were reviewed with towns along with draft land use maps
- *Regional and municipal housing targets are provided for planning purposes only*

Only a goal to provide needed housing!

Towns can choose to do something to encourage more housing or do nothing.

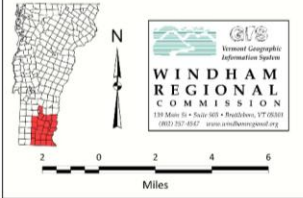
Windham Region Housing Targets			
2030		2050	
Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
2,571	3,730	7,993	15,635

2026 Regional Plan Updates

Environmental Benefits and Burdens




- RPCs are required to consider the environmental benefits and burdens of proposed Regional Plans
- Analysis of census tracts that meet “environmental justice focus population” definition in statute
- Analysis of the policies in the plan that promote and encourage environmental benefits and discourage or mitigate environmental burdens

2026 Windham Regional Plan



Environmental Justice Focus Populations

Census tracts with:

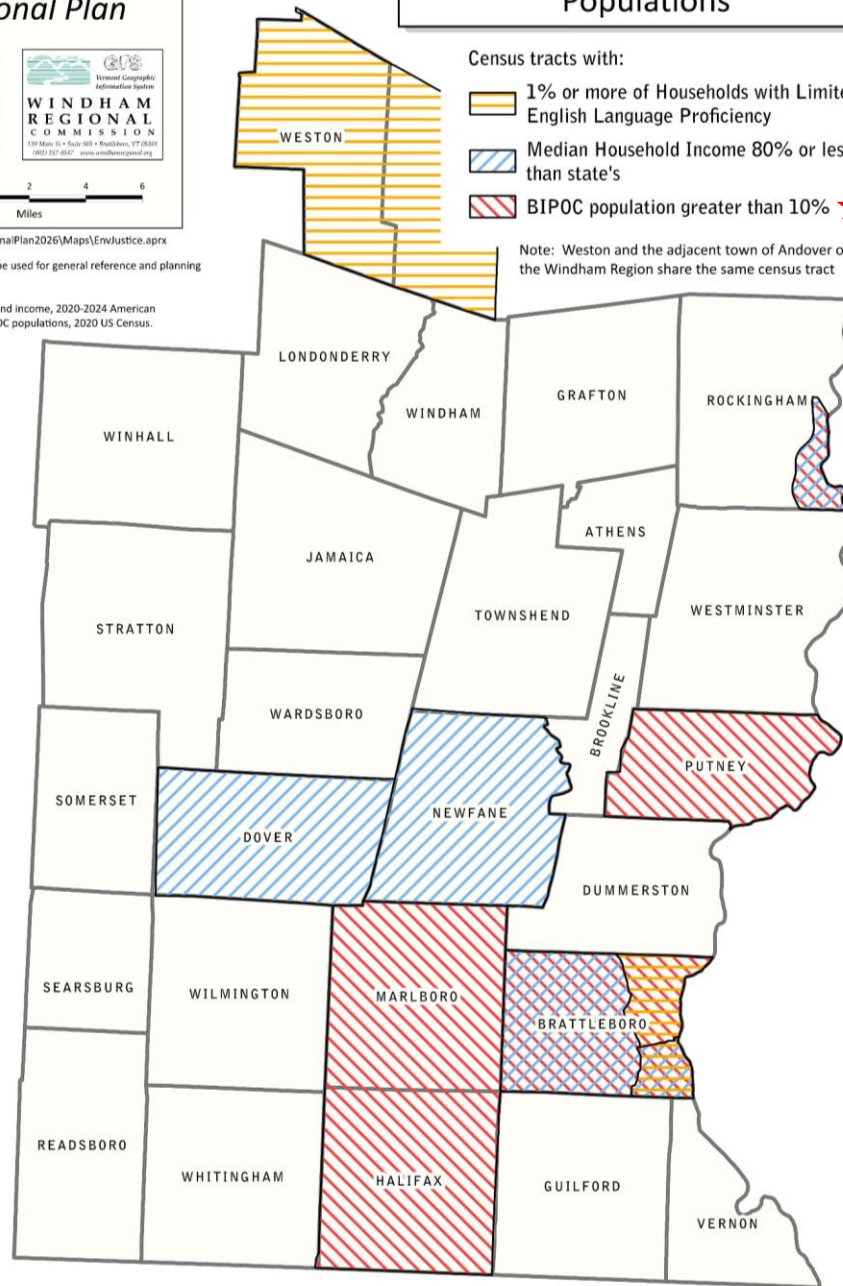
-  1% or more of Households with Limited English Language Proficiency
-  Median Household Income 80% or less than state's
-  BIPOC population greater than 10% ★

March 2026; u:\GIS\RegionalPlan2026\Maps\EnvJustice.aprx

Note: This map should be used for general reference and planning purposes only.

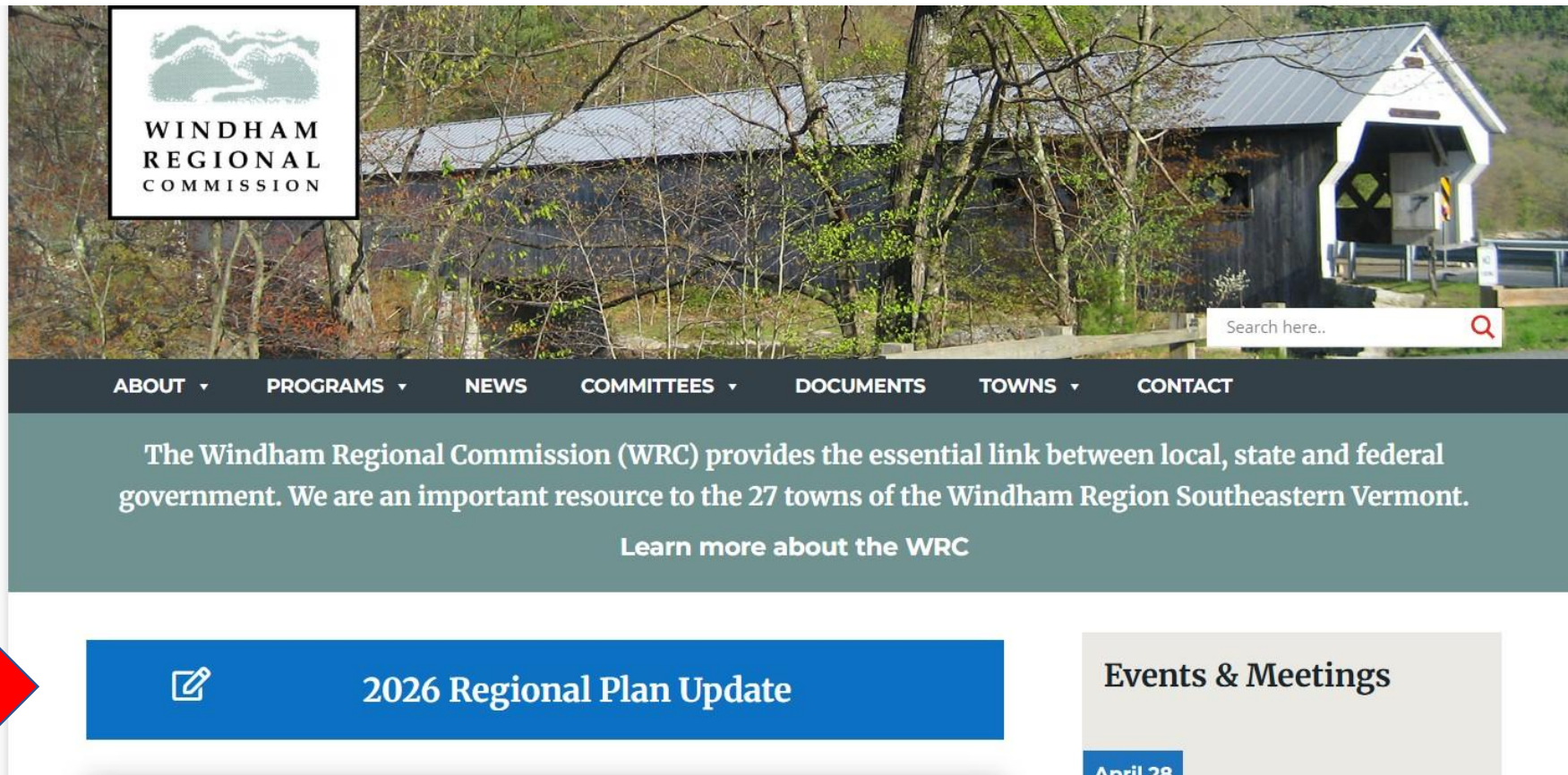
Data source: language and income, 2020-2024 American Community Survey; BIPOC populations, 2020 US Census.

Note: Weston and the adjacent town of Andover outside the Windham Region share the same census tract



Where Can I Review the Draft Plan?

Windham Regional Commission Website: <https://windhamregional.org/>



Draft Regional Plan Text

WRC is working on updates to the Windham Regional Plan to address Act 181 requirements. Draft text is available here for review. Text changes are shown in track changes for ease of review. Drafts will be finalized for submittal to the Land Use Review Board in late May 2026. In the meantime, comments or questions can be directed to asabetto@windhamregional.org.

- [Chapter 1](#), Introduction
- [Chapter 2](#), Regional Profile
- [Chapter 3](#), Land Use
- [Chapter 4](#), Natural Resources
- [Chapter 5](#), Transportation
- [Chapter 6](#), Community Utilities, Facilities, and Services
- [Chapter 7](#), Energy
- [Chapter 8](#), Housing
- [Chapter 9](#), Economic Development
- [Chapter 10](#), Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Resources
- [Chapter 11](#), Implementation
- [Appendix A](#), Equity and Environmental Justice
- [Appendix B](#), Regional LEAP Targets
- [Appendix C](#), Regional Energy Use and Targets Methodology
- [Appendix D](#), Municipal Energy Data Analysis and Targets
- [Appendix E](#), Regional and Municipal Housing Allocation Methodologies
- [Appendix F](#), Implementation Matrix
- Regional Plan Maps: The maps from the current (2025) Regional Plan, except the Regional Future Land Use Map, will be used for the 2026 plan update and can be viewed [here](#). For the 2026 draft Regional Future Land Use Map, please see below.

Draft Regional Future Land Use Maps and Town Meetings

WRC has completed a draft update of the Windham Regional Future Land Use Map to address Act 181 requirements:

- **Draft Regional Future Land Use Interactive Map:** [link](#), most current
- **Draft Regional Future Land Use PDF Map:** [link](#), last updated April 22, 2026

WRC is meeting with each town in the Windham Region to review the draft regional future land use map. Upcoming meeting dates and the draft maps for individual towns in the region can be viewed below.

Upcoming Public Meetings & Hearings

- Public Informational Meetings
 - May 7th – In-person Meeting, Winston Prouty, Brattleboro
 - May 20th – Virtual Public Meeting
- *Land Use Review Board Pre-Application Submittal: June*
- Public Hearing #1: August (TBD)
- *Plan updates based on LURB and public comments*
- Public Hearing # 2: October/November (TBD)
- *WRC Considers Plan Adoption: November/December*

How Can I Provide Comments?

Contact:

Matt Bachler, Senior Planner

mbachler@windhamregional.org

802-257-4547, ext. 112

Regional Plan Update Website:

<https://windhamregional.org/act-181>