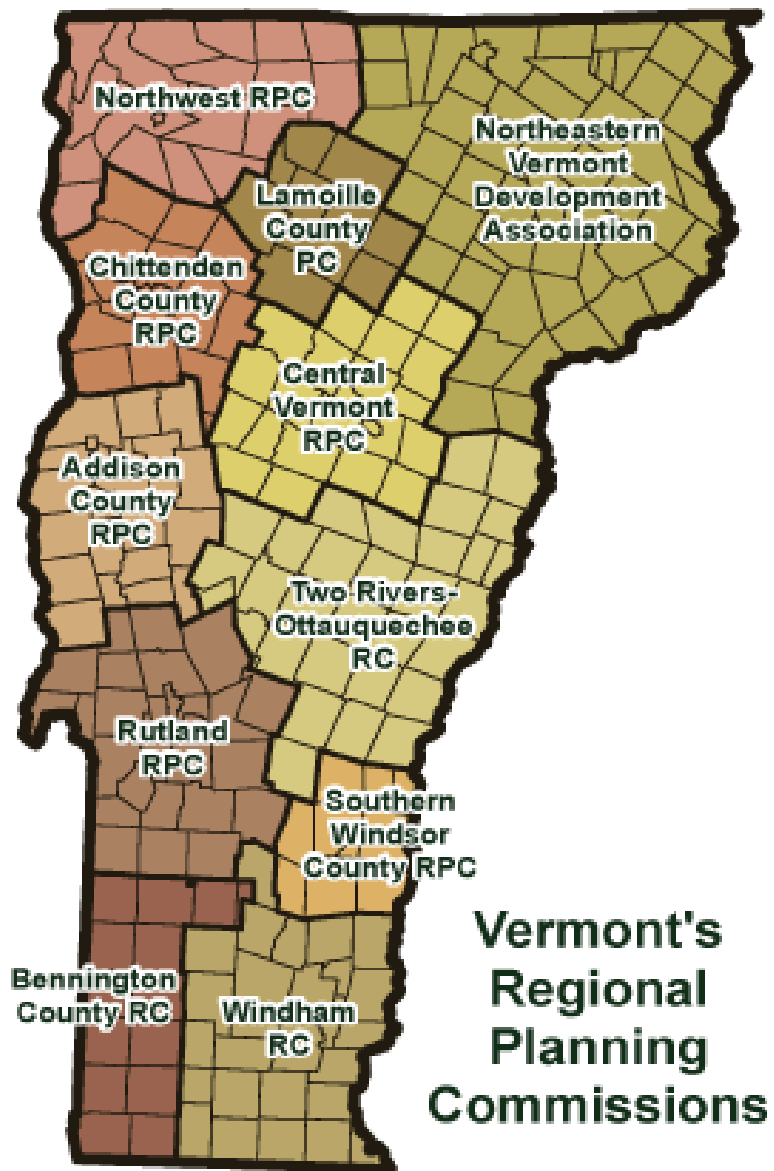




2026 Windham Regional Plan Update

Public Hearing #2
September 21, 2026

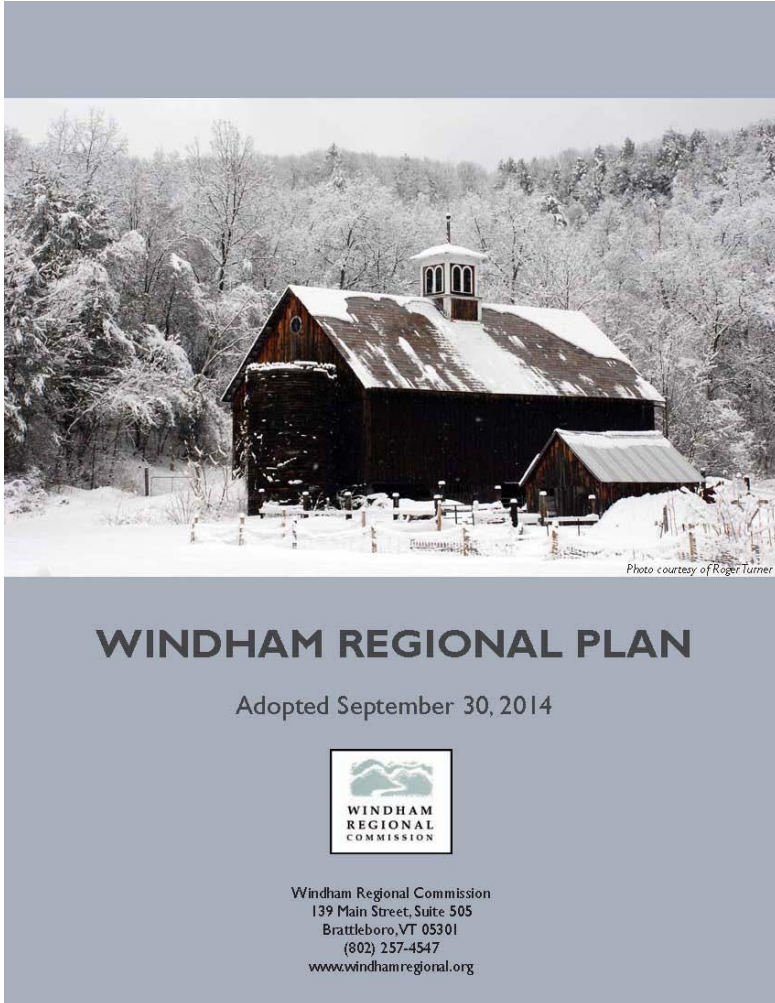


Windham Regional Commission

- 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

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.**



Role of the Regional Plan in WRC engagement in Act 250 applications.

- The regional plan sets the standard by which the commission evaluates projects for Substantial Regional Impact.
- This determination influences how WRC engages in Act 250 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.



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

Public Engagement Summary

2025 Plan Update (Winter 2023 – Spring 2025)	2026 Plan Update (Fall 2025 – Spring 2026)
• Online informational workshops • WRC Committee meetings • Stakeholder meetings • 4 in-person meetings in different locations in the region and 1 virtual meeting to present draft plan	• Act 181 online workshop • Information resources on website • Municipal Meetings ○ Approximately 30 meetings ○ 200+ attendees across all meetings • 2 public meetings in May 2026

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 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.



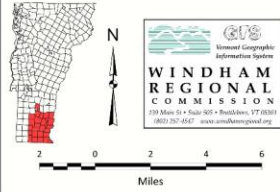
Rural – Conservation

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.

Regional Future Land Use Mapping Consideration

- 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

2026 Windham Regional Plan



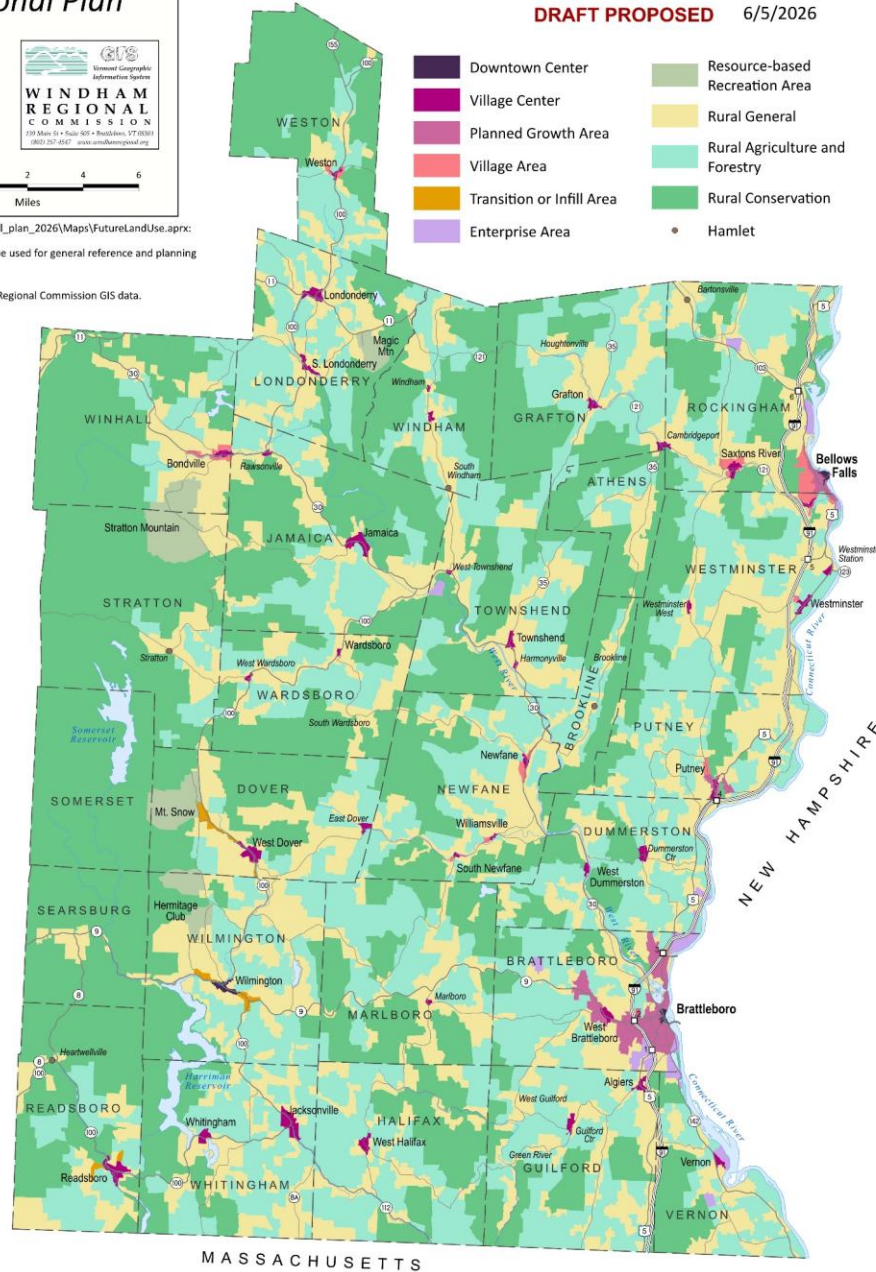
June 2026; U:\GIS\regional_plan_2026\Maps\FutureLandUse.aprx:

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 6/5/2026



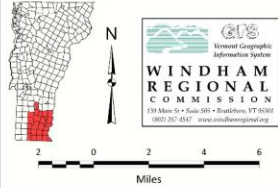
Downtown Centers: 3

Village Centers: 37

Planned Growth Areas: 4

Village Areas: 10

2025 Windham Regional Plan



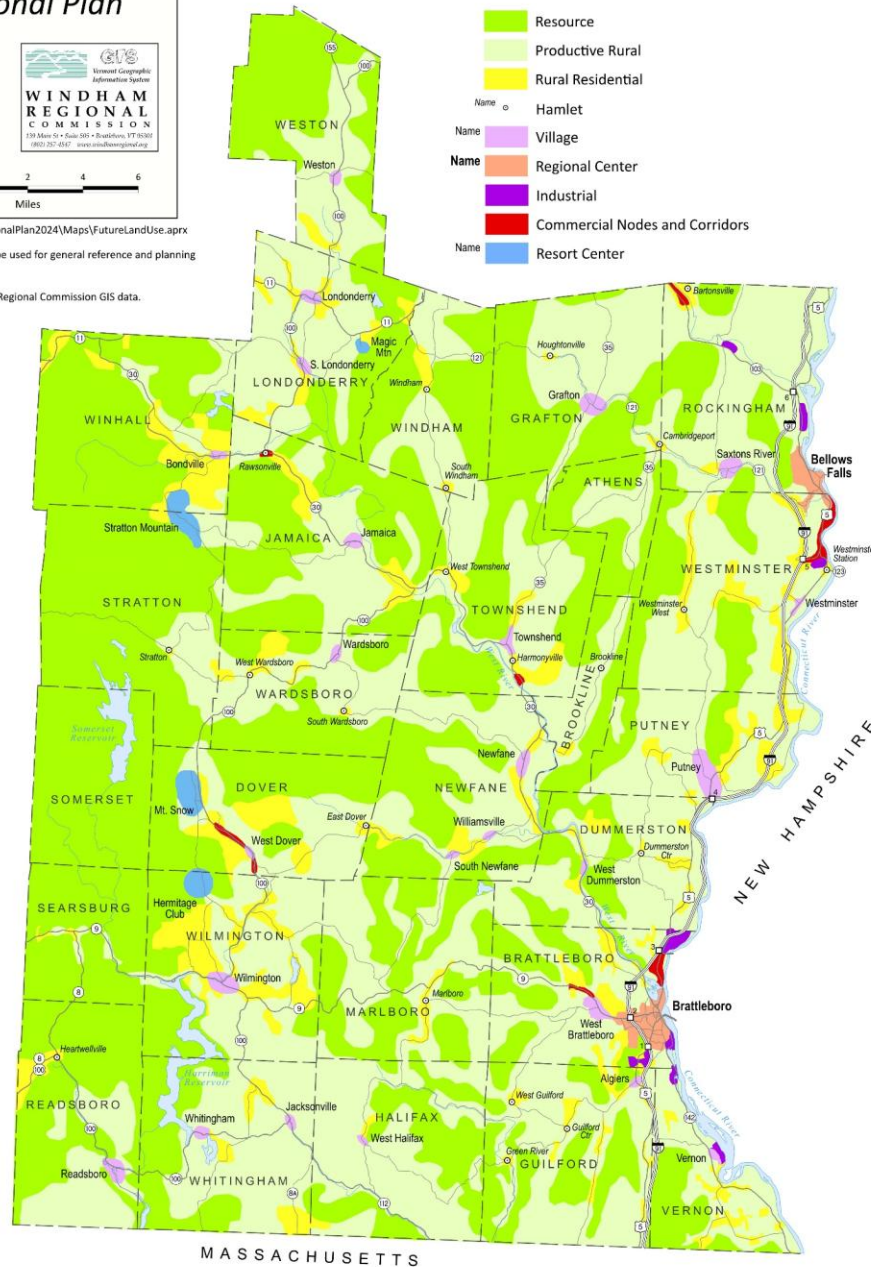
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Note: This map should be used for general reference and planning purposes only.

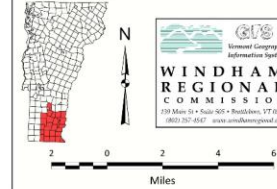
Data source: Windham Regional Commission GIS data.

Proposed Land Use

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



2026 Windham Regional Plan



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

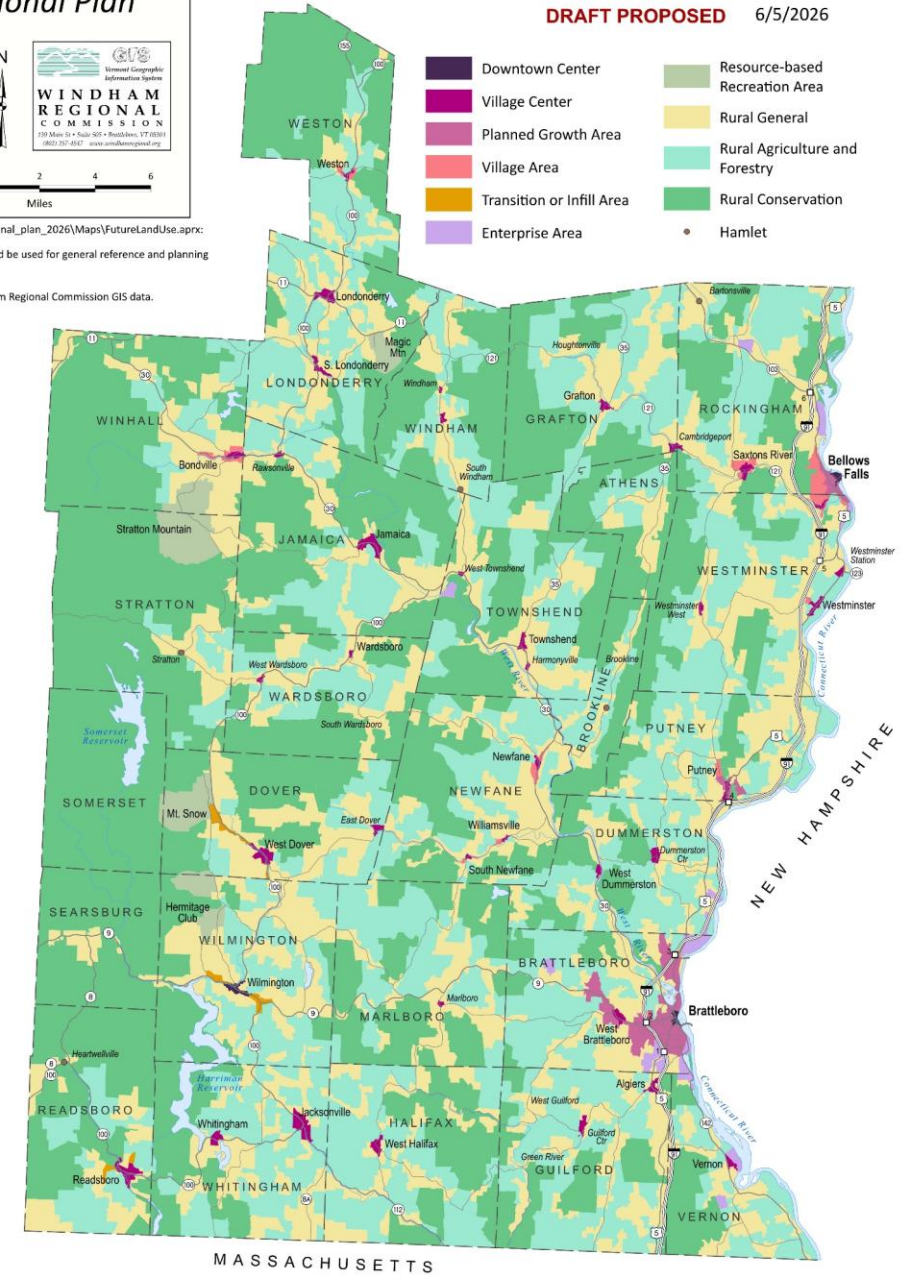
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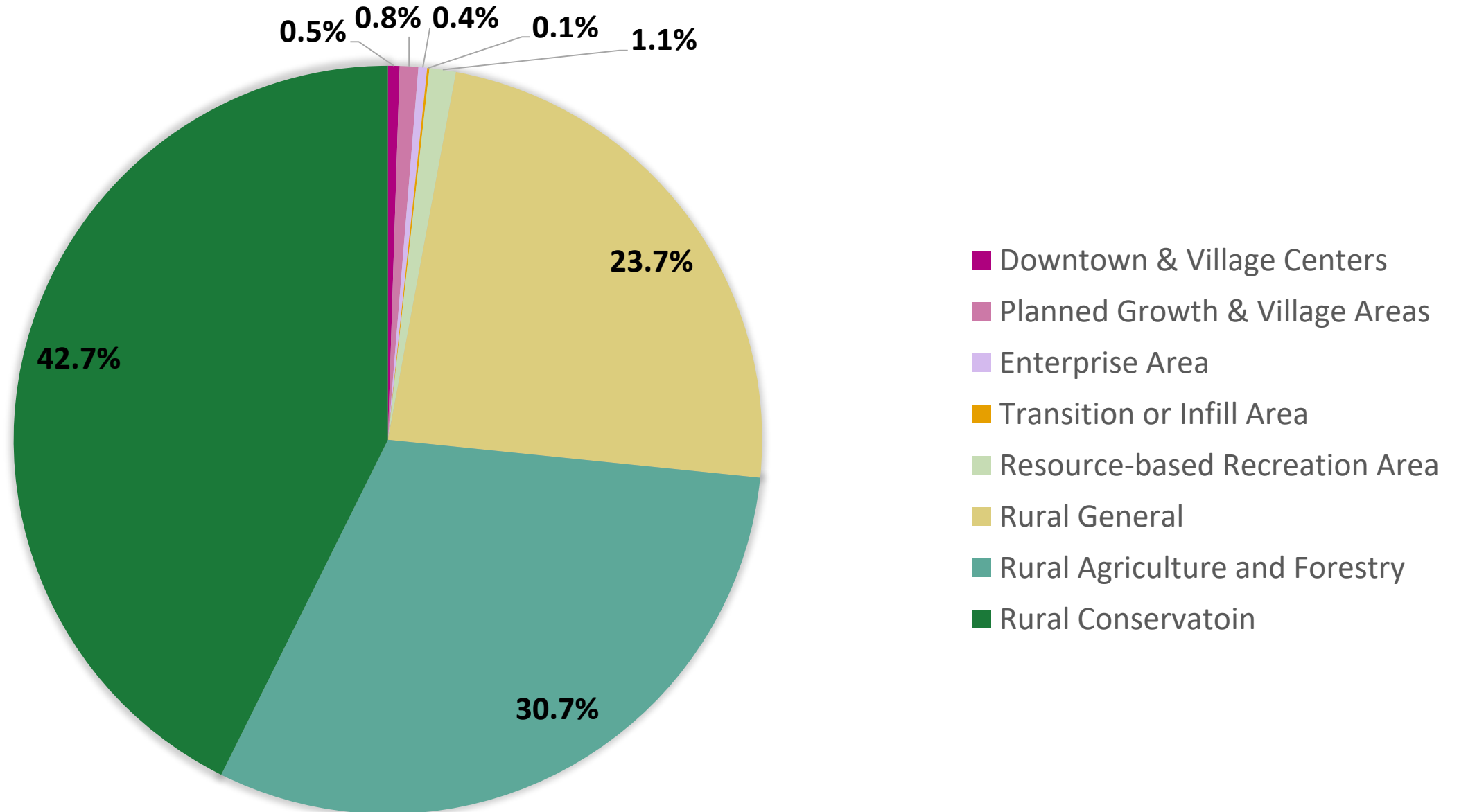
Future Land Use

DRAFT PROPOSED 6/5/2026

- 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



Regional Future Land Use Categories as Percentage of Region



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 (REPEALED)*

LURB

Tier 3 - REPEALED **(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



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*

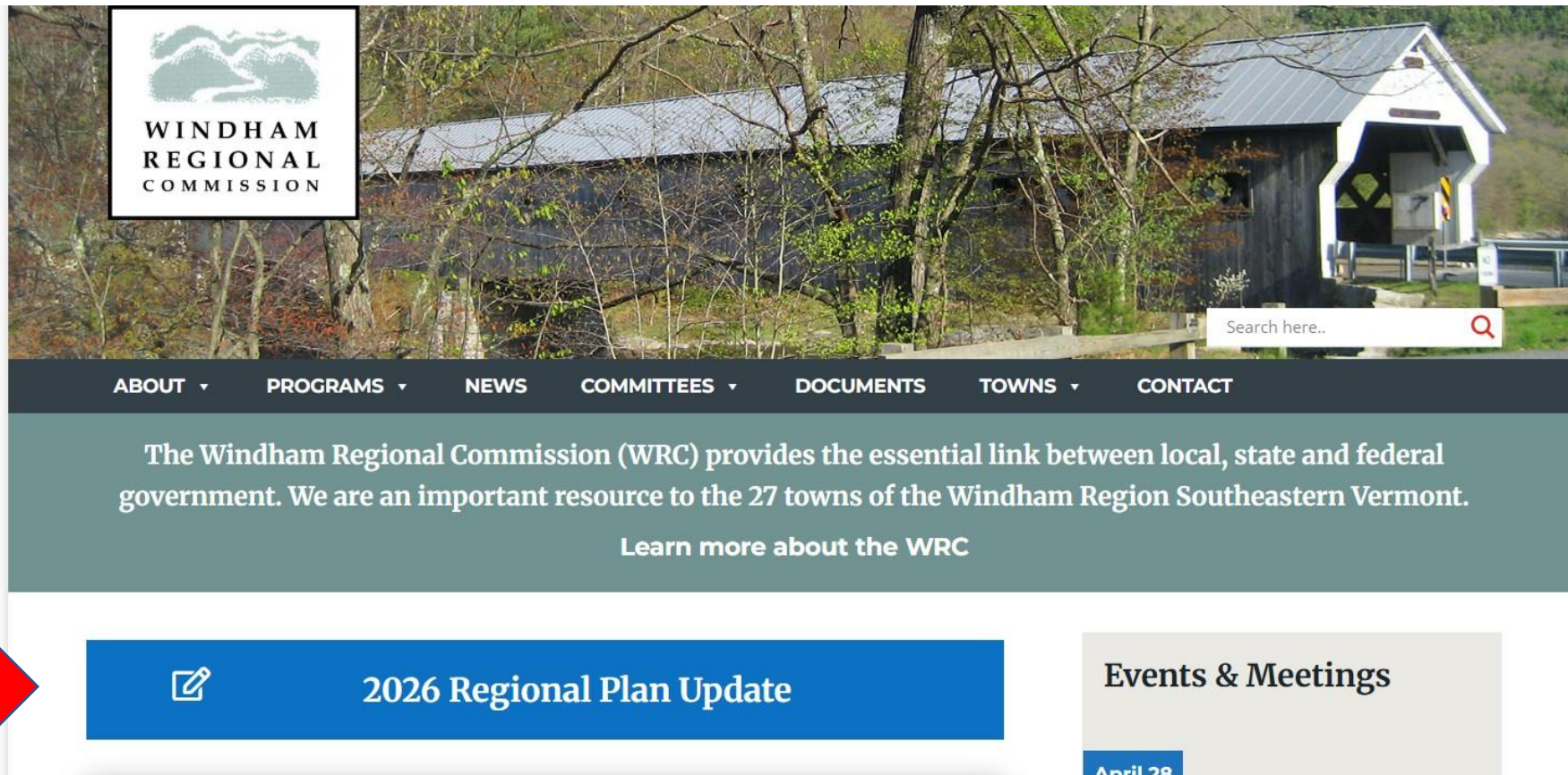
*Only a goal to
provide needed
housing!*

*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

Where Can I Review the Draft Plan?

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



Upcoming Public Meetings & Hearings

- Windham Regional Commission Review of Updates: September 29, 2026
- Second Draft of Regional Plan Update Completed: Early October 2026
- Public Hearing #3: Early November 2026 (TBD)
- Windham Regional Commission Considers Adoption of Plan: November 10, 2026

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>