

Cornwall Planning Commission
December 6, 2022

MEMORANDUM

From: Cornwall Planning Commission
To: Cornwall Select Board, Adjoining Towns, Addison County Regional Planning Commission
December 6, 2022:
Re: Submission of the Updated Cornwall Town Plan

This memorandum provides a summary of the changes the Cornwall Planning Commission is proposing to the 2013 Cornwall Town Plan. It also constitutes the written report necessary to satisfy the requirements of 24 V.S.A. §4441(c) requiring that the Planning Commission prepare a written report explaining the proposed amendments to the Town Plan.

The Planning Commission is nearing completion of its work revising the Cornwall Town Plan and on November 16, 2022 voted to submit the draft for a public hearing scheduled for January 18, 2023. The proposed updated plan constitutes a significant revision of the Cornwall Town Plan as adopted on April 30, 2013. Proposed changes primarily consist of the addition of two new sections required by the State of Vermont, as well as revisions to several specific sections. Most of the substantive additions and revisions have been presented and discussed at the previous public information meetings held on October 27, 2021 (Flood Resilience); March 23, 2022 (Population, Housing, and Forest Integrity); and July 27, 2022 (Education, Economy, and Plan Implementation). Generally, the revisions involve updates of statistics based on recent US Census data as well as updates of descriptions and analysis reflective of the current state of Cornwall. Some goals have been revised and/or added to be current and consistent with proposed plan revisions. Changes involving policy issues will be proposed for future Town Plan updates. The Planning Commission believes this proposed update enhances the Cornwall Town Plan and conforms to State of Vermont statutes. This memorandum highlights the proposed changes that the Planning Commission deems the most substantive. It does not discuss every single minor change. Accordingly, all are encouraged to read the entire document.

1. Addition of Flood Resilience Section

Vermont State Statutes 24 VSA Chapter 117 §4302 and §4382 encourage and require municipalities to include a Flood Resilience Plan in municipal development plans adopted after July 1, 2014. The intent of this section is to make Cornwall a more flood resilient community and to guide future development to reduce or eliminate effects of potential flooding and storm-related erosion. This section includes a watershed summary, a discussion of available resources, a review of existing standards and a discussion and review of River Corridor Protection Regulations and Special Flood Hazard Areas.

2. Addition of Forest Integrity in Updated Natural Resources Section

Vermont Act 171 encourages municipalities to address the conservation of forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors, as well as to support local forest products businesses, in their town plans. The draft Forest Integrity portion of the Town Plan provides an overview of the concept, summary descriptions and maps of many of Cornwall's important natural resources in terms of forest blocks and wildlife corridors, and goals and recommendations to maintain and

improve Forest Integrity in Cornwall. The overall goal is to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. The introduction of this section into the Town Plan is an effort to highlight this issue and provide the community with resources to guide the responsible development of Cornwall for the future.

3. Updated Population Section

The revised “Cornwall Today” Population section has been updated with the latest general population figures available from the 2020 Census. A brief discussion of population growth factors considers how local factors play into Cornwall’s ability to attract new townspeople.

4. Updated Housing Section

The revised “Cornwall Today” Housing Section has been revised principally to update the housing data from the 2010 data used in the existing version of the Town Plan. This section now incorporates and discusses data based on the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019, the 2021 Cornwall Grand List and the 2021 Addison County Regional Planning Commission draft updates to the regional plan. This new data is largely consistent with historical trends. It also acknowledges the relatively new use of homes for short-term rental housing and broadens the scope of the Town’s housing goals to include workforce housing.

5. Updated Economy Section

This section has been updated to incorporate new statistics from the 2020 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019, as well as data from the Vermont Department of Taxes. It inventories the aggregate sources of income and places of employment for townsfolk and reviews the services and businesses that are present in town. There is also a discussion of land use as it relates to town planning.

6. Updated Education Section

The “Cornwall Today” Education Section has been updated to reflect the creation of the new unified Addison County Supervisory District (ACSD) and the reduced role that the Town now plays in the education of its children. Accordingly, the Education Section is in many ways less directly relevant to the current Town Plan than has historically been the case. Nevertheless, education remains important to Cornwallians and the revised Education Section recognizes this. Updates include a discussion of the educational and enrichment opportunities currently offered at the school, as well as budget and enrollment data over the last decade, both of which have been fairly constant over the past decade. The revised Education Section closes by noting some of the steps that the Town can take to continue to stabilize and grow its student population.

7. Updated Plan Goals and Recommendations

Changes and/or additions to goals and recommendations have been made to be current and consistent with the proposed revisions to the overall Town Plan.

8. Updated Implementation Plan

The Plan Implementation section lists specific actions that the Town should take over the course of the next five years to implement the priority goals and objectives of the Town Plan. Six implementation actions from the current Town Plan consisting of Affordable Housing, Home-

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based Businesses, Historical Land-Use Pattern, Working Landscape, Recreation Opportunities and Land Conservation Efforts have been revised and updated. Two new actions consisting of Child Care Opportunities and Renewable & Local Energy have been added.

9. Other minor changes. The Planning Commission made other changes to the statistical information in the plan, bringing it up to date and reflective of recent and current town projects and enhancements.

The Cornwall Planning Commission believes the proposed changes enhance the readability of the plan and will encourage residents to become more involved with the future planning of their community. Our goal is to implement our Town Plan and make Cornwall a better place to live for all its citizens.

Please do not hesitate to contact Conor Stinson (stinsoncpc@gmail.com) or any members of the Planning Commission if you have questions regarding the document or the process.

On behalf of the Cornwall Planning Commission members, thank you for your consideration.