

# Thetford Town Plan Report

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## Background

The Thetford Planning Commission has substantially revised the Thetford Town Plan to reflect changes necessitated by new data and new statutory requirements. As a final step in this process, the Planning Commission is required to provide a report that indicates whether or not the proposed plan is consistent with Vermont's Planning Goals, which are set forth in V.S.A., Title 24, Chapter 117, §4302. Statute requires that if a draft plan proposes alterations to the designation of any land area, then the report should address:

- The probable impact on the surrounding area, including the effect of any resulting increase in traffic, and the probable impact on the overall pattern of land use.
- The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality
- The amount of vacant land which is already subject to the proposed new designation; and actually available for that purpose and the need for additional land for that purpose.
- The suitability of the area in question for the proposed purpose.
- The appropriateness of the size and boundaries of the area proposed for change, with respect to the area required for the proposed use, land capability and existing development in the area.

**This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4384(c) which states:**

*“When considering an amendment to a plan, the planning commission shall prepare a written report on the proposal. The report shall address the extent to which the plan, as amended, is consistent with the goals established in §4302 of this title.”*

The proposed Thetford Town Plan includes the following land use changes from the 2012 plan:

- In the 2012 plan, the Thetford Hill Village Residential Area extended east to I-91. In the proposed plan, it only extends as far as Godfrey Road.
- In the 2012 plan, the entire Post Mills residential area was categorized as “Village Residential.” In the proposed plan, the two northernmost reaches of the residential area have been classified as “Neighborhood Residential,” with the southern portion remaining classified as Village Residential. The Neighborhood Residential land use category was not included in the 2012 plan. Its purpose is to create relatively dense residential development in close proximity to the Village Residential area of Post Mills, where resources such as schools, shops, libraries and commercial and public services for residents can be found.

The following addresses §4384(c) reporting requirements with regard to land area designation changes:

1. *The probable impact on the surrounding area, including the effect of any resulting increase in traffic, and the probable impact on the overall pattern of land use.*

The decrease in the size of the Thetford Hill Village Residential Area will help to increase village density and counter the traffic impacts of sprawl. The creation of a Neighborhood Residential area in Post Mills will concentrate non-residential uses in the Village area, which will make businesses and services more easily accessible and help to mitigate the traffic impacts of sprawl.

2. *The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact on:*

(A) *the municipal tax base; and*

Impacts will be negligible.

(B) *the need for public facilities;*

By increasing density in the Village Residential areas of Thetford Hill and Post Mills, the Town may be able to maximize the use and efficiency of existing public facility infrastructure.

3. *The amount of vacant land which is:*

(A) *already subject to the proposed new designation; and*

These proposed changes will only impact the density of already-developed areas and are not expected to have any significant impacts on vacant land.

(B) *actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.*

These proposed changes will only impact the density of already-developed areas and are not expected to have any significant impacts on vacant land.

4. *The suitability of the area in question for the proposed purpose, after consideration of:*

(A) *appropriate alternative locations;*

(B) *alternative uses for the area under consideration; and*

(C) *the probable impact of the proposed change on other areas similarly designated*

These changes are impacting already-existing villages. The changes will alter development density and uses to better reflect current development patterns in those areas.

5. *The appropriateness of the size and boundaries of the area proposed for change, with respect to the area required for the proposed use, land capability and existing development in the area.”*

The boundaries of the Post Mills residential areas are not changing. The boundary change in Thetford Hill will counter sprawl along VT-113.

### **Consistency with State and Regional Planning Goals**

A primary purpose of this Town Plan revision was to address areas of inconsistency between the Thetford Town Plan and State Planning Goals. Major additions included a Flood Resilience Element, maps identifying forest blocks, and language promoting the preservation of forest blocks. The resulting document is broadly consistent with §4302; the Town will consult with Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission regarding any outstanding deficiencies.