

Dover Planning Commission Report on the Town Plan Update

February 14, 2024

This report is in accordance with 24 VSA § 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 last revision of the Dover Town Plan was completed in 2016. The proposed 2024 Town Plan is an update from this prior plan. The Planning Commission has extensively reviewed all aspects of the plan and made updates to reflect the changes in our community. The Planning Commission believes this update makes the plan more compatible with all of the Vermont planning goals listed in 24 VSA § 4302. In particular, the plan updates the Housing Chapter to meet the requirements of the recently revised language in 24 VSA § 4382(a)(10) regarding the housing element requirements for municipal plans.

The above referenced statute also states that the following points must be addressed if the “designation of any land area” would be altered by the proposed update:

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.*
2. *The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact on: (A) the municipal tax base; and (B) the need for public facilities.*
3. *The amount of vacant land which is: (A) already subject to the proposed new designation; and (B) actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.*
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.*
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 Town Plan update would make the several changes to the designation of land areas in town as shown on the Proposed Land Use Map. The following section provides a summary of each of these changes and addresses the five points listed above.

- Several parcels of land along the western boundary of Dover that are part of the Green Mountain National Forest have been re-designated as part of the Resource Conservation District from Productive Residential District.
 1. Expected to have little to no impact on traffic levels or the overall pattern of land use because the subject properties are currently and will continue to be part of the Green Mountain National Forest.
 2. Anticipated to have no impact on municipal tax base or need for public facilities as the subject properties are federal land within the Green Mountain National Forest.

3. Resource Conservation District lands are designated because of their special and unique value to the public and the region's ecosystem. Already existing lands within this District include publicly-owned land (Federal or Town), land over 2,500 feet, steep slopes, wetlands, and portions of the northeastern corner of Dover already developed as low-density residential.
 4. The Resource Conservation District is the most appropriate designation for the subject properties because they are federal lands within the Green Mountain National Forest.
 5. The size and boundaries are appropriate as they would follow existing property lines of Green Mountain National Forest land.
- Several parcels with existing commercial uses on Route 100 between West Dover Village and the Wilmington/Dover town line were re-designated to Planned Commercial District from Productive Residential District.
 1. Expected to have little to no impact on traffic levels or the overall pattern of land use because the subject properties are already developed and used for commercial purposes.
 2. Anticipated to have little to no impact on municipal tax base or need for public facilities as the subject properties are already developed and used for commercial purposes, and are served by public facilities and infrastructure.
 3. The Planned Commercial District applies to properties along Route 100 that have already experienced substantial commercial development. The District currently extends from approximately Tannery Road south to Valley View Road. There are only a few vacant properties within the Planned Commercial District.
 4. The Planned Commercial District is the most appropriate designation for the subject properties because it better reflects existing conditions and anticipated future use of these sites. The change would also better support the Town's efforts to address access management and building and site design for commercial properties on the Route 100 corridor.
 5. The size and boundaries of the areas is appropriate as they would follow the existing property lines of the subject commercial properties on Route 100.
 - The area located between Route 100 and the Mount Snow Golf Course and to the south of Cross Town Road was re-designated to Residential District from Productive Residential District.
 1. Expected to have little to no impact on traffic levels or the overall pattern of land use because the majority of the land area has already been subdivided and developed for residential purposes.
 2. Anticipated to have little to no impact on municipal tax base or need for public facilities as the majority of the land area has already been subdivided and developed for residential purposes, and are served by public facilities and infrastructure.
 3. The Residential District applies to lands that have already been committed to residential development. Much of the land in the Residential District has already been subdivided, although there are numerous vacant parcels within some subdivisions. Examples of existing areas in the Residential District include the developments off Dover Hill Road on Heritage Road and Antler Loop, and on Valley View Road.

4. The Residential District is the most appropriate designation for the subject properties because it better reflects existing development patterns and densities in this area of town as compared to the current Productive Residential District designation.
 5. The size and boundaries of the area is appropriate as they would follow existing property lines and subdivision boundaries.
- The former Deerfield Valley Airport property was re-designated to Airport Redevelopment District from Light Industrial District. While there have not been discussions about an alternative use of the property, the site may be better suited for other uses, including residential, rather than light industrial. The site is constrained due to its only having access from a private dirt road through a residential neighborhood.
 1. Anticipated impacts to traffic levels or overall pattern of land uses are unknown at this time because further studies and discussions are needed to determine the most suitable use for this property.
 2. Anticipated impact on municipal tax base or need for public facilities are unknown at this time because further studies and discussions are needed to determine the most suitable use for this property.
 3. No other lands in the Town of Dover are within the Airport Redevelopment District.
 4. The Airport Redevelopment District is the most appropriate designation for the subject property as it will allow for a process to determine the most suitable future use of the property rather than being limited by the current Light Industrial District designation.
 5. The size and boundaries of the area is appropriate as they would follow existing property lines of the former Deerfield Valley Airport parcel.