

Mendon Planning Commission

Mendon Town Plan Update: Written Report November 4, 2021

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 Mendon Town Plan has been updated in accordance with the goals set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4302. The changes made to the Mendon Town Plan include the adoption of a stand-alone Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP) and a related updated energy section referencing the EEP in the Mendon Town Plan, in compliance with the enhanced energy planning requirements set by the Department of Public Service and Act 174, to comply with state planning goals, and to be consistent with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) *Regional Plan*.

24 V.S.A. §4384(c) requires that when the designation of any land area is altered, that the report covers the following points:

*(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 probable impact on the surrounding area of the updated energy section would be minimal since the land use references in the EEP reflect current use. Increase in traffic is not anticipated.

*(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.*

Long-term costs are not anticipated. Long-term benefits are anticipated by virtue of the “substantial deference” standard that is to be afforded the Mendon Town Plan in the Public Utility Commission’s review of whether an energy project meets the specific policies in the EEP, once the EEP is adopted. The need for additional public facilities is not anticipated.

*(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.*

Vacant land that is conducive to renewable energy development was looked at in drafting the energy section. Scenic resource concerns were paramount in determining where energy generation is not encouraged.

*(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.*

The suitability of the energy section's preferred or non-preferred areas was carefully considered by the Mendon Planning Commission. The group spent considerable time considering these areas' renewable energy resource potential and comparing that to alternative locations and uses as well as to the probable impact 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 size and boundaries of the preferred renewable energy generation sites are appropriate and minimal with respect to the area required and land capability. The impact on existing development would be minimal in these areas although the Mendon Planning Commission is and will continue to be sensitive to abutting landowners' aesthetic concerns. As outlined in the energy section, abutting landowners will be an integral part of the planning process if energy projects are proposed in Mendon.