
VISION STATEMENT

Northwestern Vermont's greatest asset is its diversity. A healthy, clean environment, a good mix of farms, forests, village and urban centers, combined with a growing employment base make this area a great place in which to live, work and raise a family. It is the goal of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to foster this diversity by supporting a strong tradition of local planning and community development, while considering the needs of adjoining communities and the region as a whole.

The region will continue to be a group of locally connected communities working toward common goals to address issues which will affect them into the next century. Communities will work together to ensure that long-term economic, social and environmental factors are balanced in the planning and decision-making process. This balance will ensure the region's continued growth and well-being by promoting a healthy and sustainable quality of life based on the following:

1. A diverse and sustainable economy, including agriculture and forestry, small businesses, manufacturing and commerce, education, health care and tourism which will provide expanded job opportunities and living wages for all area residents. Local and regional self-sufficiency and the growth and expansion of existing businesses will continue to be a priority.
2. Efficient, targeted public investment in infrastructure and services to support new development in designated regional and local growth centers.
3. More pervasive use of technology in industry, schooling, transportation, health care and communications. Low-traffic business enterprises will no longer need to be located in the larger urban centers; rural residents will have increased access to educational, employment and health care opportunities.
4. More opportunities for enjoyment of the arts and culture - concerts, plays, exhibits and celebrations will be more common. Recreational opportunities for all ages will continue to increase.
5. Continued improvements in the quality of the region's natural and built environment, including improved air and water quality and the protection of the region's most important natural, cultural and scenic features.
6. A viable working landscape, including protection and sustainable use of the region's resource lands in support of healthy, diverse agricultural and forestry industries. The region will continue to be the premier agricultural region in the state; the increased production of value added products will add to the region's resource-based economy.
7. Quality education, which will be available and accessible to all residents of the region.
8. An efficient, multi-modal, cost-effective and accessible transportation system which will move people and goods, and focus upon providing access to growth centers.
9. Affordable and elderly housing opportunities for those in need. These will be located in areas with access to jobs and services by means other than the private automobile.
10. Energy conservation, and increased, sustainable use of renewable energy resources and related technologies which will increase energy self-sufficiency, availability, and affordability.
11. New development that respects and reinforces traditional, established patterns of land use and development, which will contribute to the region's unique character and identity.

This regional plan provides a framework for future planning and growth, and strives to help in the continuation of the region's success. The plan considers this vision statement and presents long-range policies which will guide the region into the next century.