



# Municipal Plan Update City of Vergennes

Public Planning Workshop  
September 13, 2018

# Workshop Schedule

- Introduction of Planning Commission members
- Overview of basics of a Municipal Plan
- Overview of our four focus areas
- Breakout brainstorming sessions
- Reconvening as a group to discuss findings
- Questions/answers, door-prizes and workshop wrap-up

# What is a Municipal Plan?

- A long-term guide
- A basis for decision-making, community programs, and taxpayer investments
- An action plan that identifies implementation steps
- A basis for municipal regulations
- A source of information
- A source for strategic planning and studies
- A tool for coordination
- A source for community standards in state regulatory proceedings

# Why Plan?

**Four good reasons to plan that are important to everyone in our community:**

- A plan paints a clear picture of the future
- A plan makes great places
- A plan establishes transparent, consistent, and predictable public policy
- A plan promotes wise investments and helps manage future costs

# Why a Municipal Plan is necessary

## **A plan empowers local decisions by making it possible to adopt:**

- Zoning regulations
- Subdivision regulations
- Flood-hazard and other free-standing regulations
- A capital budget and program and charge impact fees

## **A plan can influence state regulatory proceedings:**

- Act 250 applications must conform to a municipal plan
- Applications for a Section 248 Certificate of Public Good must give due consideration to the municipal plan

## **A plan is necessary to qualify and receive priority for certain state and federal programs, including:**

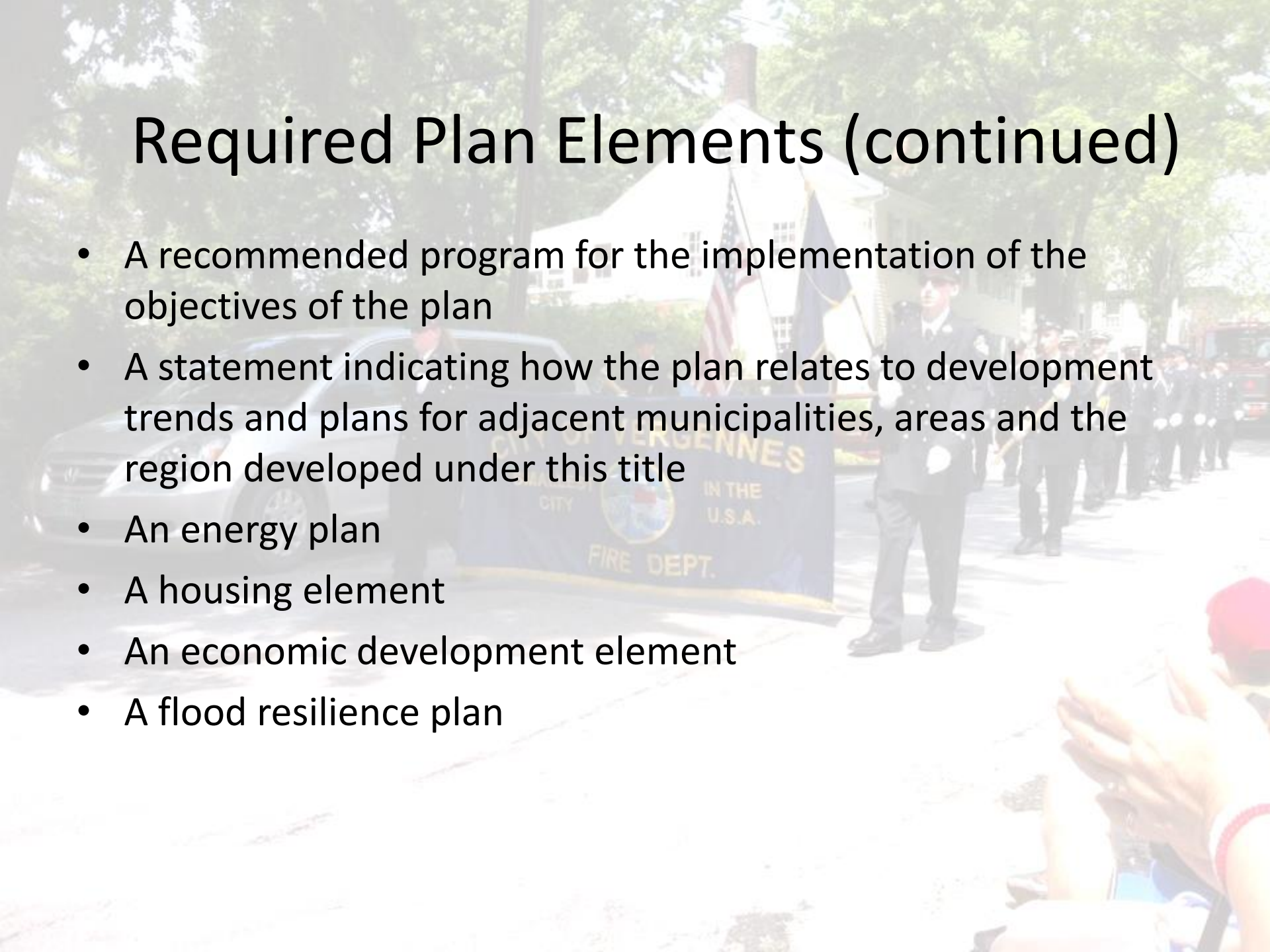
- Municipal planning grants
- State designation programs
- Downtown and village tax credits
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities funding
- Brownfield redevelopment funds
- Community development and affordable housing funds

# Required Plan Elements

- A statement of objectives, policies and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services, and facilities, and to protect the environment.
- A land use plan
- A transportation plan
- A utility and facility plan
- A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources
- An educational facilities plan

# Required Plan Elements (continued)

- A recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the plan
- A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region developed under this title
- An energy plan
- A housing element
- An economic development element
- A flood resilience plan



# Focus areas for this workshop

1. Lot sizes/dimensional standards and density bonus structure in the High Density Residential District
2. Should the City continue to have an Agricultural and Rural Residential District and, if not, what should that area look like in the future in terms of its use and development?
3. What should the City look like in the future in terms of accessibility/connectivity/pedestrian safety/multi-modal resources, including but not limited to:
  - Walking and biking options – trails, paths, connected ROWs, rail trail
  - Sidewalk conditions or missing sidewalk
  - Vehicle speeds, safer crossings
  - The walkability of the ½ mile radius around our downtown
4. How will the City meet the community's energy needs in the future?



# High Density Residential District

We recommend making the dimensional standards and dwelling unit densities more like the Historic Neighborhood District.

## Existing

- Minimum lot size
- One Family – 15,000 sq ft
- Two Family – 21,000 sq ft
- Multiple Family – 27,000 sq ft, plus 6,000 sq ft per additional dwelling units
- Front & side yard mins – 20 ft
- Coverage max – 30%
- Building height – 35 ft

## Proposed

- Minimum lot size
- One Family – 9,000 sq ft
- Two Family – 15,000 sq ft
- Multiple Family – 27,000 sq ft plus 6,000 sq ft per additional dwelling units
- Front yard min – 5 ft
- Side yard min – 12 ft
- Coverage max – 35% - 50%
- Building height – 40 ft

# Agricultural and Rural Residential District

We recommend converting the district to be part of the Low Density Residential district and conform to the uses and standards of that district.

## Existing

- Lot area min – 5 acres
- Lot frontage min – 120 ft
- Lot depth min – 150 feet
- Front yard min – 20 ft
- Rear yard min – 20 ft
- Side yard min – 20 ft
- Coverage max – 20%
- Building height max – 35 ft

## Proposed

- Lot area min – 1 unit per 2 acres
- Lot frontage min – 100 ft
- Lot depth min – 125 feet
- Front yard min – 20 ft
- Rear yard min – 20 ft
- Side yard min – 20 ft
- Coverage max – 20%
- Building height max – 35 ft

# Accessibility/Connectivity

**What should Vergennes look like in terms of accessibility and connectivity?**

- Walking and biking trails, bike lanes
- Safe sidewalks and crosswalks connecting downtown and the basin/falls area.
- Walkability of the half-mile radius around downtown
- Vehicle speeds

# Energy Planning & Act 174

- 2011 Comprehensive Energy Plan - driven primarily by a desire to reduce greenhouse gasses
- Other Goals:
  - Reduce total energy consumption per capita
  - 90% by the year 2050
  - Renewable end use sector goals for transportation, buildings and electric power
- Energy intertwined with other planning issues:
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Natural Resources
  - Land Use
  - Economic Development
- “Substantial deference” versus “Due consideration” under Section 248
- Requirements to achieve goals

# Recap of Breakout Groups



# Questions and Next Steps

