A PRIMER ON PLANNING FOR PREVENTION

A tool to help link alcohol prevention with land use planning!

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Partners

- Partnership for Success Project, including:
  - Healthy Lamoille Valley
  - Johnson State College
  - VT Department of Liquor Control
  - Lamoille Family Center
  - Law enforcement (LCSD, Hardwick Police)
  - Peoples Academy (Morrisville) & Hazen Union (Hardwick)
  - Lamoille Restorative Center

- Funded by the Vermont Department of Health—Morrisville District Office
Purpose

• Provide and enhance substance abuse prevention and early intervention for youth
• Connect municipal planning with youth alcohol abuse prevention
• Provide sample alcohol policy and bylaw language
• Not to restrict or mandate municipalities to take action, but provide staff & volunteers with new options and ideas
Why planning and prevention?

- Emerging field recognizing how our built and social environments influence substance abuse
- Alcohol use among youth leads to risky behavior, harmful impacts, and draws on local and regional economies:
  - Employment
  - Health
  - Public Safety
  - Education

According to the 2013 Youth Behavior Risk Survey, 39% of Lamoille County students in 9-12th grades drank alcohol in the past 30 days. Of these students, 61% report that someone gave them the alcohol or they gave someone money to buy it for them. In the same survey, 18% of youth responded that they had drunk alcohol prior to their 13th birthdays. **These numbers are all higher than state averages.**
Vermont Prevention Model

- Addresses *individual risk* and protective factors but also the norms, beliefs, and social and economic systems that create the conditions for the occurrence of substance abuse.
- In order to have the greatest impact, *multiple levels* of the model *must be addressed simultaneously* with efforts directed specifically at the higher levels of community, organizations, policies, and systems.

Policies and Systems
Local, state, and federal policies and laws, economic and cultural influences, media
Example: Substance free parks, community ordinances
Lamoille Valley: Hyde Park substance free MacFarlane Recreation Fields, Greensboro Beach’s no alcohol policy

Community
Physical, social, and cultural environments
Example: Substance free community events, enclosed beer tent located to the side at events
Lamoille Valley: Healthy Lamoille Valley 5K Fun Run, North Central VT Recovery Center’s Super Sober Celebration!

Organizations
Schools, worksites, faith community, etc.
Example: Tobacco cessation, Employee Assistance Programs
Lamoille Valley: Trapp Family Lodge and Stowe Mountain Lodge Employee Assistance Programs, North Central VT Recovery Center

Relationships
Family, peers, social networks, associations
Example: Mentoring, grandparents, student assistance programs
Lamoille Valley: Lamoille Family Center Rocking Horse Circle of Support & Nurturing Fathers

Individual
Knowledge, attitudes, beliefs
Lamoille Valley: Johnson State College’s freshmen Alcohol EDU program, Healthy Lamoille Valley’s self-screening e-Checkup tool
How to do this?!?!

- **Municipal & Regional plans**
  - Information
  - Goals & Policies
  - Implementation Items

- **Regulation**
  - Zoning – Distance requirements, signage, density, conditional use standards
  - Alcohol ordinances – standalone, park rules, or incorporated

- **Non-regulatory actions**
  - Alcohol-free events
  - Visual cues
  - Education
  - Healthy Community Design
Municipal Plans

- Think broadly about your community
- Community process
- Set strategy: goals, policies, recommendations
- 5-year planning cycle
- Required elements for eligibility in certain programs
- Planning Commission/ Board/ Council and Selectboard/ Trustee approval
- Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)
What is a Municipal Plan? Why have one?

What: A guide for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions, often through public investments, land use regulations, and other implementation programs.

Why:
- Inclusive process develops community-wide vision
- **Empowers communities** to respond to change in ways that reflect their own goals, needs, priorities and values.
- Allows communities to **designate growth areas** to attract new business and other areas to preserve rural character or protect natural resources
- **Reduce costs** of infrastructure
If you plan, then you can…

• Adopt Zoning, Subdivision, and Flood Hazard Regulations
• Participate in Act 250 process (Criterion 10)
• Participate in Section 248 Certificate of Public Good Applications
• Be competitive for grant applications
The Planning Process

1. Collect and analyze background information
2. Establish goals and objectives
3. Outline actions to achieve those goals and objectives
4. Create an implementation program
5. Adopt the plan
6. Implement the plan
7. Evaluate the plan and planning program

The cycle continues to ensure the plan is effective and achieves its objectives.
Vermont Planning Process Goals

Planning Process

• Coordinated comprehensive process to guide decision making
• Citizen participation at all levels
• Consider use of resources and consequences of growth and development locally and beyond
• Work with neighboring municipalities and region to implement plans

The process is often more important than the product!
Who Should be Involved in Planning?

Everyone!
Required elements

1. Objectives, Policies and Programs
2. Land Use (Map and Statement), including any state designation
3. Transportation (Map and Statement)
4. Utilities and Facilities (Map and Statement)
5. Policies on Preserving Rare & Natural Areas
6. Education (Map and Statement)
7. Implementation Program
8. Compatibility with Adjacent Municipalities and Region
9. Energy
10. Housing
11. Economic Development
12. Flood Resilience
Plan Adoption and Regional Approval

- Plans expire every 5 years
  - Must make minimum necessary edits to data and implementation program, OR
  - Revise or rewrite

- Adoption process can take several months
  - Planning Commission hearing with notice to adjacent communities
  - Selectboard hearing (1 or 2)
  - Shall be adopted by Legislative Body, unless the Legislative Body or voters have elected to adopt by Australian Ballot
  - Plans go into effect upon adoption

- Regionally approved plans allow municipalities to:
  - Attain village or downtown designation
  - Apply for municipal planning grants
  - Levy Impact fees
  - Requires state agencies to consider local plan in their planning
Local Roles and Responsibilities

- Legislative Body
  - Legislative
    - Planning Commission
  - Quasi-Judicial
    - EITHER Development Review Board
    - OR Zoning Board and Planning Commission
  - Administrative
    - Zoning Administrator
Legislative Function

- **Planning Commission**
  - Municipal Plan
  - Zoning Bylaws/Development Regulations
  - Capital Budget
  - Other Studies

- **Legislative Body**
  - Edits Municipal Plan and either adopts or sends to voters
  - Edits Zoning Bylaws/Development Regulations and either adopts or sends to voters
  - Edits and adopts Capital Budget
Municipal Plan and Prevention Language

- Economic Development
- Education
- Health and Wellness (not required)
- Land Use

- “Healthy Community Design” principles as gateway
Regulations

- Zoning
- Standalone ordinances
- Integrated ordinances

Tip: Make sure to define terminology to avoid confusion. Words such as “alcohol”, “malt beverage”, “liquor”, “possession”, “public place”, and “vinous beverage (wine)” should be defined within any ordinance or bylaw. Defining establishments such as “alcohol outlet”, “bar”, “club”, “restaurant”, and “tavern” is advisable for zoning bylaws.

24 VSA § 4411 concerns municipal zoning bylaws. This statute gives municipalities the authority to regulate land development in conformance with its adopted municipal plan.

Zoning bylaws may permit, prohibit, restrict, regulate, and determine development, including:
- Specific land uses;
- Dimensions, locations, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, razing, removal, and use of structures;
- Areas and dimensions of land occupied by uses and structures, as well as open spaces;
- Timing or sequence of growth; and
- Uses within a river corridor and its buffer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>How it works</th>
<th>Sample Language</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Use Approval</td>
<td>“Conditional use” is a zoning tool that allows flexibility in administering the regulations. Conditional use allows a municipality to control certain uses which it deems detrimental to the community. If a use is not specifically identified as Permitted or Conditional, it is Prohibited. Conditional uses are then reviewed by the Appropriate Municipal Plan (Development Review Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment). This allows the Appropriate Municipal Panel to review proposals on a case-by-case basis and require certain standards and conditions in order to be approved.</td>
<td>Prohibit screening outdoor alcohol beverage consumption areas.</td>
<td>Underage drinkers and binge drinkers are visible to the public.</td>
<td>By reducing visibility of imbibers, consumption may increase because the perception is that no one is watching. Open viewing of alcohol consumption normalizes the activity.</td>
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<td>Conditional Use Approval</td>
<td>Require a certain number of seats in an establishment that serves alcohol.</td>
<td>Restrict sales of alcohol to patrons unless a meal is also ordered.</td>
<td>Limits the amount of customers consuming alcohol at a given time.</td>
<td>Politically difficult to pass.</td>
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<td>Conditional Use Approval</td>
<td>Restrict sales of alcohol to patrons unless a meal is also ordered.</td>
<td>Limit bar service in favor of alcohol consumption only available by table service.</td>
<td>Reduces the amount of lingering while drinking, reduces effects of intoxication.</td>
<td>Difficult to enforce.</td>
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<td>Conditional Use Approval</td>
<td>Limit bar service in favor of alcohol consumption only available by table service.</td>
<td>Establish hours of operation on an establishment.</td>
<td>Encourages responsible alcohol consumption with meals as secondary to the meal, not as the primary activity.</td>
<td>Politically difficult to pass.</td>
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<td>Distance requirements between alcohol outlets and sensitive locations</td>
<td>Locate alcohol establishments, such as liquor outlets, bars, or taverns, far from where youth are likely to visit. Research has shown that increased youth exposure to alcohol, such as signage and advertising, leads to greater intention to drink, which leads to earlier initiation of drinking.</td>
<td>Require 300 feet between alcohol outlets and sensitive locations, such as schools, hospitals, day care facilities, playgrounds, parks, alcohol treatment facilities, teen centers, and churches.</td>
<td>Provides a buffer to what children see in places they are likely to frequent, as well as reducing youth access to alcohol by making it less prevalent in their immediate environment.</td>
<td>In compact village centers common throughout Lamoille County, it may not be feasible to separate uses based on number of feet.</td>
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<td>Alcohol Outlet Density</td>
<td>The increase in availability of alcohol leads to increased consumption of alcohol and violence, which has lasting impacts on public health and safety. Alcohol outlet density means the number of places that sell alcohol in a geographical area. Consider establishing a density requirement on the number of alcohol outlets, such as liquor stores, convenience stores selling alcohol for off-site consumption, bars, or breweries / distilleries, located in one area.</td>
<td>New alcohol outlets will not be permitted within 300 feet of an existing alcohol outlet. [Note: “alcohol outlet” should be defined or municipality should select appropriate terminology that is defined in the bylaws.]</td>
<td>It makes the ability to go from one alcohol outlet to the next more difficult.</td>
<td>In compact village centers, this may not be feasible to separate based on number of feet.</td>
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<td>Reduce Signage</td>
<td>Signs promoting or advertising alcohol consumption and sales influence youth behaviors about the consumption of alcohol. Consider prohibiting alcohol advertisements visible to the public or limiting the number of signs externally facing at convenience stores, grocery stores, and other retail establishments.</td>
<td>No person may place any sign, poster, placard, device, graphic display, or other item that advertises alcoholic beverages or cigarettes in any publicly visible location. Exemption: when alcohol is part of the business name, such as “John Smith Winery”.</td>
<td>Reduces the prevalence of alcohol advertising and promotion.</td>
<td>May reduce the exposure of local businesses that manufacture sale of alcoholic beverages.</td>
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<td>Standalone</td>
<td>A standalone alcohol ordinance may be adopted</td>
<td>Example: Alcoholic Beverage Restrictions: An Ordinance for Restricting Alcoholic Beverage Use on Town Property, Town of Middlebury</td>
<td>Clear, overarching policy</td>
<td>May be politically difficult to pass or enforce</td>
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<td>Included in Code of Ordinances</td>
<td>Include alcohol / tobacco rules and prohibitions among the municipality’s other ordinances</td>
<td>Example: Alcoholic Beverages Control Ordinance, City of Brattleboro</td>
<td>Streamlines the number of ordinances in the municipality</td>
<td>May be politically difficult to pass or enforce</td>
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<td>Special Events or Park Restrictions</td>
<td>For municipally owned facilities, an agreement may be signed limiting the ability to furnish alcohol. Special use or special event permits may place restrictions on alcohol.</td>
<td>Example: Town of Stowe includes provisions for restricting alcohol sales and consumption for special events. Stowe prohibits glass bottles at Memorial Park.</td>
<td>Tailors alcohol language to specific events / activities. Holds users responsible for adhering to conditions. Standardized alcohol use in publicly owned spaces.</td>
<td>Only addresses alcohol at certain places and activity restrictions for certain users.</td>
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Non-regulatory actions

• Alcohol – free events
  • Sponsorship; alcohol – free activities; beer tent minimized

• Visual cues
  • What does a visitor see when s/he comes to your town?

• Education
  • Schools
  • Employers – Employee Assistance Programs, etc.

• Healthy Community Design
  • Encourage walkable, bikable communities
  • Green / open space
  • Activities for youth, all ages, families, etc.
  • Access to healthy food options
Non-regulatory example

Turn this…

Junk food

Into this!

Vermont-made healthy snacks!
Lessons Learned

Successes

• People are talking!
• Raising awareness
• New partnerships
• New opportunities

Challenges

• Language barrier
• Slow process
• Building momentum
• Overcoming resistance
• Separating prevention from “alcohol as economic driver”

“What good is the land without the people?”
-LCPC Board Member
Questions and Discussion

• Your questions
• How to overcome those resistant people / mindsets?
• Are you using the Primer? If so, how is it being used? What reception have you gotten with the Primer?
• What is your relationship with your RPCs? Municipalities?
• How can you incorporate the Primer into your work?
• Who are the key service providers you can work with?
• Which towns are ready to engage?
• What ideas do you have to engage youth with the Planning Commission?
• Come up with sample policies to share!
Contact

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