

Vermont Healthy Community Design Resource

Examples for Creating Healthy Communities:
Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, Tobacco, Alcohol & Drug Abuse
Prevention

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Introduction

Vermont communities play an important role in Vermonters health and wellbeing. Municipalities that have safe and attractive sidewalks and trails, healthy food availability, and ordinances that limit tobacco and alcohol use and visibility on public property, or limit youth accessibility to these products, all support community member's ability to make and maintain healthy choices.

This document provides examples of policies, plans, and strategies that Vermont communities have implemented to create places that support healthy lifestyles. It also includes sources to find "best practice" examples of zoning, ordinance and policy language municipalities could adopt to support healthy lifestyle choices.

This document may be used alone or in conjunction with the [Vermont Healthy Community Design Resource: Active Living & Healthy Eating](#), a comprehensive "how to" guide with steps, definitions and action strategies for creating healthy communities.

Physical Activity and Nutrition

Physical inactivity and poor nutrition are among the top leading causes of preventable death in the US and, with tobacco use, contribute to four diseases (cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, lung disease), leading to more than 50% of all deaths in Vermont ([3-4-50](#)). Below are examples of ways Vermont's community leaders have created places where people can be physically active and access healthy food.

Enhance Concentrated Mixed-Use Development and Smart Growth

Mixed use concentrated development refers to a deliberate mix of housing, civic uses, and commercial uses including retail, restaurants, and offices in a community, and works best when it grows out of a thoughtful plan that emphasizes the connectivity and links among the uses. Mixed use is seen as a key Smart Growth tool to reduce auto dependence, increase opportunities for active transportation (walking and biking), transit use, and it helps support economic development, and preserve green space and natural resources.

Vermont Examples and Resources

Form-based code uses physical descriptions of development instead of restricted uses like conventional zoning to promote desired community design and use. Winooski and Newport are two towns who are using Form Based Code.

- [Winooski Form Based Code](#)
- [City of Newport Municipal Plan](#): Includes Form Based Code language; strong support for outdoor recreation, including boating, biking, support for parks, community gardens, housing and development supporting of aging in place.
- Mixed used development is incorporated into many regional plans. Contact your local [Regional Planning Commission](#) to learn more.
- [Vermont Smart Growth Score Card](#): Vermont specific, clear, usable means of assessing how well your town is prepared for the pressures of growth.

National Examples and Resources

- [Smart Growth](#): Smart growth is a better way to build and maintain our towns and cities. Smart growth means building urban, suburban and rural communities with housing and transportation choices near jobs, shops and schools. This approach supports local economies and protects the environment
- [Form based code](#): According to the [Form Based Code Institute](#), “form based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation”.

Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Friendly Community

People are more likely to walk or bike when communities have well-maintained networks of sidewalks and bike lanes.

Vermont Examples and Resources

- Northwest Regional Plan [Transportation Chapter](#): Includes policies on roadways, transit, pedestrian facilities and bicycle access, including policy guidelines to implement the Complete Streets law, When implemented, this plan will enhance the community’s transportation options by providing more employment opportunities closer to where people live so that walking and biking to work could become viable options. Finally, as part of implementation, grants will be available to local municipalities to adopt local plan and zoning code revisions to enhance streetscapes with pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly facilities.
- [Montpelier in Motion Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#); Montpelier in Motion is the pedestrian and bicycle plan for the City of Montpelier, Vermont. The City is developing this plan to serve as a guide for future actions to make bicycling and walking more visible, easier, and more widely undertaken by residents and employees. The plan covers future roadway and sidewalk improvements along with City policies regarding roadway and sidewalk maintenance, walking and bicycling education and encouragement, and local and state bicycling, walking and driving law enforcement. The plan contains overall walking and bicycling goals that the City hopes to reach as well as methods of evaluating progress towards attaining them.
- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan: Town of Essex/Village of Essex Junction](#) With support from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction are updating their combined Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Both communities have made great progress on the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure since 1994, when the first non-motorized transportation plan was developed. There are many miles of sidewalks, shared use paths, and other facilities that have been constructed, providing a functional and attractive network for bicyclists and pedestrians. Essex Junction has been designated a Walk Friendly Community, indicating a commitment to making the Village safe and attractive to encourage more widespread walking. This plan update includes an assessment of the needs and a review of emerging design alternatives to set the stage for future continuing investments.

- “Planning for Walkable Communities: A Guide for Planning Commissions”, written by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, this document includes Mixed Use Development. [Contact](#) the Planning Commission for a copy.
- [Bennington Multi-Use Path](#) – as a result of a Health Department funded scoping study, the Town of Bennington secured a grant from the Department of Transportation’s Bicycle and Pedestrian program for the design and construction of a multi-use path to connect Applegate and Willowbrook Apartments. The path will span a wetland and stream to connect a 104-unit affordable housing complex, Applegate Apartments, to Bennington’s municipal sidewalk network, and will give the 89 children from Applegate mobility, independence, and a healthy alternative way to get to school. Children from Applegate are now bussed to the Molly Stark Elementary School less than half a mile away, because Orchard Road, which connects Applegate to the school, is unsafe for walking.
- [Newport City Bicycle Rack Project](#) Private-public partnership with the City and local businesses contributing funds to have bicycle racks installed throughout the community to support tourism and active lifestyles and transportation.
- Montpelier in Motion [Website](#)
- Village of Essex Junction [Bike/Walk Advisory Committee](#) The purpose of the Bike/Walk Advisory Committee is to advance Essex Junction as a friendly neighborhood community where bicycling and walking are encouraged, and where sidewalks, bike paths, multi-use paths, and other facilities are provided and maintained in order to enhance the year-round safety, accessibility, convenience, enjoyment, and health of all citizens. The Bike/Walk Advisory Committee consists of eight members appointed by the Board of Trustees.
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont [walking maps](#) for communities.
- Local Motion’s [trail finder](#): whether you're a resident or a visitor, commuting or recreating, seeking thrills or a quiet moment, this tool will help you find great places to go.

National Examples and Resources

- [Complete Streets](#): Are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.

Improve Access to Parks, Recreation Facilities and Open Spaces

Safe and accessible parks, recreation facilities, and open space encourages people to enjoy the outdoors and supports leisure time physical activity.

Vermont Examples and Resources

- [Montpelier pocket park](#): A public open space on a downtown Montpelier lot with solar lighting, rainwater catchment, flowers, bike parking.
- [Bennington County Active Transportation Guide](#) catalogues and describes a number of path and trail, bicycle, and pedestrian projects in the County.

- The [Cross Cutting Section](#), below links to comprehensive plans that address parks, recreation and open space.

Increase Access to Fresh and Healthy Food

Language in town plans that support farmer's markets, community gardens, and grocery stores, as well as polices requiring healthy food be offered at municipal buildings and during town events are important tools for supporting healthy eating.

Vermont Examples and Resources

- [Northeast Kingdom Regional Food System Plan](#) The Regional Food System Plan for Vermont's Northeast Kingdom (herein referred to as "the NEK Plan") is an attempt to develop a vibrant agricultural economy and food system in the region through a regional planning process that builds on the strengths of both regional planning and local, decentralized planning. In recognition of the importance of the growing agricultural economy, Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA), the regional planning commission as well as the regional economic development corporation, sought to undertake a food systems development plan for the Northeast Kingdom (NEK). The ultimate goal of this plan is to drive the development of new and more diverse agricultural activity within the area's economy and to develop a comprehensive strategy to stimulate this innovative food system sector for the three counties of the region: Caledonia, Essex and Orleans.
- [Central Vermont Regional Food System Plan](#) In 2011, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) received funding from the Vermont Department of Health to complete research, collect public input, and develop a baseline of information for the state of Central Vermont's local food system. The resulting document identifies the main components of the region's local food system, information that's known, and room for improvement.
- [Newport Community Gardens](#) Newport City Zoning Administrator Paul Dreher hired Khris Flack and Jennifer Black at the end of 2010 in order to start a community garden, and the planning stages began in January 2011. Instead of going the route of the traditional plot-based garden, Fresh Start Community Farm created a communal setup with volunteer hours. Fresh Start Community Farm is growing a lot of food in its gardens and hundreds of residents are reaping the benefits in a community that desperately needs it.
- [Milton Farmers Market](#) In 2013, the Milton Farmer's Market was revitalized when the Milton Community Youth Coalition (MCCYC) received a state grant to increase healthy food access. Over two years the market grew 10-fold, from 2 vendors to over 20, and it secured a new location with high traffic and visibility. The market is now a destination for community members and families alike to support local growers, crafters and small businesses, enjoy fresh foods and connect with friends and neighbors. The Milton Farmers' Market brings in over \$17,000 in revenue to local businesses and supports the community through \$2,500 in subsidy programs, bringing high quality, locally grown food to families in need.
- Central Vermont Food System Council [Website](#)

National Examples and Resources

- [CDC Nutrition: Strategies and Resources](#): Describes initiatives to increase access to healthier foods and beverages in retail venues, encourage placement of new stores, improve transportation access to healthier food retailers and/or implement comprehensive in-store markets and promotion. Includes access to farmers markets.
- [SNAP-Ed Strategies & Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States](#), includes evidence based policy, systems and environmental strategies for childcare, school, community and family settings.

Tobacco

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Along with physical inactivity and poor nutrition, tobacco use contributes to four diseases (cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, lung disease), leading to more than 50% of all deaths in Vermont ([3-4-50](#)). Below are examples of ways Vermont's community leaders have successfully created places limiting access to tobacco advertising and products by minors, and to second hand smoke exposure for all.

Vermont Examples and Resources

- Learn more about smoke-free indoor and outdoor air [policies](#) in Vermont.
- Passed policies including policy language from the Weathersfield Town Plan regarding buffer zones and density, and content-neutral signage ordinances are available by emailing tobaccovt@vermont.gov. Please specify the policy language you are interested in reviewing.

National Examples and Resources

- Model Zoning Ordinance, Appendix A:
http://www.tobaccopolicycenter.org/documents/VT_AddressinPOS.pdf
- Appendix A: Model Campus Policy, Appendix B: Model Multiunit Housing Policy, Appendix D: Outdoor Air Model Policy
<http://www.tobaccopolicycenter.org/documents/VT%20SHS%20Reduction%20Report.pdf>:
- Model policies for state excise tax, tax parity, minimum sales price, minimum package size, restricting discount coupon redemption, restricting manufacturer inducements to wholesalers and retailers, restricting value-added promotions, sunshine or disclosure requirements http://www.tobaccopolicycenter.org/documents/CPHTP_VT_Tobacco%20Product%20Pricing%202014.pdf:
- Tobacco-free pharmacies suggestions
<http://www.tobaccopolicycenter.org/documents/VT%20Pharmacy%20Report%20FEB%202014.pdf>:

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention

Substance abuse prevention reduces the risks that contribute to alcohol, tobacco, or other drug misuse while promoting factors that support healthy lifestyles and communities. Factors in the community that contribute to or prevent future drug and alcohol use are the focus of substance abuse prevention

initiatives. These initiatives aim to stop unhealthy behaviors before they begin. In 2015, every \$1 invested in substance abuse prevention saved \$10-18 in costs associated with health care, criminal justice, and lost productivityⁱ. Below are examples of how Vermont communities have approached prevention planning in their policies as well as examples of national models to consider for future policy development.

Vermont Examples and Resources

- East Central Vermont: What We Want, [Chapter 3](#)
Part of a publication developed through a three-year planning process, this chapter focuses on the importance of healthy communities. Goal C (page 76) is especially important to alcohol and drug abuse prevention (“ensure community policies and practices support emotional, behavioral, and mental health as well as social well-being”).
- [Open Container Ordinance – Wilmington, Vermont \(2000\)](#)
Wilmington Vermont has codified their open container policy “for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public from endangerment by unruly persons who drink intoxicating liquor in public places and threaten the public peace and tranquility.”
- [Ordinance Prohibiting Drug, Tobacco & Vaping Paraphernalia Establishments & Further Prohibiting Marijuana Dispensaries – Ludlow, Vermont \(2016\)](#)
Ludlow Vermont has adopted the ordinance to prohibit the establishment of medical marijuana dispensaries, any retail establishment that sells marijuana or related products (should that become legal in the state of Vermont), or drug and tobacco paraphernalia establishments in the Village of Ludlow.
- [Regulation of Alcohol Policy](#) – Manchester, Vermont (*in voting process as of July 2016*)
Manchester has developed a forthcoming policy to codify open container prohibitions, alcohol at town parks, outdoor consumption licenses, permission to sell alcoholic beverages at town parks and town rights of way, catering permits and special events permits, and enforcement.
- [Revised Town Plan](#) – Wilmington, Vermont (*not finalized as of July 2016*)
Wilmington is proposing including support for providing local mental health & substance abuse treatment and recovery services in their revised town plan; they also propose listing local resources and increasing awareness of existing resources for mental health & substance abuse treatment; access to the revised plan is forthcoming.
- Vermont League of Cities & Towns - Vermont Municipal Regulation of Alcohol and Tobacco (*executive summary of the VLCT document estimated to be available mid-2016 and posted on the [VLCT website](#)*)
- [Lamoille Planning Commission’s Primer on Planning for Prevention:](#) This tool provides sample alcohol policy and bylaw language for municipalities
- Community Connections handout, available from [ADAP](#) upon request.
- Windsor Resource Guide, available from [ADAP](#) upon request.
- Burlington District Office ATOD Sample Language for Town Plans, available from [ADAP](#) upon request.
- The Impact of Alcohol Retail Outlet Density Brief, The Chittenden Prevention Network, available from [ADAP](#) upon request.

National Examples and Resources

Model Policies/ Examples	Resource Audience	Policies aimed at:				What is helpful for Vermont about this resource?
		Retailers	Adult Providers	Youth	Controlling General Availability	
<p>Alcohol Policy Information System</p> <p>https://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov</p>	Regional (State)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Succinct resource for policy areas under nine broad categories, and cross-cutting dimensions (including Demographic Groups; Beverage Types; Penalties, Liabilities, and Incentives; Special Jurisdictions; and Other Dimensions).</p> <p>Can compare states' policies by policy area by year. A very comprehensive resource.</p>
<p>Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Project</p> <p>http://www.law.wisc.edu/wapp</p>	Regional (County, State)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	<p>Good model if the infrastructures were present, and currently they are not. Specific links to information about licensing, municipal policies, and outdoor event-related serving policies are provided. Links to presentations to help “start the community discussions” are also offered.</p>
<p>County Health Rankings & Roadmaps</p> <p>http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies?ff0=field_program_health_factors%3A12056</p>	Regional (County, State)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Provides a description of 36 (as of this writing) social and commercial alcohol control policies and drug control policies with existing evidence for their support. Implementation examples for each policy are also provided.</p>
<p>University of Minnesota, Social Access Policies</p> <p>http://www.aep.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Social-Access-Policies.pdf</p>	Regional & Town	No	Yes	No	Yes	<p>This policy document outlines four policies individually and in detail: what the policies are, how they work, why they are important for the community, considerations for passing the ordinances in your community, and how they fit in a larger context. Vermont planners can apply this framework to other policies, and customize the policy frameworks provided in this document for their own communities.</p>

Model Policies/ Examples	Resource Audience	Policies aimed at:				What is helpful for Vermont about this resource?
		Retailers	Adult Providers	Youth	Controlling General Availability	
University of Minnesota, Commercial Access Policies http://www.aep.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Commercial-Access-Policies.pdf	Regional & Town	Yes	No	No	Yes	This policy document outlines six policies individually and in detail: what the policies are, how they work, why they are important for the community, considerations for passing the ordinances in your community, and how they fit in a larger context. Vermont planners can apply this framework to other policies, and customize the policy frameworks provided in this document for their own communities.
Ventura County, Model Social Host Liability Ordinance http://www.ca-cpi.org/SIG_subsite/SIG_Documents/Resources/VCL_MSHLO_web2.pdf	Regional & Town	No	Yes	No	No	This model has been developed in California (2005) has sample language that may be adapted to Vermont regions and towns.
Washington State http://theathenaforum.org/sites/default/files/SocialHostHandbookAppendix2011.pdf	Regional & Town	No	Yes	No	No	Excluding the Washington-specific chapters, there is good general information to guide communities in deciding how to assess need and what social hosting ordinances may be appropriate for their unique community.

Cross Cutting Vermont Plans/Policies

A number of Vermont communities and counties are creating plans that are consistent with a [Health in All Policies](#) approach, integrating health language throughout town and regional plans or adding chapters to ensure health is addressed. These plans, important tools in guiding community development and decision making, include physical activity, healthy food, tobacco, substance abuse as well as many other health related topics.

Vermont Examples and Resources

- [Chittenden County ECOS \(Environment. Community. Opportunity. Sustainability.\) Plan](#)
Integrates health concepts throughout, including mixed use development, parks and recreation, biking, walking, local food and has a high level goal specific to broader public health: “Increase opportunity for every person in our community to achieve optimal health and personal safety. Efforts to reduce obesity, tobacco use & alcohol abuse must be multi-focal; impacting social norms, public engagement and ultimately laws and policy”.
- [East Central Vermont: What We Want](#) This publication is the product of a three-year planning process with the goal of supporting planning and collaboration efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that helps communities with the interdependent challenges of: (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) health and environmental impact.
- [Fairfax Vermont Town Plan, 2013](#) The Town of Fairfax is a 41.7 square mile rural town, located in Franklin County and made up of approximately 4,000 residents. The town engaged in a planning process to encourage the appropriate development of land, facilities, and services located within the Town in a manner that will promote the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents, with the result being this plan. The Fairfax Town Plan addresses mixed use development, recreation, walkability/bikeability and access to healthy food in various sections.
- Healthy Community Design Recommendations for Chittenden County Communities; ECOS project compilation of environmental strategies, contact: AHS.VDHOLHBurlington@vermont.gov for more information.
- Healthy Alcohol and Tobacco Policy in Chittenden County: An Action Guide, contact: AHS.VDHOLHBurlington@vermont.gov for more information.
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA): According to [Human Impact Partners](#), “HIA is a practical tool that uses data, research and stakeholder input to determine a policy or project’s impact on the health of a population. HIAs also provide recommendations to address these impacts. HIAs have demonstrated success in a variety of issue areas, ranging from land use, housing and transportation projects to labor, education and economic policies.” Staff from Health’s Department’s [Offices of Local Health](#) are available to consult on local HIA projects or ideas. Please see the examples of [completed Health Department HIA’s](#) to date.

ⁱ Miller, T. and Hendrie, D. Substance Abuse Prevention Dollars and Cents: A Cost-Benefit Analysis, DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 07-4298. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008.