

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

NVDA Office, St. Johnsbury, VT | Zoom | September 25, 2025, 6:00 PM

Those attending:

### Committee

Fred Saar	Michael Strait [Z]
Cynthia Stuart	Mark Whitworth
Michael Metcalf	Hope Colburn [Z]
Farley Brown [Z]	Paul Brouha

### Staff

David Snedeker, Executive Director  
Jennifer Burchell, Office Manager  
Liam Abbate, Transportation Planner  
Cathlin Driscoll, Regional Planner

### Guests

None

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The Meeting was called to order by Fred Saar at 6:00PM.

### Updates to Agenda

None

### Introduction

Executive Committee members and NVDA staff introduced themselves.

### Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes of the May 22, 2025 meeting as presented was made by Hope Colburn and seconded by Mike Metcalf. The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

### Financials

The June, July, and August 2025 Unaudited Financial Statements were presented. A motion to approve the financials subject to audit was made by Paul Brouha and seconded by Cynthia Stuart. The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

### Increasing Credit Card Charge Limits

Committee members asked NVDA staff about credit card usage and a suggestion was made about incorporating ACH in the future. A motion was made by Mike Metcalf and seconded by Cynthia Stuart to increase staff credit card limits to \$7,500.00 and \$5,000.00 respectively. The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

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### **Appointments to Finance Committee**

A motion was made by Mike Metcalf and seconded by Cynthia Stuart to reappoint Hope Colburn, Fred Saar, and Cynthia Stuart to the Finance Committee. The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

### **Annual Meeting Update**

Jennifer reported that 82 tickets had been sold to date. Dave reported that the annual report was sent to production and that Governor Scott had been invited as a guest speaker. A response was expected by the end of the week.

### **Future Land Use Mapping Progress Check**

Liam and Cathlin gave a progress report [appended] on the successes and challenges of mapping over 50 towns in the 3 counties served by NVDA and presented a map of Caledonia County to outline various land use categories. They addressed common concerns related to Act 250 and clarified that NVDA was not involved in rulemaking decisions regarding land use. A citizen's letter of concern was shared regarding Act 250, Tier 3 [appended]. Concerned persons are invited to submit questions and comments to [act250.rulemaking@vermont.gov](mailto:act250.rulemaking@vermont.gov).

### **Director's Update**

Dave presented his Director's Report. A full copy is appended to these minutes. He also presented a Brownfield's cleanup project proposal. The discussion was tabled for a later date.

### **Public Input**

None

### **Other Business**

Committee members inquired about the wrap up of the USDA TA Grant project, and also about obtaining help regarding a watershed project.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17PM with a motion by Cynthia Stuart and seconded by Mark Whitworth. All were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Burchell,  
Office Manager  
Northeastern Vermont Development Association

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Summary of Future Land Use Mapping by NVDA, as of Sept 2025



FLU Category

# of Areas

# Of Towns\*

Downtown Center	3	3: St. J, Newport City, Hardwick
Village Center	66	45: <i>excluding Kirby, Maidstone Victory, Lemington, UTG</i>
Planned Growth Area (PGA)	24	5: St. J, Newport City, Hardwick, Lyndon, Derby
Village Area	42	7: St. J, Newport City, Hardwick, Lyndon, Derby, Burke, Sutton
Transition/Infill Area	109	20
Enterprise Area	58	27
Resource-based Rec Area	16	18
Groundwater Contamination	3	3: Lowell, Lyndon, Coventry
Hamlet	39	27
Rural General	thousands	50
Rural Ag/Forestry	thousands	50
Rural Conservation	thousands	50

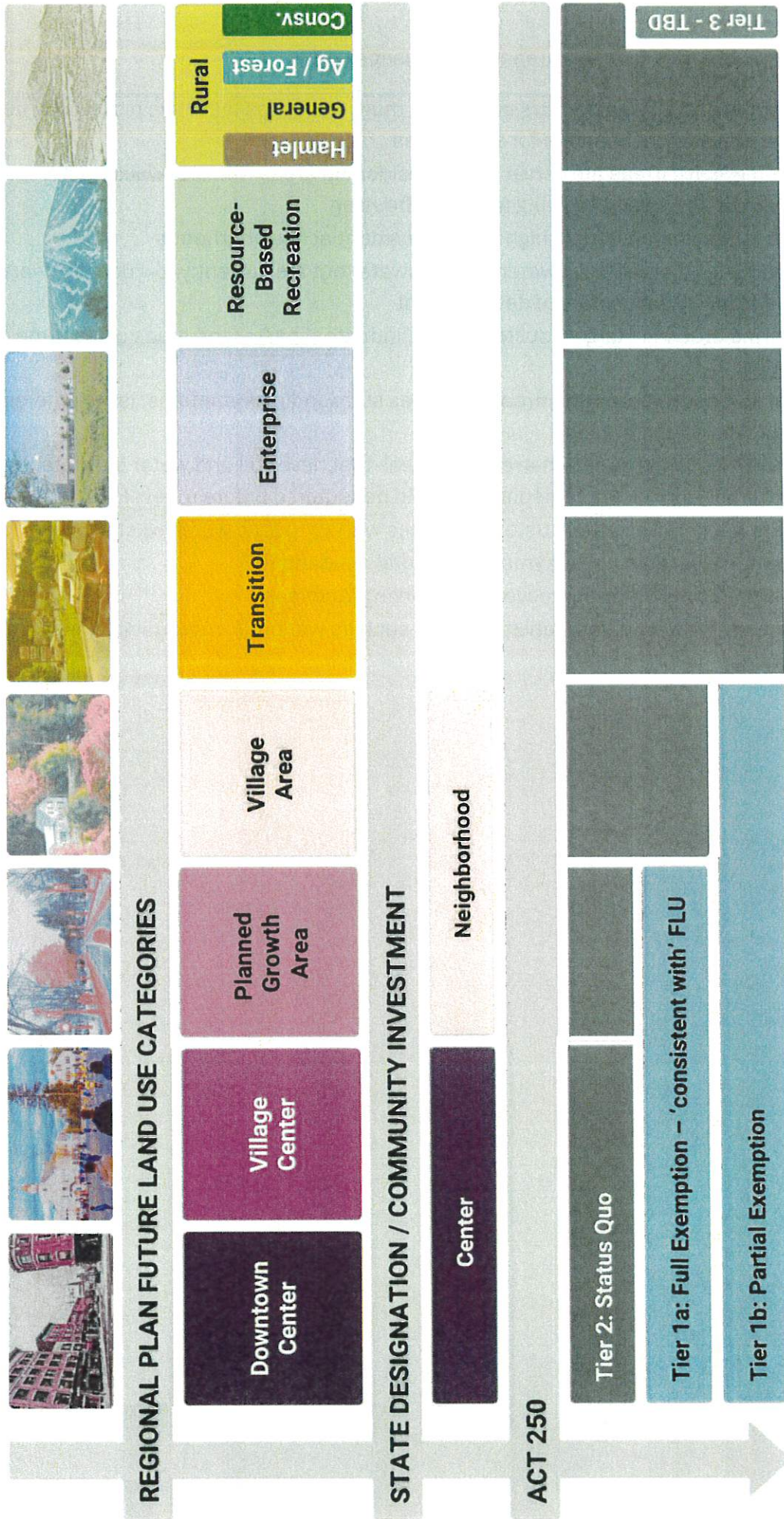
\*The City of Newport and UTG are counted as town-equivalents for the purposes of this chart

As of 9/25/25:

- Towns with draft future land use (FLU) maps: 48; Lemington and UTG are works in progress
- Towns with at least one meeting with PC or SB: 42; we have yet to meet with Bloomfield, Granby, Lunenburg, Brunswick, Victory, Troy, Lemington, UTG
- Towns with a finalized FLU map (all local feedback has been received and addressed): 25

Common concerns:

- Towns want conservation easements included in rural conservation; VAPDA's methodology does not allow for this.
- Towns want to know what land in their town will be Tier 3. NVDA is not involved in that decision; that decision is the responsibility of the Land Use Review Board (LURB) and Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).
- Towns think that being in rural conservation will restrict landowners' rights to do as they wish with their land. This is not necessarily true, although many portions of rural conservation lands are already subject to state wetlands permitting or will in 2026-27 be subject to Tier 3 rules, the state's river corridor rules, or the road rule.
- Towns want more open fields included in rural ag/forestry. This is something NVDA is happy to change if they can identify specific fields that have crops or get hayed. Otherwise, the methodology discourages lawns or other fields that are not used for agricultural purposes to be included in rural ag/forestry.
- Towns are concerned about the title of "transition area" as they think that means the state will come in, knock down buildings, and build development inconsistent with the immediate surroundings. The name is misleading: the transition/infill category is a catch-all for any areas that have access to public water or sewer systems, are zoned for medium/high density, yet are disqualified from being a "pink" (center, PGA, village area) category for one reason or another.
- Some small towns want very large village centers, but NVDA is constrained by soil types, topography, and the requirement that village centers not be longer than 0.75 miles.
- Towns think that FEMA's existing flood maps, DEC's river corridor maps, or ANR's wetland maps are inaccurate. This may be true, but NVDA is required to use these data layers as they currently exist.
- Current use enrollment does not guarantee classification in a given FLU category. However, we do use current use data to identify lands that are actively farmed.



**Tier 3 subject to rulemaking; not derived from regional maps.**  
 This table represents land use, designation, and Act 250 jurisdiction categories, not land area acreage or percentage of land area.

Brief description of future land use area types (“cheat sheet”):

- **Downtown and village centers** are dense, multi-use areas that have historically been commercial and civic centers for their towns
- **Planned growth areas** are dense largely residential areas with sidewalks, water and wastewater, and zoning allowing for dense housing
- **Village areas** are medium to high density residential neighborhoods
- **Transition/infill areas** have water or wastewater but are currently low density or are outside of historical centers of development
- **Enterprise areas** are large industrial areas, industrial parks, and areas of resource extraction
- **Resource-based recreation areas** are areas surrounding mountains, lakes or forests that people flock to for recreation
- **Groundwater contamination areas** are areas that have soil and water so contaminated that extremely significant remediation would be required before redevelopment
- **Hamlets** are small historic clusters of homes without public water/wastewater
- **Rural general** is largely synonymous with rural residential
- **Rural agriculture & forestry** covers the working landscape
- **Rural conservation** covers sensitive areas such as wetlands, mountains, and undeveloped floodplains
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September 24,2025

To Mark Whitworth, Town of Newark's Representative to the NVDA,

Mark, please share at your executive meeting if possible.

After attending a recent meeting of the Newark Planning Commission where the NVDA Future Land Use maps for Newark were reviewed and discussed, I came away with a few questions to the NVDA as well as ultimately the Land Use Review Board (LURB). The maps, very well done by Caithlin Lord, denoted by colors the different "designations". As a property owner smack dab in the middle of a proposed "Rural Conservation" designation, I asked what future restrictions this would imply on the land my home sits on. I was told "none". I also see the NVDA Act 181 FAQ document states under the Act 250 Jurisdiction, Tier 3 insert it states \*not based on regional maps.

My questions are these:

#1. Why aren't currently conserved lands ,either under Land Trust or Current Use, reflected on these designation maps? If these maps are to be used in the future, as their name suggests, wouldn't it be wise to take into account large tracts of land, especially in some of the areas LURB may want to permanently conserve? These property owners have already stated by entering into Current Use that their land is under State management from a State approved Forestry or Agricultural plan, thus ensuring it will not be developed. These lands should be duly noted and considered in the Tier 3 designation program as well as the 30/30, 50/50 Land conservation goals. If you considered these areas you'd see that over 50% of Newark's land is in some form of conservation limiting development already.\* Town and State forests,Municipal properties/cemeteries, School property, Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, State managed Fish and Wildlife habitat and Current Use.

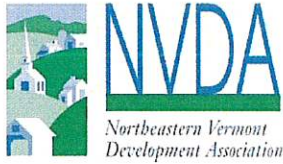
#2. I understand the designation maps could not entirely follow property boundaries and "smoothing" was needed to create the areas, but how can you designate a current residence into "Rural Conservation"? Half of my property , by these maps, is designated as "Rural Ag/Forestry" and part ( right through the middle where we already have open agriculture areas and crops, raise bees, have out buildings and do selective cutting for our firewood and disease management) is now designated as "Rural Conservation". Our entire property, if it must be in a category, would be best placed as "Rural Ag/Forestry". This is the pattern across most of our major town roads. The homes and camps fall into that less restrictive category, as all of the homes and camps should. You cannot future designate someone's home as a conserved area. What kind of restrictions would that imply? No more firewood cutting or selective small scale (chainsaw/tractor) logging, no agriculture ( bees and crops), no hunting?? I understand you may not have these answers, as these are questions more for the LURB, but as a major step in their decision chain, I feel it necessary for our local NVDA to step up and bring these concerns forward.

And lastly,

#3. If the LURB is not taking into account these NVDA Future Land Use Designation maps as their FAQ flyer suggests, why do they? Why designate anything in one category or another? I do not believe the LURB will randomly select areas to develop and areas to conserve. Their decision will be based on the framework others, like the NVDA, have provided with tools such as these designation maps. I also believe that rural areas like Newark will need the NVDA's advocacy to protect us from an overstep at the State level. Newark chooses no zoning. Tier 3, especially conserved areas, if allowed to overlap residences, will be ultimately zoning land owners, in some cases taking away what they have paid for over more than a quarter of a century, in the name of conservation. I ask you to carefully consider these potential ramifications and re-look at some of your designations.

Thank you for your time,

Kasey and John Talbot



September 25, 2025

To: NVDA Executive Committee

From: David Snedeker, Executive Director

Re: NVDA Director Updates through September 25, 2025

Thank you once again for your leadership and participation in the NVDA organization.

**Brownfields:** In July, NVDA received a new EPA Brownfield Assessment grant for \$1.2Mi. This is following the wrap up of our 2023 EPA assessment grant. We still have \$1M in EPA brownfield revolving loan funds that seem to be more difficult to utilize for now.

**Regional Plan and Mapping:** NVDA staff continues our work with SE Group on the rewriting of the NVDA Regional Plan. Staff are prioritizing mapping work on the Future Land Use areas (required for all RPCs due to Act 181). Direct outreach to local communities with our draft maps has been ongoing over recent months and we anticipate meeting with every town by November. Public engagement for Regional Plan input has also been occurring around the region at local events.

NVDA has added a list of Frequently Asked Question and webinars to our web page to learn more: <https://www.nvda.net/act181.php> (See Act 181 under the Land Use tab).

**Municipal Energy Resiliency Program (MERP):** Following NVDA's assistance with 51 municipalities to obtain energy assessments of 125 buildings in the region, staff are actively assisting the 39 municipalities that were awarded implementation grant funding from BGS to complete the energy efficiency work. Implementation has been going smoothly for those towns who have started.

**Industrial Park activity:** Vermont Renewable Gas is considering a 2.2MW renewable generation project in NVDA's Lyndon industrial park. The PUC has rejected their entry into the Standard Offer program, so the developer is now in contact with LED for a Rule 4.100 opportunity. VRG will also need an Act 250 permit for the development.

**Transportation work:** NVDA staff and interns completed Summer field work with our municipalities in August. They are working with Newport/Derby on a Bike & Pedestrian Study, and also working with communities along the LVRT for enhancement projects.

**Brownfield Redevelopment Opportunity:** NVDA has been working with the Town of St. Johnsbury, a local landowner, and a housing developer toward a brownfield redevelopment project in the community. NVDA is being asked to consider an interim ownership for the cleanup phase before turning the property over to the housing developer.

**Regional Alignment for Economic Development:** NVDA has been in discussions with the NEK Collaborative and the NEK Chamber of Commerce to coordinate economic development activities and reduce duplication of services in the region. Areas for collaboration appear to be in regional marketing, workforce development, and convenings on topics of regional importance – e.g. housing, population growth, etc.

The above list of projects highlights just some of our work. Staff are also working in the areas of emergency management, water quality planning, transportation, mapping, and many other projects related to community and economic development in the Northeast Kingdom. Please contact me at [dsnedeker@nvda.net](mailto:dsnedeker@nvda.net) if you have any questions. The support of the NVDA Board and our communities is greatly appreciated!

Thank you,

David Snedeker  
Executive Director