



## **Solicitation for Three Towns to Participate in Developing an Act 174 Compliant Town Energy Planning Element for the Town Plan**

***Letters of interest should be submitted to the WRC by November 17<sup>th</sup>***

The Windham Regional Commission (WRC) has received funding to assist three towns with the development of town plan energy elements that are consistent with the provisions of Act 174 (see links to background information below). We note that the development of an Act 174 compliant town energy planning element is not a requirement under state law, and is at the choice of the town. A number of towns have told us they'd like assistance. This is an intensive, detail-oriented planning effort that will take a lot of time and energy (no pun intended) on the part of the town planning commission and others involved in the effort. A condition of the funding we've received requires that the town have a completed draft energy element by August 2018. Because of the level of commitment and effort required on the part of the town, and because there are externally-imposed deadlines we must meet in assisting the town, we want to make sure the town planning commission, Selectboard, and energy committee (if there is one) are all on board and committed to the effort.

The WRC Energy Committee will select the three towns we will assist through this funding. The selection will be based upon letters of interests that address the following items. ***The letter must be signed by the Selectboard and Planning Commission, as well as the energy committee if one exists.***

- 1) **Commitment to comprehensive energy planning.** While planning for the siting of renewable energy projects has garnered the most attention and interest, this planning process is much broader and deeper than addressing only siting issues. The towns we assist must be committed to: understanding how energy is consumed in the town across sectors and how this relates to the town's land use policies; what steps the town will take to reduce energy consumption, transition away from non-renewable energy consumption, and move towards the adoption of renewable energy; what renewable energy development is appropriate within the town, and where and how it can best be developed; and the town policy basis for all of the above. The goal is to amend your current town plan to incorporate this enhanced energy element.
- 2) **Commitment to working on the enhanced energy element has been discussed within the town between the Planning Commission and Selectboard (along with the town's Energy Committee, if you have one), and there's agreement that going through this process is something that would be good for the town at this time.** ***Each of the above boards and committees must sign off on the***

**letter of interest submitted to the WRC.** The WRC plays the role of facilitator and technical assistance provider when we assist towns with their planning efforts. The hard work is up to the town. It is the town that deliberates and makes the decisions, including what town policies should be. Please consider whether or not the town is in a place where it is capable of having a robust conversation about all aspects of energy, and whether or not this process will bring the town together rather than divide it.

- 3) **Willingness to collaborate with other towns in training and education.** While WRC staff will meet with towns on a one on one basis in the development of their individual energy elements, we expect the towns to meet and work together on educating themselves about the substance and process of comprehensive energy planning. We encourage the towns to work together as a peer group as much as possible, and it is our hope that this group will be willing to share what they learn with the towns that follow in their footsteps.

Here's what the WRC offers:

- 1) **Guidance through the planning process with the deliverable of a draft Act 174 compliant energy element.** The WRC has created a chapter template that guides towns where to input town-specialized data and policies which we will use as we assist in drafting the element. The WRC has also provided towns with data analysis of the current use, projected use, targets, and maps (available on our website under "What's Current" at the bottom of the page [here](#)). WRC staff will be available for three meetings for each town as a consultant resource for committee meetings or as a resource during public outreach meetings discussing the town's policies/energy element.
- 2) **We will host two gatherings of the towns working on the element to discuss key issues, policies, and approaches to arriving at a compliant energy element.**
- 3) **Technical assistance ensuring internal consistencies in town plan policies.** Compliant elements must ensure that the policies in the energy element are consistent with all other policies in the town plan.

**Letters of interest should be submitted Marion Major at the address below or at [mmajor@windhamregional.org](mailto:mmajor@windhamregional.org) by no later than November 17, 2017.** Please call Marion with any questions at 802-257-4547 x109.

**For additional information:**

Act 174:

<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2016/Docs/ACTS/ACT174/ACT174%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

Act 174 Regional and Municipal Planning Standards Overview:

[http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Pubs\\_Plans\\_Reports/Act\\_174/Standards%20Overview.pdf](http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Pubs_Plans_Reports/Act_174/Standards%20Overview.pdf)

Final Energy Planning Standards: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov/announcements/final-energy-planning-standards>

Public Service Department Energy Planning Page: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/act-174-recommendations-and-determination-standards>

WRC Energy Planning Page and Town Specific Data: <http://www.windhamregional.org/energy/act-174-energy-planning>