

Helping Communities face the challenge and impacts of growth while maintaining community character and a sense of place.

FACT SHEET: 8

iTRaC is the Nashua Regional Planning Commission's new approach to community planning that focuses on integrating transportation, land use and environmental planning. The program was developed to assist communities in dealing with the challenges of growth in a coordinated way that sustains community character and a sense of place.

Village Plan Alternative

What is the Village Plan Alternative?

The Village Plan Alternative is a planning tool that promotes compact development with a mix of land uses, including residential, small-scale commercial, recreation and conservation. These mixed uses are in close proximity to one another within a neighborhood. It is designed to implement the specific provisions of RSA 674:21.VI (a) to allow for the creation of new villages with mixed-used development that is scaled to the smaller populations and lower density of New Hampshire towns.

The Village Plan Alternative (VPA) was designed to respond to the economic, environmental and social consequences of conventional zoning that tends to isolate places of work, home, and recreation, producing a sprawling development pattern. The VPA addresses these consequences by promoting the smart growth principles of compact, mixed-use development, preserving the working landscape, and protecting environmental resources.

The VPA is based on the best examples of village design and Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND), scaled to a rural setting. A VPA development should be designed at the human scale and provide for pedestrian access, clear delineations of public and private spaces, and connections between residential and small-scale retail areas.



Rockingham Planning Commission's Village Design Model Ordinance



Buildings shall relate to scale and design to the surrounding buildings and the human environment- Village Design Model Ordinance, Rockingham Planning Commission

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How is the Village Plan Alternative Used?

The VPA is most appropriately used as an alternative to cluster or open space developments in undeveloped areas. For example, the VPA can be used when a new village or an extension of an existing village would result from the development. Towns can use the VPA as a tool to support open space goals in the Master Plan or to achieve larger-scale objectives such as the conservation of a multi-town network of contiguous open space or the protection of a sensitive regional resource.

Requirements of the Village Plan Alternative

There are two key requirements of the Village Plan Alternative per RSA 674:21:

1. The entire density permitted by existing land use regulations must be located within 20 percent or less of the total parcel available for development.
2. The village plan alternative must comply with existing subdivision regulations relating to emergency access, fire prevention, and public health and safety. However, lot size, setbacks, dimensional requirements for frontage and setbacks, density regulations, and lot size regulations shall not apply.

Optional requirement: Although not a requirement under RSA 674:21, an application made under the village plan alternative ordinance can be given expedited review. Expedited review was required under the original VPA legislation but was removed in a subsequent amendment. Expedited review could be used as an incentive to encourage developers to design their projects utilizing village design principles. The locations and extent of areas in a town zoned for the Village Plan Alternative should be set forth in the Master Plan, based on the considerations given in the above sections.

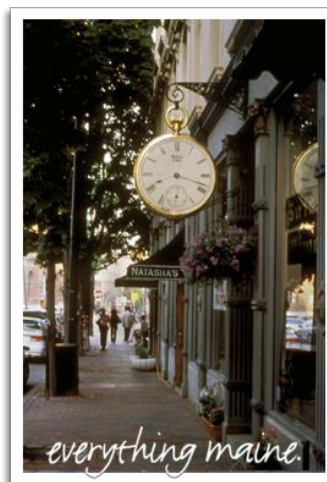
Where has VPA been used?



I'on Village, SC. *photo: www.ionvillage.com*

I'on Village, SC—I'on Village, located in Mount Pleasant, SC, is a modern development rooted in the architecture and design of the area's historic cities. Much like Charleston, Savannah, and Beaufort, I'on Village features a grid layout and mixed-use development. It has received several awards, including the 2001 Platinum award for Best Smart Growth Community in the Nation from the National Association of Homebuilders.

Old Port, Portland, ME—Portland's Old Port provides an example of a successfully revitalized warehouse district. The Old Port effectively combines a working waterfront with a vibrant shopping, dining, and entertainment district. Its quaint cobblestone streets and well scaled architecture make the Old Port very accessible to pedestrians.



Portland, ME
photo: CVB of Greater Portland



Kearny, NJ. *photo: www.kearnyusa.com*

Kearny, NJ—The Town of Kearny, NJ is home to a diverse population of 40,000. Kearny has a number of features that make it an attractive place to live, including safe streets, a variety of housing types, access to public transportation, an active recreation program, and a true town center.

For more details on this topic or to schedule an introductory iTRaC presentation, contact Camille Pattison, iTRaC Program Manager, at camillep@nashuarpc.org.

