

## Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Plan Amendments

The Berlin Planning Commission has prepared a minor amendment of its 2018 Town Plan. The 2018 Berlin Town Plan is consistent with the 14 state planning goals established in 24 VSA §4302 as demonstrated on pages 3-4 of the plan. The proposed amendment adds language to the plan related to two state planning goals – educational and vocation training opportunities and childcare services. As such, changes are limited to the Utilities and Facilities and Economic Development Chapters. There is no change proposed to any land use designations. The proposed amendments are as follows:

*Added a new paragraph to the Educational Facilities section of the Utilities and Facilities Chapter*

There are no institutions or organizations in Berlin which provide traditional higher education or vocational training opportunities in Berlin. Residents seeking these services may enroll in programs offered in nearby municipalities such as Montpelier or Barre City or access classes remotely.

*Added a new section to the Utilities and Facilities Chapter*

**Childcare Services.** There is one licensed childcare provider in Berlin. With 8 infant slots and 10 toddler slots, it is operating at capacity with zero vacancies. Berlin residents and employees may find limited openings in surrounding towns or may rely on a neighbor or family member. There are no licensed or registered childcare providers in the region providing services on the weekends or during the evening or nighttime hours to serve families which work extra hours, second shifts or on the weekends. These schedules are often required for those working in healthcare or in the retail or industrial sectors. Recognizing the reality that most families require full or at least part-time childcare outside of their homes, childcare is critical to Berlin residents and is also vital to the stability and sustainability of the local economy especially considering the towns substantial employment base.

*Added two new paragraphs to the Planning Considerations section of the Utilities and Facilities Chapter*

Co-locating higher education and vocational training programs and facilities that support and enhance existing local employment sectors in Berlin would both increase resident’s access to broader educational opportunities and support local economic development.

Berlin should explore private-public partnerships with advocacy groups and large employers to expand the availability of quality childcare in town. Through the administration of grant funds (through the allocation of municipal funds) the town may help alleviate high childcare start-up or operational costs by lowering building construction costs or facility rental costs.

*Revised Policy 1 in the Utilities and Facilities Chapter*

1. Focus higher-density housing, educational, commercial, and industrial development in the northeast quadrant where it can be efficiently served from existing or planned utility networks, and where the availability of that infrastructure will reduce development cost.

*Added a new action to the Utilities Facilities Chapter*

6. Seek funds to undertake a childcare needs assessment to define the specific needs of Berlin residents and employees.

*Revised a sentence in the Planning Considerations section of the Economic Development Chapter*

As discussed in Chapter 3. Transportation (page 19) and in Chapter 4. Utilities and Facilities (page21), improvements to transportation infrastructure—particularly major state highway intersections—along with ensuring adequate availability of safe and affordable childcare, will also be necessary to further the town’s economic development objectives.