

1 H.306

2 Introduced by Representatives Sims of Craftsbury, Bluemle of Burlington,  
3 Stebbins of Burlington, Anthony of Barre City, Austin of  
4 Colchester, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor,  
5 Cordes of Lincoln, James of Manchester, Masland of Thetford,  
6 Mulvaney-Stanak of Burlington, Nicoll of Ludlow, Ode of  
7 Burlington, Vyhovsky of Essex, and Walz of Barre City

8 Referred to Committee on

9 Date:

10 Subject: Government; conservation and development; municipal and regional  
11 planning; land use planning; State Planning Office

12 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a study  
13 committee to propose an entity that would coordinate State, regional, and local  
14 planning.

15 An act relating to developing a State Planning Office

16 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

17 Sec. 1. PURPOSE

18 The purpose of this act to is to develop a recommendation for reviving and  
19 modernizing the State Planning Office to oversee and coordinate at every level  
20 of government:

1       (1) the prioritization of areas of investment into Vermont’s economy and  
2       people, aligned with climate goals and environmental sustainability;

3       (2) community engagement, equity, and language access in government  
4       operations;

5       (3) long-term emergency and disaster preparedness and recovery;

6       (4) standardized data collection and management; and

7       (5) intergovernmental communications and coordination.

8       Sec. 2. STATE PLANNING; STUDY COMMITTEE; REPORT

9       (a) Creation. There is created the State Planning Office Study Committee  
10       to develop a recommendation for an entity to oversee and coordinate planning  
11       at every level of government.

12       (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following  
13       members:

14               (1) three current members of the House of Representatives, not all from  
15       the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

16               (2) three current members of the Senate, not all from the same political  
17       party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

18               (3) the following members who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the  
19       House:

20               (A) one member from the business community;

21               (B) one member representing persons with disabilities; and

22               (C) one youth member; and

1           (4) the following members appointed by the Committee on Committees:

2                   (A) one member of an environmental organization;

3                   (B) one member with land use planning experience;

4                   (C) one member from a racial equity organization; and

5                   (D) one member representing a regional development corporation.

6           (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study the need for a single

7           entity to oversee and coordinate planning across all levels of government,

8           including the following:

9                   (1) whether the State Planning Office should be housed within the  
10           executive branch or be an independent body;

11                   (2) what the duties of the State Planning Office should be;

12                   (3) how the Office will be funded;

13                   (4) how to ensure equity while growing Vermont's economy in a  
14           sustainable, climate-focused manner;

15                   (5) whether any existing State programs should be housed within the  
16           Office; and

17                   (6) how to better standardize regional and local government  
18           coordination, support, and communication.

19           (d) Assistance. For purposes of scheduling meetings and preparing  
20           recommended legislation, the Committee shall have the assistance of the  
21           Office of Legislative Operations and the Office of Legislative Counsel.

22           (e) Report.

1           (1) On or before December 15, 2021, the Committee shall report to the  
2           General Assembly with its findings and a draft bill creating the Office  
3           proposed.

4           (2) The Committee shall receive input on the State Planning Office from  
5           at least the following entities:

6                   (A) the Vermont Chief Performance Officer;

7                   (B) the Agency of Commerce and Community Development;

8                   (C) the Agency of Digital Services;

9                   (D) the Department of Public Service;

10                  (E) the Agency of Transportation;

11                  (F) the Director of Racial Equity or designee;

12                  (G) one or more representatives from the regional planning  
13           commissions;

14                  (H) the Vermont Planners Association; and

15                  (I) the Director of the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.

16           (3) In studying the issues with creating the State Planning Office, the  
17           Committee shall review:

18                   (A) the State's existing environmental management plans, climate  
19           change mitigation plans, economic development plans, and workforce  
20           development plans;

21                   (B) the regional planning system and how it may interact with the  
22           State Planning Office;

1           (C) the municipal and regional planning grant system and evaluate  
2           whether it should be administered by the Office;

3           (D) best practices for community engagement that the Office may  
4           need to incorporate into its work;

5           (E) current data collection practices within the State agencies and  
6           recommendations for developing common standards;

7           (F) the duties and responsibilities of the prior State Planning Office;  
8           and

9           (G) models from other states.

10          (f) Meetings.

11           (1) The Office of Legislative Counsel shall call the first meeting of the  
12           Committee to occur on or before July 1, 2021.

13           (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the  
14           first meeting.

15           (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

16           (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on December 31, 2021.

17           (5) The Committee shall meet at least five times and take testimony  
18           from a variety of stakeholders including from those with experience in state  
19           land use planning, regional planning, municipal planning, economic planning,  
20           or strategic planning.

21           (6) The Committee may investigate models used in other states to  
22           determine if any would be applicable to Vermont.

1        (g) Compensation and reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during  
2        adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee  
3        shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses  
4        pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than five meetings. These payments  
5        shall be made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

6        Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

7        This act shall take effect on passage.