# Planning for Rural Development in Hinesburg

**Public Forum Nov. 11, 2009**

## What We Have Now

**The Land**

+ A mix of open and forested lands
+ Large and small parcels throughout…
+ Two large rural districts: AG and RRII

**The Regulations**

The DRB reviews projects using dimensional regulations (set numbers) and planning standards (subjective)

**The Review Process & Predictability**

DRB members, landowners and citizens engage in a lengthy process in an attempt to discover "The Number": How many houses should be built on a certain parcel?

## Planning Comm. Objectives

**Create a Development Density System**

+ Adds predictability to the review process
+ Helps retain important resources as rural areas develop

Focus on **resource protection first**, with **development to integrate/benefit** from resource areas

**Do away with outdated minimum lot sizes** that hamper innovative subdivision design and fragment the rural landscape

Clearly **distinguish between density and minimum lot size**

## The Planning Commission is proposing a new, 2-Step approach to the DRB Review Process

**Step 1** **Find The Number**

+ The Number or "build-out" of a parcel is found using a formula.
+ Provides predictability: Anyone can find out maximum build-out number at any time, outside of any DRB hearings.

**Step 2** **Design The Project**

+ DRB members work with landowners to find the best house & infrastructure sites, applying dimensional & rural design standards.
+ Considers important natural/resource areas first, then integrates development into the landscape.

## The Planning Commission has developed 2 Density Options for Finding the Number in Step 1

**OPTION 1** **Feature-Based Density**

Recognizes the individual features of a parcel

(Total acres *minus* natural/resource areas)

x (Density #) - - varies by road class

= Maximum Build-out Number

(with an exemption for small lots)

**OPTION 2** **Sliding Scale Density**

Parcel features are only addressed during the Project Design step

(Total acres)

x (Density #) - - found on a sliding scale

= Maximum Build-out Number

# QUESTIONS

Q1. What is in the best interest of our community (Hinesburg, Vermont, USA) in regulating growth and development in the rural parts of town?

Q2. What types of resource areas would you consider in thinking about the future of your land?

Q3. How should the provision of public services and proximities be factored in – e.g., distance to police/fire/school; distance along and/or impacts on rural roads?

Q4. Should there be more 2 rural districts? Suggestions for other factors or a blend of options?

## From the Town Plan: Goals and Objectives as a Basis for Rural Planning

**Section 1.2 Use Of The Plan "This plan is to be used as: …"**

**"a plan for the future growth and development of the Town"**

**"the basis for revisions to the zoning and subdivision regulations"**

**Section 1.5 Goals and Objectives**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Goal 1** | **To maintain and enhance the rural small town character and environment of Hinesburg.** | |
| | **Obj. 1.1** | **To guide development into locations that reinforce the rural pattern of compact settlements surrounded by open lands.** |
| | **Obj. 1.2** | **To encourage the economic viability of agriculture and forestry uses.** |
| **Goal 3** | **To provide and plan for efficient and adequate community facilities and services** | |
| | **Obj. 3.2** | **To balance growth with the Town's ability to pay for the provision of expanded services and facilities.** |
| **Goal 4** | **To preserve and protect the natural resources and special features of Hinesburg.** | |
| | **Obj. 4.1** | **To enhance and protect the surface and groundwater resources of the Town.** |
| | **Obj. 4.2** | **To preserve significant natural areas such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams, and shorelines.** |
| | **Obj. 4.3** | **To restrict development in areas that would be detrimental to human health, safety and the public good.** |
| | **Obj. 4.4** | **To promote the wise use and conservation of natural resources.** |
| | **Obj. 4.5** | **To conserve viable agricultural and forestry lands in the rural regions of Hinesburg.** |
| | **Obj. 4.6** | **To encourage a pattern of development that maintains open spaces and scenic resources.** |
| | **Obj. 4.7** | **To encourage recycling, the use of renewable resources and the safe cost effective disposal of wastes.** |