

February 24, 2025

**Testimony on Several Housing
Issues to the House Committee
on General and Housing,
2/21/25**



Testimony of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Josh Hanford, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs
and Samantha Sheehan, Municipal Policy and Advocacy Specialist
to the House Committee on General and Housing
February 21, 2025

Infrastructure Needs

In VLCT's membership survey last October, 35 municipalities reported that they currently have plans to build or expand municipal water or sewer systems. From those 35 projects:

- 28% have received some state funding, 16% have received some federal funding.
- The average total cost for the project is about \$14 million, the median is about \$10.2 million
- Anticipated date of completion from 2025 to 2030
- Total anticipated costs from all survey respondents is \$393,871,000 and the funding secured to date is \$151,912,000.

That means that Vermont needs to find over \$240 million just to meet expected costs for local infrastructure projects underway.

\$9.1 Million Infrastructure Sustainability Fund

- VLCT supports investments for municipal infrastructure to enable housing
- Eligible activities: VLCT survey found the top three needs for funding assistance were construction, planning and design, and project management (including finance/grants management)
- Consider expanded geographic application criteria, such as settlement areas, villages, fire districts
- Consider investment above \$9.1 million

Municipal Zoning Appeals

- VLCT supports efforts to enable the development of housing that communities have envisioned, planned for, and allow.
Consider eliminating petitioner appeals
- 60-day measure should not be applied to municipal panels due to predictable resource constraints

Act 250 Appeals

- Consider commensurate, interim reforms pending Appeals study
- Consider tasking the report to also study standing for appellants, and the costs and impact of permit defense to builders and the public.
- Prior DHCD study has found that initial Act 250 exemptions saved \$50k and an average of 7-months, without studying the legal and professional costs related to permit defense.

Municipal Zoning Preemptions

VLCT supports the option to adopt zoning preemptions without a hearing. Municipalities are on track to implement Act 47 & Act 181, with only 13% of survey respondents reporting they have “not started”. Reasons include: other priorities, lack of TA, lack of funding.

[View the recording of this testimony being delivered.](#)

Attachments

[house_generalhousing_2025-02-21.pdf](#)