

**VPA 2016 Awards
Nomination for Citizen Planner,
Board, or Professional Planner**

Name of person or board:

David E. White, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning
City of Burlington, Vermont

Contact Information for the Nomination:

Nomination forwarded by Mary O'Neil, AICP and Scott Gustin, AICP, CFM
City of Burlington Planning and Zoning Office
149 Church Street, Burlington VT 05401
802-865-7556 (Mary); 865-7189 (Scott), or 865-7194 (David)

Contact Information for the Award (if the nominator would also be the recipient of the award if granted, please provide one additional contact person):

Mary O'Neil mconeil@burlingtonvt.gov 802.865-7556
Scott Gustin sgustin@burlingtonvt.gov 802.865-7189
David White dewhite@burlingtonvt.gov 802-865-7194

Check one box only:

- Serves as a volunteer on a committee, board or commission or as citizen activist
Names of board(s) _____
Citizen activist or neighborhood leader _____
- Serves as a volunteer board for a municipality, region or state
Name of board _____
- Serves as a professional planner on behalf of Vermont, on the local, regional or state level or in the private sector (for example, consultant).

Please provide brief (up to one page) summary of the individual or board's qualifications:

David has been working as a professional land use planner in Vermont since 1989. His professional practice began with the Lamoille County Regional Planning Commission, but has evolved to providing service to Vermont communities quite diverse in area, wealth, character, and population.

David is currently the Director of Planning and Zoning for the City of Burlington, Vermont; Vermont's largest city with a population of ~42,000. In his more than 20 years with the Department, David has quietly but significantly contributed in helping to maintaining Burlington's place as one of the country's most livable and dynamic small cities.

David is a past President of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning

Association where he has served as a member of the Chapter's Executive Committee since 1995. He was admitted to the American Institute of Certified Planners - the professional institute of the American Planning Association - in 1997.

Please describe how the nominee meets each of the criteria below (up to 3 pages for questions 1- 6 together):

1. About how many years has this individual or board committed to planning, as part of a group, program, initiative and/or cause? Give details:

David worked for the Lamoille County Planning Commission for nearly 6 years (November 1989-August 1995) for the City of Burlington since then. He began in Burlington in the role of Comprehensive Planner, but was appointed the Director of Planning and Zoning in August 2007; a position he continues to hold. Collectively, David has more than 25 years' experience as a professional planner.

2. To what extent has the nominee's time and dedication increased his/her constituents' (including members of the public) understanding of planning principles and the planning process as well as the goals of the organization of which he/she is a part? How has this advocacy role been pursued?

David has a marked interest in utilizing the tools of planning to engage citizenry, inform administration, policymakers, constituents, commissioners, City Councilors and other public bodies. He actively and passionately initiates public planning processes, typically being the "front man" at civic events, planning charrettes, public engagement dates, media interviews, Planning Commission or City Council agenda dates to provide overview, background, context, purpose, and goal. He is recognized for his technical expertise, his personal warmth and genuine interest in assuring dissemination of factual information and broad public outreach; his honed ability to anticipate and respond calmly in controversial or sensitive conversations; and (perhaps most importantly), his deep seated commitment to listening.

3. Within what sphere of influence has this effectiveness been realized (local, regional, statewide, national)?

As Director of the Planning and Zoning department for the largest city in the state, David's sphere of influence has been local (Chittenden County) and regional (Vermont, and Northern New England) with his continued active participation in NNECAPA's Executive Committee. As past-president of the organization, his reputation extends beyond the boundaries of New England, and he enjoys professional relationships with planners nation-wide.

4. To what extent has this person or board exhibited outstanding leadership in his, her or their endeavors? To what extent is this person or board respected and emulated by peers and/or the community? List example(s)

David is well known throughout the Vermont Planning community; by other municipalities, regional planning commissions and state level planning professionals. He is broadly respected for his integrity, enthusiasm, commitment, and exercise of the profession. As David holds the overall responsibility for leadership and management of the City's planning department, he provides professional advice on planning and development issues to the

Planning Commission, Mayor, City Council, Department Heads, and other local and regional officials. Within the department, David maintains a position as mentor, advisee, and guide to the planning staff. By his example, demeanor and quiet accomplishment, he inspires those with whom he works. He exemplifies the professional practice of Planning. It is an understatement to note that David is deeply respected both inside and outside City Hall.

5. To what extent has the nominee been effective in formulating and implementing his/her/their plans and furthered the cause of planning?

Before David assumed the role of Director, he repeatedly sounded the bell that the department was expending more resources on development review, and insufficient effort on long range planning initiatives. His selection as Director almost immediately changed that course; his directive and initiative founded the **Plan BTV Downtown and Waterfront** project, an enormously broad and ambitious plan for Burlington's Downtown.

(<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/planBTV>.) On the heels of that project David instigated **Plan BTV South End**, a Master Plan for an area of Burlington in rapid and significant change. **Plan BTV South End** has a draft plan now available for public review. Those documents are available here: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/planBTV/SE>

Both of these Master Plans created a municipal identity and momentum for other department based plans: Plan BTV Parks Masterplan (<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/ParksMasterPlan>), Plan BTV Walk Bike Plan (<http://www.planbtvwalkbike.org/>) and the 2014 Plan BTV Open Space Protection Plan ([https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/PZ/OpenSpaceProtectionPlan/BOSPP_As%20Adopted 3.31.14%20with%20inventory.docx.pdf](https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/PZ/OpenSpaceProtectionPlan/BOSPP_As%20Adopted%203.31.14%20with%20inventory.docx.pdf).) This type of expansive (and publically inclusive) comprehensive planning model has become the anticipated archetype within the community; all due to David.

6. Other – for example list involvement in public outreach and citizen engagement, or if this person or board has any publication related to planning.

Apart from the Plan BTV Downtown and Waterfront / Plan BTV South End plans, David was instrumental and early in suggesting and ultimately initiating a planning process for the anticipated redevelopment of the Burlington Town Center Mall. Supporting documents and information about public process may be viewed here:

- **Burlington Town Center (BTV) Mall Public Process**

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/BTV-Mall-Redevelopment-Process>

The video of the Burlington Town Center Re-development Update meeting is available here: <https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-town-center-redevelopment-update>

- **Downtown Form Based Code**

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/planBTV/FBC>

David is managing a Joint Committee with the Planning Commission to begin the detailed review of the proposed Form-Based Code for the Downtown and Waterfront area.

In many of these plans, David's prodding spurred development of new interactive web tools that allowed for expanded public participation in planning initiatives. Plan BTV featured a very popular toggle type web inquiry that received several thousand "hits" from which additional information was drawn. A more recent web-based interactive tool, intended to help

inform the framework for a proposed development agreement relative to the Burlington Town Center Mall, can be viewed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LCDH25X>

David continues to remain active in on-going planning relative to the Downtown Parking Transportation and Management Plan: <http://parkburlington.com/>. The City is currently working on three parking and transportation related plans – a Downtown Parking and Transportation Plan, a Residential Parking Plan, and a Transportation Demand Management Plan.

For a description and an updated timeline of all three projects, [click here](#).

Some of David's previous planning publications include:

Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance, 2002-present.

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/PZ/CDO/>

Vermont Planning Fundamentals – Lesson 3: VT Master Planning Process, Lincoln Education Online, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, MA, 2001

www.lincolneducationonline.org/

2000 Burlington Open Space Protection Plan, 2000.

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/PZ/OpenSpaceProtectionPlan/Full%20Report.pdf>

We believe David is among the pantheon of Planners in Vermont, New England, and the East Coast. We hope his lifetime of commitment and dedication to the professional practice of Planning, and the body of his accomplishments in the field may be recognized by the Vermont Planning Association as the 2016 Vermont Professional Planner of the Year.

Please feel free to include additional supporting material such as letters of support, related documents, reports, articles, presentations, etc.



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

February 19, 2016

Vermont Planners Association
Professional Planner of the Year - 2016 Nomination

To Whom It May Concern:

It is a pleasure to nominate our City of Burlington Planning & Zoning Director, David White, for the Vermont Planners Association's Professional Planner of the Year Award. David has ably served the City of Burlington for over 20 years, and as Director since 2007. His dedicated tenure spans multiple Administrations and includes many planning accomplishments in our community. I am grateful for David's service and look forward to our continued work together.

Since David assumed the role of Planning & Zoning Director, the Department has engaged in multiple long-range planning initiatives to better support our dynamic and innovative City. The *planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront* project resulted in two years' worth of civic engagement to chart a path forward for our vibrant downtown district. The *planBTV* process was so successful that the brand has expanded to other planning projects, including *planBTV South End*, regarding the planning process for Burlington's artistic and industrial district, *planBTV Walk Bike*, and *planBTV Burlington Parks Master Plan*. Under David's leadership, the Planning & Zoning Office has helped cultivate community conversations with a dual purpose: to protect and preserve what is most loved in our City, and to prepare for the continued growth and change all communities undergo.

More projects are on the horizon, including the redevelopment of the Burlington Town Center Mall and the City's work toward a form based code for the downtown district. We are positioned to see much progress in the years to come, much of which can be attributed to David's service to the City. David is a committed and dedicated public servant, and the City of Burlington has greatly benefited from his professional practice.

I am grateful for the opportunity to write in support of David's nomination for the Vermont Planners Association 2016 Vermont Professional Planner of the Year, and I recommend David for this award without reservation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Weinberger".

Miro Weinberger
Mayor



Vermont Planners Association
c/o VLCT 89 Main Street, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602

February 22, 2016

Re: Nomination for Professional Planner of the Year

To whom it may concern-

It is my great pleasure to nominate David E. White, AICP, and Director of Planning and Zoning the City of Burlington, VT for Professional Planner of the Year.

I have been on the Burlington Planning Commission since fall of 2008, have had the opportunity to work with David closely since that time, and am currently the chair of the commission. David's work has always been exemplary and highly professional throughout, but I wish to call special attention to his role in Plan BTV, which can be found online at www.burlingtonvt.gov/planbtv, as well as the follow-up to the latter, Plan BTV South End, which can also be found online at www.burlingtonvt.gov/planBTV/SE

When the idea of competing for a HUD grant to fund a comprehensive development plan for the downtown and the waterfront area of Burlington was first proposed in the fall of 2009, the commission was very supportive, and gave the green light to staff to proceed with the grant application. David initiated the grant process, and oversaw the initial scope of work. When the grant was awarded, he quickly and professionally became the primary responsible party overseeing staff for grant management and administration, and managed all of the consultants hired to help with the process.

David's signature piece, however, is and has been the public engagement and outreach process for both Plan BTV, and Plan BTV South End and his passion and enthusiasm for the latter has been evident at all times. David has worked with the entire city NPA's, at multiple farmers markets, at public charrettes, and presented to citizen and business organizations throughout the city over a period of four years, as the plans evolved in succession. Our new challenge is the development and implementation of Form-Based Code in the downtown and waterfront districts, and as usual, David's efforts to solicit feedback and engage the community have been positively Herculean.

Over the course of these processes, he has been instrumental in spreading the "gospel" of planning throughout Burlington, and not only involving ordinary citizens in the process, but also helping them to understand how important planning and the principles behind it are to a healthy and vibrant community, and letting them know that their visions and ideas matter.

The result has been an active sense of ownership by the citizens of Burlington's Planning and Zoning department, as well as a groundswell of support and interest in the planning process, and how similar exercises might be applied to other areas of the city. We owe David a tremendous debt of gratitude, and it is my sincere belief that he is a perfect candidate to be honored with the distinction from his peers as Vermont Planner of the Year.

Respectfully yours,

Yves Bradley- Senior Vice President, Commercial Brokerage
Chair, Burlington Planning Commission

842 South Prospect Street
Burlington, Vermont 05401
February 22, 2016

Vermont Planners Association
c/o Vermont League of Cities and Towns
89 Main Street, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602

Re: *In support of Nomination of David E. White, AICP, for 2016 Professional Planner of the Year*

Dear Sir or Madam:

I joined the Burlington Planning Commission just as David E. White, AICP, became Director of the City of Burlington's Department of Planning and Zoning. At the time of his hire, the Commission Chair said that David was one of the finest candidates for the post that the Commission could ever hope to consider. In the eight and a half years since, I think David has lived up to that billing.

He is absolutely passionate about land use planning, about determining what choices are best for Burlington's present and future, and about learning what Burlingtonians are thinking and wanting. He is a calm, steady, patient, accessible and approachable presence and he endeavors to work constructively with all, regardless of their viewpoints and regardless of whether he personally agrees with them or not. David is always intellectually engaged and is constantly thinking how Burlington might be able to overcome any land use problems or challenges which it faces at any given time. He is also self-analytical and is always trying to improve as a Director.

David is also a fine teacher, very helpful in explaining complex land use planning and zoning matters to a Planning Commission composed of citizen (as opposed to professional) planners. It is natural for any Planning Staff member to have viewpoints on such matters and the Commission welcomes hearing them. By the same token, the Commission also values an analysis which impartially presents all sides to a matter rather than just advocacy for a particular viewpoint. David is extremely good at meeting such tasks professionally and objectively.

As Director, David must also deal with Department management matters, a number of which have neither been easy or pleasant. He has always done what he has had to do to fulfill these duties competently and professionally and, as needed, with sensitivity to the personal and professional impacts upon the parties involved.

David is also dedicated to the integrity of the land use planning process in Burlington, helping to ensure that the status of quasi-judicial bodies involved in the process is respected and that any breaches are addressed and do not recur. This is not always easy or politically popular, given the parties who can be involved, but David has never shrunk from it.

David is very good at follow through. When he was hired, he wanted land use planning in Burlington to change, with more focus on planning at the neighborhood level as well as maintaining an overall view of the City as a whole. He has engaged in this very successfully, beginning with Burlington's downtown and waterfront and continuing with one of its light industrial corridors, among other areas.

He has successfully obtained grants from the federal government for at least some of these projects from a very limited pool of available money.

He is a forceful advocate for the Department of Planning and Zoning in interactions with the Mayor and City Council, and he is clearly viewed by them as very credible and respected by them. He engages deftly and with respect towards the media, providing straightforward information and in a succinct manner, an ability that is perhaps increasingly important with short news cycles.

In short, I would heartily recommend David E. White for Professional Planner of the Year. I think it an honor that is long overdue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce D. Baker', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bruce D. Baker
Vice Chair, Burlington Planning Commission