



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

1 Baldwin Street • Montpelier, VT 05633-5701 • (802) 828-2295 • <https://jfo.vermont.gov>

Fiscal Note

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Ted Barnett, Senior Fiscal Analyst

H.775 – An act relating to creating tools for housing production

As recommended by the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs¹ⁱ

Bill Summary

This bill as recommended would create various policy tools to support housing development in Vermont, including:

- *Section 1:* creating the Service-Supported Advisory Council;
- *Section 2:* increasing the cap for the “10% for Vermont” program to 12.5% of the State’s average cash balance;
- *Sections 4 and 5:* codifying the Rental Housing Revolving Loan Program in statute;
- *Section 7:* authorizing municipalities to issue special assessment bonds for the purposes of financing public infrastructure; and
- *Section 11:* making changes to the Community Investment Program to extend designation benefits to eligible New Town Centers

The bill would allow for additional lending of the State’s average cash balance through the Treasurer’s credit facilities.

Fiscal Impact

Increasing the amount of the State’s cash balance invested through credit facilities would result in forgone interest income starting in fiscal year 2028 (interest rates on loans offered by the Treasurer are lower than the average return on short-term investments of the State’s cash balance).

Based on estimates of the average State cash balance, an extra \$30 million could be awarded to housing projects by increasing lending from 10% of the State’s cash balance to 12.5%. This could result in up to \$600,000 in forgone interest income annually. However, this should be considered a maximum potential impact – it often takes time for awardees to draw down funds, and it would take a few years for this capacity to be fully realized. The Treasurer does not expect to issue any loans from the expanded facility in fiscal year 2027.

¹ *The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.*

Section 11 of the bill would allow New Town Centers (NTC) to fully participate in the center designation process through the State Community Investment Program. Currently there are 3 NTCs in Vermont – Berlin, Colchester, and South Burlington. Under current law, these centers will be designated as a Step 2 once the Land Use Review Board (LURB) approves regional plans. The bill would allow these NTCs to become a Step 3 center if they meet the various requirements for that step. Step 3 center designation allows access to State funding and grant programs, such as the Sales Tax Reallocation Program, and Downtown Vibrancy Grants. Future NTCs would also be able to participate in Steps 2 and 3 of the center designation program if they meet the requirements for either step. This fiscal impact of this provision is unknown and depends on the number of qualifying projects in designated areas.

Background and Details

Section 1: Service-Supported Housing Advisory Council

Section 1 would create the Service-Supported Housing Advisory Council, comprised of 11 members, which would identify opportunities for increased alignment between human services programs and policies serving individuals who receive Medicaid-funded Developmental Disability Services and housing capital and support programs. The Council would report annually to committees of jurisdiction on its activities and recommendations for legislative action. The bill would not authorize per-diems for Council members.

Section 2: 10% for Vermont Program

The current 10% for Vermont program makes low interest loans primarily for various housing projects. Interest rates range from 1% to 2.5%, depending on the length of loan term/amortization. The amount of money available to lend is currently capped at 10% of the State's average cash balance.

The potential capacity for the program has increased substantially in recent years, largely due to increases in federal funds received by the State in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The average cash balance was \$321.5 million in fiscal year 2020 but increased to \$2.2 billion in fiscal year 2023, before decreasing to \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2025 as more federal funds were spent down. The Local Investment Advisory Committee (LIAC), which oversees the 10% for Vermont program, has authorized a cap of \$120 million for the 10% credit facility, assuming an estimated \$1.2 to \$1.5 billion average cash balance through fiscal year 2027.²

The increase in the State's average cash balance has increased interest income available to the General Fund. Between fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2025, interest income available to the General Fund increased from \$2.3 million to \$58.6 million. The January 2026 Consensus Revenue forecast estimates that the General Fund will have \$27.5 million in available interest income in fiscal year 2027.

In the absence of future significant one-time federal funding, the State's average cash balance is expected to decrease. As that happens, the amount of money that could be awarded through credit facilities would also decrease, potentially limiting the fiscal impact of this bill. As such, the figures presented above should be considered maximum potential fiscal impacts.

Section 11: State Community Investment Program

New Town Centers (NTC) are areas of a municipality that meet certain planning, density, capital, and infrastructure requirements. There are three NTCs in the state: Berlin, Colchester, and South Burlington. Section 11 would allow all three NTCs to reach Step Three of the center designation process if they meet all the other requirements. This would give these NTCs the benefits listed on the following page, which includes access to various funding sources.

The main fiscal impact would be increased eligibility through the Sales Tax Reallocation Program. Between 2021 and 2025, the program awarded eight projects in five municipalities a combined \$3.5 million in

² <https://www.vermonttreasurer.gov/sites/treasurer/files/20250609%20LIAC%20meeting%20minutes%20draft%201.docx>

reallocated sales tax.³ Since sales taxes flow to the Education Fund, the change could increase forgone revenue to the Education Fund, though the annual impact depends on the number of projects that qualify and whether any current or future NTCs reach Step Three designation and qualify for the program.

CENTER BENEFITS	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Downtown Vibrancy Grant Funding			X
Sales Tax Reallocation Funding			X
National Main Street America Accreditation Eligibility			X
Placemaking/Wayfinding/Off-Site Signage Exemptions			X
Housing Permit Appeals Limitations			X
Location Priority for State Office Building Development			X
Downtown Transportation Improvement Fund Eligibility			X
Better Connections Grant Funding Priority		X	X
Infrastructure Funding Priority		X	X
Priority Consideration for State and Federal Affordable Housing Funding		X	X
Municipal Authority to Create Special Taxing District		X	X
Priority Consideration for State/Federal Funding		X	X
Authority to Lower Speed Limits <25 mph		X	X
State Water/Wastewater Permit Fee Reduction		X	X
Exemption from Land Gains Tax		X	X
DHCD-Assistance on Municipal Historic Preservation Regs.		X	X
Other benefits under Department, Program or Board guidelines.		X	X
Funding Priority for Municipal and Regional Planning Resilience Fund	X	X	X
o Municipal Plans/Visioning/Assessment	X	X	X
o Special Purpose Plans		X	X
Better Places Grant Funding (<i>not currently funded</i>)	X	X	X
Downtown & Village Tax Credit Funding	X	X	X

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development

ⁱ The full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.

³ https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Funding-and-Incentives/CPR-SalesTax-Annual-Report.pdf?_gl=1*1mcxiby*_ga*MzI4MTE2NjA3LjE3NjE4NTc3NDk.*_ga_V9WQH77KLW*czE3NzQzNjAwMjQkbzMwMCRnMSR0MTc3NDM2MTcxOCRqNTc3bDakaDA.