

FY2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Essex Junction

The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) is a political subdivision of the State created by the municipalities of Chittenden County in 1966 for the development of policies, plans and programs that address regional issues and opportunities in Chittenden County. Its vision is to be a pre-eminent, integrated regional organization that plans for healthy, vibrant communities, economic development, and efficient transportation of people and goods while improving the region's livability. The CCRPC serves as the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and is responsible for comprehensive and collaborative transportation planning involving municipalities, state and federal agencies and other key stakeholders in Chittenden County. The CCRPC works to ensure implementation of the regional transportation plan and provides technical and planning assistance to its member municipalities, and the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans).

The CCRPC is governed by a 29-member board consisting of one representative from each of the County's 19 municipalities; transportation representatives from VTrans, Green Mountain Transit (GMT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Burlington International Airport (BIA), and a rail industry representative; and, at-large members representing the interests of agriculture, environmental conservation, business, and housing/socio-economic. The legislative body of each Chittenden County municipality selects its own representative and alternate. The full CCRPC selects the at-large representatives.

The CCRPC appreciates the continued opportunity to work with its municipal members to plan appropriately for the region's future to protect and improve the special quality of life that is shared throughout Chittenden County. In FY22, the CCRPC invested approximately \$5.9 million in regional land use, transportation, emergency management, energy, natural resources, public engagement, training, and technical assistance. The program leverages more than \$4.5 million in Federal and State investment with \$250,400 in municipal dues and another \$175,000 in local match for specific projects—a more than 10:1 return on local investment.

Essex Junction representatives to the CCRPC Board and other committees in FY22 were:

- CCRPC representative – Daniel Kerin | CCRPC Alternate: Elaine Haney
- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): Robin Pierce
- Planning Advisory Committee (PAC): Robin Pierce
- Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC): Chelsea Mandigo
- Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REMC): Police Chief Ron Hoague, Fire Chief Chris Gaboriault

Specific activities the CCRPC is engaged in with Essex Junction, as well as CCRPC's regional activities, are discussed in the following sections.

Essex Junction Activities

In FY2022, the CCRPC provided assistance to Essex Junction on the following projects and initiatives:

- **Municipal Planning/Zoning Assistance:** CCRPC staff continued to work with the Essex Junction Planning Commission on a bylaw amendment project to advance a pedestrian friendly landscape in the Village, along with housing, stormwater, statutory changes, and switching to a Development Review Board (DRB) model.
- **Essex Junction Stormwater CCTV Inspection (Phase 2):** This project focused on inspection of existing storm drainage infrastructure in Essex Junction and development of an asset management database of the assessed drainage systems. This is the second round of inspections to be conducted in the village and it built upon the previous asset management database developed in the first round of inspections. Data and information generated by this effort could be used to create a stormwater infrastructure replacement plan. Phase 1 was completed in FY21. Phase 2 will be completed in FY23. Total consultant budget for Phase 1 & 2: \$96,000
- **Water Quality Planning Assistance:** The CCRPC continued to provide assistance with Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) compliance. Staff reviewed and uploaded REI updates to the DEC data portal before the April 1st, 2022 deadline.
- **Emergency Management – LEMP:** CCRPC staff offered assistance in preparing the annual Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP), to ensure that Essex Junction identified a chain of command for efficient response in the event of an emergency.
- **Chittenden County Brownfields Program:** CCRPC obtained a \$400,000 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in FY16; and a \$300,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant in FY18. Since the fall of 2016, using these two grants the program has provided \$586,488 to assess perceived or real contamination issues in various municipalities, including Essex Junction at 3 Maple Street (Chittenden Crossing) and 1 Main Street (Road Res-Q). For more information, visit: <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/economic-development/brownfields/>.
- **Traffic Counts:** Traffic counts conducted in support of Essex Junction’s transportation projects and studies can be found here: (<http://vtrans.ms2soft.com/>).
- **Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program:** The E&D Transportation Program supports community members through affordable transportation to medical appointments, access to grocery stores, and social visits with friends and family. In our region, Green Mountain Transit (GMT) contracts with the Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA) to provide the service. The program uses a combination of lift-equipped vans, sedans and minivans, along with volunteer drivers to give rides to E&D users. While still adapting from the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the E&D program continued to deliver vital transportation to older adults and persons with disabilities in Essex Junction.
- **Technical Assistance:** CCRPC staff provided a variety of technical assistance to the Junction, including:
 - Provided the Junction with a map for understanding Cannabis Regulation.
 - Gave a presentation to Essex Junction staff on a sidewalk condition inventory plan.

- Assembled a map to help municipal official convey existing small lot regulation language.

Essex Junction Projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP (<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/transportation-improvement-program/>) is a prioritized, multi-year list of transportation projects in Chittenden County. To receive federal funds, each transportation project, program or operation must be authorized through the TIP. Essex Junction projects included in the TIP are listed below. These projects are also identified in the FY22 Vermont Agency of Transportation Capital Program for design or construction.

- **Crescent Connector Road** – \$13.8 million for the construction of a new road between VT2A and VT 117 and improvement to Railroad Street between VT117 and VT15. This is a CIRC Alternative Phase I project. Construction is scheduled to be completed in 2025.

Regional Activities

- **ECOS Plan Implementation:** The CCRPC continues to implement the strategies of the *2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan* (<http://www.ecosproject.com/2018-ecos-plan>). The ECOS Plan (Environment; Community; Opportunity; Sustainability) is the regional plan for Chittenden County and combines three plans into one: The Regional Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The 2021 ECOS Annual Report summarizes progress toward the goals set in the ECOS Plan: (<http://www.ecosproject.com/2021-annual-report>). In addition, the ECOS Scorecard monitors the accomplishments and indicators depicting progress towards all 17 of the ECOS goals (<https://embed.clearimpact.com/Scorecard/Embed/8502>).
- **Chittenden County Municipal Legislative Briefing:** On December 7th, the CCRPC hosted a legislative briefing to serve as a forum for municipal representatives and legislators to connect on important topics for the upcoming legislative session. The focal areas for the 2021 briefing included: Smart Growth Investment; Economic Recovery; Governance & Funding (<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/policies-positions/>).
- **Public Engagement & Racial Equity:** Achieving a healthy, inclusive, and prosperous future for Chittenden County is the vision of our Regional ECOS Plan. However, the ECOS partners know we cannot achieve that future without addressing the systemic racism in our community. While addressing inequity has been one of the eight key strategies in the ECOS Plan since 2013, there is much work to be done. The **2014 Public Participation Plan** (PPP: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/public-participation-plan/>) guides our program and policy outreach and will be updated in FY23 with a renewed focus on analyzing inequities in all sectors of our work to ensure that we actively eliminate barriers and foster an inclusive and meaningful public engagement for all planning and policy work we do – this meaningful engagement is the foundation that leads to actions that meet the needs of our diverse community. In FY22 the CCRPC continued to address issues related to racial and economic disparities through the following actions:

- Continued working with equity consultant The Creative Discourse Group (TCDG) to address racial equity within CCRPC. Their work included an [Organizational Equity Assessment](#) of CCRPC with recommendations.
- Established a CCRPC Racial Equity Leadership Team (ELT) which has evolved into a newly forming Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) to guide the CCRPC's equity work.
- Facilitating, providing, and/or taking advantage of educational opportunities for our staff, municipalities, and other local and regional partners that address inequities and advance anti-racism efforts.
- Strengthening existing relationships and partnerships and forging new ones with Vermont organizations working to advance anti-racism efforts.
- In partnership with TCDG, hosted a Planning for Equity Summit as way to engage outside individuals and external partners in examining our organization's policies, practices, culture, and services through the lens of anti-racism and white privilege to ensure they reflect our commitment to racial justice.
- **Building Homes Together:** The CCRPC, Champlain Housing Trust and Evernorth concluded the first Building Homes Together campaign, which has been a five-year outreach, education, and advocacy effort focused on the production of much-needed housing in Chittenden County. The campaign set a goal of 3,500 new homes from 2016 to 2020, with 700 of them permanently affordable to low-income households. Over the five years, 3,659 net new homes were built, but only 536 of them are permanently affordable, achieving 77% of the affordable housing goal. Following the conclusion of the first campaign, the Building Homes Together 2.0 campaign was launched last fall with the goal of building 5,000 homes by 2025 for people of all incomes, including at least 1,250 affordable homes. To review the latest housing data, infographics and press releases, more information can be found at <http://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together/>.
- **Emergency Management:** The CCRPC helped the State transition from regional Local Emergency Planning Committees to a statewide LEPC starting in July 2021. Concurrent with that change a Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC) was formed consisting of two representatives from each municipality and others involved in emergency management in Chittenden County. The purpose of the REMC is to coordinate and support regional all-hazard emergency planning and preparedness activities to improve the region's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all disasters. CCRPC staff participate in a wide array of emergency management-related workshops and exercises to support our role in the SEOC when called upon. The CCRPC also served as the local liaison between municipalities and the state to collect damage assessment information after significant storm events, helped with emergency preparedness for hazardous materials incidents, collected information from each municipality on annual implementation of hazard mitigation activities, and worked with municipalities to complete Local Emergency Management Plans. Finally, CCRPC assisted IEM, a national consulting firm, with drafts of the 2022 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/emergency-management/hazard-mitigation-plan/>) and its municipal annexes.
- **Regional Energy Planning:** The CCRPC continues initiatives to support the Region's Enhanced Energy Plan (<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/regional-energy-plan/>). The CCRPC hired an energy project manager in September and participated in implementation activities

funded by ACCD, which included a Button-Up Vermont event, statewide RPC roundtables, a resource to towns for addressing climate change in land use policy (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Climate-Change-and-Land-Use-Standard-Resolution-20220427.pdf>), energy committee roundtables, technical assistance to energy committees and municipal staff, promotion of CVOEO low-income weatherization program, and electric vehicle, energy storage, heat pump, and weatherization education webinars.

- **Chittenden County Park and Ride Plan Update:** This plan assesses existing park and ride facilities in Chittenden County, identify opportunities for improvements to the existing facilities, and evaluate the potential for new facilities that will benefit commuters and residents throughout the CCRPC region and adjacent communities. This plan also evaluates recent travel trends and establishes a methodology and process to determine whether there is demand for new facilities and where new facilities may be warranted. The plan will be finalized later this fall.
- **Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study:** The CCRPC in collaboration with VTrans, municipalities, and other interested parties completed the I-89 2050 Study. The study evaluated existing multimodal conditions along the I-89 Corridor and its interchanges; assessed numerous new and improved interchange alternatives; conducted extensive outreach to the public including underserved populations, municipal officials, and other stakeholder groups; developed and analyzed bundles of multimodal corridor improvements, and created an implementation plan that will guide the corridor toward the project’s vision over the next 30 years. For more information, please visit the project website: <https://envision89.com/>.
- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM):** In partnership with VTrans, CCRPC staff managed the transition of the **Way to Go! School Challenge** into **Park Your Carbon** (<https://www.connectingcommuters.org/parkyourcarbon>). The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the effectiveness of Way to Go! which was a school-focused K-12 program to encourage sustainable transportation and demonstrate the environmental and financial benefits of non-single occupant vehicle travel. Park Your Carbon was created to pandemic-proof this TDM program and create a fun, engaging brand with easy participation by all Vermonters. Since the transportation sector is the largest contributor to statewide greenhouse gas emissions, educating and encouraging a shift in transportation behavior away from driving alone can help Vermont meet its climate and energy goals. The CCRPC participated in CATMA’s Employer Transportation Coordinator (ETC) Network program and events to learn from other ETC Network members about employee TDM benefits and programs. The CCRPC also continued to collaborate with regional TDM partners to evaluate strategies and policies to encourage sustainable modes of transportation such as walking, biking, ridesharing, vanpooling, transit, bikesharing and carsharing. TDM partners include: the Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA), CarShare VT, the University of Vermont, Green Mountain Transit (GMT), Local Motion, Greenride Bikeshare, Go! Vermont/VTrans, and United Way.
- **Public Transportation Planning:** The CCRPC remains engaged with GMT in a wide variety of public transit planning projects and initiatives to support the continued development of a transportation system that is efficient, equitable and environmentally sustainable. In FY22, the CCRPC staff participated in Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) meetings (<https://www.actweb.org/>), continued to participate in Tri-Town Transportation Committee

meetings to review community-based solutions to enhance mobility in Jericho, Underhill and Cambridge, served as a stakeholder for the Vermont Clean Cities Coalition’s Future of Rural Transit Project (<https://vtccc.w3.uvm.edu/projects/future-of-rural-transit/>) and managed the Transit Finance Study that developed transit financing options for the Legislature to consider (https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Transit_Funding_Report_Dec2021.pdf).

- **Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program:** The Chittenden County E&D Transportation Program supports community members through affordable transportation to medical appointments, access to fresh food at the grocery store, and social visits with friends and family. In FY22, the E&D Committee held four quarterly meetings to discuss program funding, volunteer driver utilization and opportunities to enhance transportation equity within our region. In coordination with VTrans, the CCRPC hosted the 3rd Annual E&D Transportation Summit in Burlington. More information about the event can be found here: (<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/public-transit/E-and-D>). The CCRPC also managed the E&D, ADA & Medicaid Call Center Feasibility Study: (<https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GMT-SSTA-Call-Center-Draft-Final-Report.pdf>).
- **Active Transportation Planning:** The CCRPC began updating the 2017 Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP, <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/regional-bikeped-plan/>), which serves as the active transportation element of the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The ATP includes recommended priority corridors, programs and policies to support active transportation throughout the region. CCRPC staff collaborated with TDM partners and local municipalities to expand the Greenride Bikeshare system and convert the fleet to electric assist bicycles (www.greenridebikeshare.com). The CCRPC also promoted TDM strategies and provided bike/ped-related technical assistance to municipalities and businesses, assisted municipalities with bike/ped grant and UPWP applications, managed bike/ped-related UPWP projects, and conducted bike/ped counts on paths, designated bike lanes, and other roadways. The CCRPC also continued to host the 2021 webinar series from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycling Professionals for municipalities and regional partners.
- **Clean Water:** The CCRPC’s water quality initiatives help to safeguard our clean drinking water, support our recreation and tourism industry, and make our municipalities more resilient to flood events. The CCRPC continues to host the Clean Water Advisory Committee and the MS-4 Sub-Committee (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/clean-water-advisory-committee/>) and provide guidance for the Vermont Clean Water Fund. CCRPC staff also joined the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program Advisory Committee, and managed Design Implementation Block Grant projects on behalf of select towns to design stormwater treatment practices. The CCRPC also supported education programs such as the Rethink Runoff (<http://www.rethinkrunoff.org>) on behalf of nine of our municipalities, assisted with watershed resiliency mapping, participated in water quality-focused policy discussions. As the newly designated Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) for the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages, Basin (5). CCRPC worked to seat the Basin 5 Water Quality Council which will assist the CCRPC as it oversees the development and implementation of non-regulatory water quality improvement projects that reduce phosphorus loading into these streams and Lake Champlain.
- **Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Compliance and Water Quality Planning Assistance:** CCRPC staff continues to work with all Chittenden County municipalities on meeting their

MRGP obligations. This includes evaluating segments through Road Erosion Inventories (REIs), tracking and documenting upgraded segments and outlets, and reporting to DEC. Staff also assists municipalities with the State's Grants in Aid (GIA) program, which allocates funding to participating towns for stormwater improvements related to the MRGP. In FY2022, 13 Chittenden County municipalities signed up to participate in the GIA program. An estimated 38 non-compliant segments will be upgraded using the allocated \$253,000.

- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** With federal funding from the US Economic Development Administration, CCRPC continued work on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) for our region in concert with the Addison, Rutland and Central VT regions -- collectively called the [West Central Vermont CEDs](#). This document will help identify priority economic development strategies and projects and will be used by a variety of federal and state funding programs when making grant decisions. The project will be completed in late 2022.
- **VTculverts:** CCRPC staff worked with a consultant to upgrade the VTculverts website (<https://www.vtculverts.org/>). The new website allows easy in-the-field bridge and culvert inventories to be conducted. VTculverts is a great tool to visually see town-maintained bridges and culverts on a map or chart. Between the new website and training, municipal use of the website has increased.
- **Regional Technical Assistance:** This includes, but is not limited to, municipal technical assistance for various transportation issues, GIS mapping, and bylaw revisions, Act 250/Section 248 application reviews, grant administration and grant application assistance for plans, projects and initiatives at the local level that help advance the ECOS Strategies, Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- **Lake Champlain Byway:** Chittenden County includes eight of the Byway's 22 communities: Milton, Colchester, Winooski, Essex Junction, Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, and Charlotte. CCRPC staff maintained the Byway website (<https://lakechamplainbyway.com/>) including a helpful Interactive Map (<http://map.ccrpcvt.org/lcbyway/>). Additionally, CCRPC continues to host the Byway's audio stories App & Phone line (<https://lakechamplainbyway.com/explore-our-regions/mobile-story-app/>).

For further information about the CCRPC, please visit <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/> or contact CCRPC Executive Director, Charlie Baker: cbaker@ccrpcvt.org.