

## **FY2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Essex**

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 FY20, the CCRPC invested just under \$4.5 million in regional land use, transportation, emergency management, energy, natural resources, public engagement, training, and technical assistance. The program leverages more than \$4.1 million in Federal and State investment with \$245,000 in municipal dues and another \$146,000 in local match for specific projects—an estimated 11:1 return on local investment.

Essex representatives to the CCRPC Board and other committees in FY20 were:

- CCRPC Representative: Jeff Carr | CCRPC Alternate: Irene Wrenner
- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): Dennis Lutz
- Planning Advisory Committee (PAC): Darren Schibler
- Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC): Annie Costandi
- MS4 Subcommittee: Annie Costandi

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

## Essex Activities

In FY2020, the CCRPC provided assistance to Essex on the following projects and initiatives:

- **Tanglewood Drive Shared-Use Path and Stormwater Scoping Project:** The purpose of this project was to improve the drainage system along Tanglewood Drive and to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities for users of various ages and abilities while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular conditions. Throughout FY20, the CCRPC worked with the Town and a consultant to move forward with this study. After collecting existing conditions data during the summer of 2019, a local concerns meeting was held in October. A public survey was then developed to get feedback on initial conceptual ideas for a multiuse path and stormwater improvements. After reviewing public input, the project team developed a draft report. The final report is scheduled to be completed and presented to the Selectboard in FY21. Total consultant costs in FY20: \$13,977. Contract balance for FY21: \$25,023.
- **Water Quality Planning Assistance:** The CCRPC continued to provide assistance with Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) compliance and the Grants-In-Aid Program. Using Grants in Aid funding, RPC and town staff worked to plan out a project on West Sleepy Hollow Road, although implementation won't take place until FY21. Staff reviewed and sent Essex's REI Inventory to the DEC data portal before the April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 deadline. RPC Staff provided a letter of support for a FY21 Better Roads grant on Osgood Hill Road.
- **Essex Stormwater CCTV Inspection:** This project has consisted of working with a consultant to use a camera to inspect and inventory stormwater pipes and to generate a condition assessment report that the Town will then be able to use to create a stormwater infrastructure replacement plan, to be used in both operational and capital infrastructure planning. After a consultant was hired during the fall of 2019 and the scope of work was finalized in early 2020, the video inspection of the stormwater system commenced in March. Due to working restrictions caused by COVID-19, this project is being carried over into FY21. Total consultant costs in FY20: \$10,500. Contract balance for FY21: \$42,550.
- **Municipal Energy Planning:** CCRPC staff collaborated with the Essex Community Energy Committee to plan and host the regional Button Up event on 11/24/2019 which showcased the Home Energy Makeover Trailer, 7 energy vendors, and attracted 400 people to the Essex Experience Performance Space. This event was instrumental in making the 2019 Button Up Campaign the biggest ever. In particular for Essex, 14 households signed up for home energy visits from Efficiency Vermont staff and 156 individuals engaged with Efficiency Vermont regarding home energy savings and efficiency.
- **Emergency Management – LEMP:** CCRPC staff offered assistance in preparation of the annual Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP), formerly known as the Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), to ensure that Essex is prepared in the event of a disaster.
- **Geographic Information Systems:** CCRPC staff updated VTculverts data with Essex culvert inventory work conducted by the Town.
- **Traffic Counts:** The CCRPC conducted five roadway AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) counts and two turning movement counts in support of Essex's transportation projects and studies: <http://vtrans.ms2soft.com/>

- **Technical Assistance:** CCRPC staff provided a variety of technical assistance to the Town, including:
  - Worked with the Town and Village on developing infographics for a public engagement initiative surrounding a Town/Village merger vote taking place in November 2020;
  - Assembled a COVID-19 Community Guide for Essex residents.

### Essex 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 projects included in the TIP are listed below. These projects are also identified in the FY20 Vermont Agency of Transportation Capital Program for design or construction.

- **Alder Brook Culvert on VT 117:** \$2.17 million for replacement of a failed buried structure on VT117 carrying Alder Brook. Construction scheduled to begin in 2021.
- **Pinecrest Drive Sidewalk:** \$286,216 Transportation Alternatives grant in 2015 for sidewalk from VT2A to Suffolk Lane. Construction scheduled for 2021.
- **Stormwater Detention Pond Design and Construction at LDS Church:** \$478,265 federal and \$598,683 state Municipal Highway and Stormwater Program award scheduled for construction in 2021.
- **Stormwater System Retrofit with Infiltration Systems and Stabilized Outfalls for Three Cul-de-sacs:** \$271,139 Transportation Alternatives award in 2018 to be constructed in 2021.
- **Susie Wilson Road/VT15 Intersection Improvements:** \$1.78 million CIRC Alternatives Phase III project to improvement the VT15/Susie Wilson Rd intersection. Construction schedule for 2022.
- **Sydney Drive Detention Pond:** \$243,954 Transportation Alternatives award in 2016 to retrofit a detention pond in a wooded area adjacent to Sydney Drive. Construction scheduled for 2020.
- **VT 117/North Williston Road Hazard Mitigation Improvements:** \$400,000 CIRC Alternatives Phase III project to install a box culvert, safety enhancements and armoring. Construction schedule to be determined.
- **VT 117/North Williston Road Intersection Improvements:** \$1.7 million CIRC Alt Phase III project. Construction scheduled for 2022.
- **VT 15 Sidewalk Old Stage Road to Essex Way:** \$160,000 CIRC Alternatives Phase III project. Construction schedule to be determined.
- **VT128/Alder Brook Culvert:** \$505,000 for replacing a culvert on VT128 in 2021.
- **VT 15/Sand Hill Road Intersection Improvements:** \$1.34 million CIRC Alt Phase II Project for installation of a signal. Construction scheduled to begin in 2022.
- **VT15 Multiuse Path:** \$2 million for path from Lime Kiln Road to Susie Wilson Road as part of CIRC Alternatives Phase II implementation project. Construction scheduled to begin in 2021.

## Regional Activities

- **ECOS Plan Implementation:** Throughout the past fiscal year, the CCRPC has been working to implement the planning principles of the [2018 Chittenden County 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 2019 ECOS Annual Report is a summary that highlights a number of regional accomplishments, trends, and high priority actions (<http://www.ecosproject.com/2019-ecos-annual-report>). In addition, the ECOS Scorecard hosts the ECOS Partners' shared measurement and indicator system that monitors how Chittenden County is doing relative to achieving our shared ECOS goals (<https://app.resultsscorecard.com/Scorecard/Embed/8502>).
- **Legislative Forum:** The CCRPC hosted the Legislative Breakfast to serve as a forum for municipal representatives and legislators to connect on a few important topics for the upcoming legislative session, including: Smart Growth, housing, Act 250, water quality funding, transportation investments, transportation climate initiative, population health, workforce, mental health and substance use disorders, and regional and municipal planning investments (<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/policies-positions/>).
- **Racial Equity & Public Engagement:** Addressing inequity in our region is one of the eight key strategies in the Chittenden County ECOS Plan. CCRPC staff have started to plan for the update of the **2014 Public Participation Plan** (PPP: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/public-participation-plan/>) 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. This past year, the CCRPC continued to participate in Refugee and Immigrant Service Provider Network meetings, completed the 2019 Title VI Report for VTrans/FHWA, and worked towards the completion of the FTA Title VI Program. The CCRPC has made a public commitment to address issues related to racial and economic disparities through the following actions:
  - Facilitating, providing, and/or taking advantage of educational opportunities for our staff, partner municipalities, and other local and regional partners that address inequities and advance anti-racism efforts.
  - 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.
  - Furthering our understanding of the significant historical role land use policies and transportation investments have had in systemic racism and inequity, while making sure that future zoning and transportation investments in Chittenden County encourage equity and provide increased opportunities for Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and low income residents. More specifically, we will update our Equity Impact Worksheet that is part of our Public Participation Plan based on best practices around the country and will have this reviewed locally by a diverse audience.
  - Encouraging municipal appointments on our Board and Committees that reflect the diversity of our community.

- Strengthening existing relationships and partnerships and forging new ones with Vermont organizations working to advance anti-racism efforts.
- Committing to advance Strategy 8 of the Chittenden County ECOS Plan (page 48), which includes specific tasks related to tracking and analyzing inequities in all sectors of our work, prioritizing positive programs and investments to low opportunity places, and more.
- **Building Homes Together:** Following the first three years of the Building Homes Together campaign, more progress on housing production in Chittenden County was achieved in 2018 – please note that 2019 data is not available at this time. The campaign was initiated by the CCRPC, Champlain Housing Trust, and Housing Vermont in 2016. There were 620 homes developed and ready for occupancy in 2018. Over the first three years of the campaign, an average of 758 homes were built each year ahead of the pace needed to meet the campaign’s goal of 3,500 homes over five years. With over 2,200 homes built in the county in the last three years, only 280, or 13%, became permanently affordable. That’s shy of the campaign’s goal of 20%. (<http://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together>).
- **Public Health:** The CCRPC served on the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance (CCOA, <http://www.ccoavt.org>) together with other dedicated stakeholders including local non-profit agencies, state and local government, United Way of Northwest Vermont, UVM Medical Center, Vermont Department of Health, business leaders, and community members in Chittenden County. In FY20, we helped the CCOA transition to the Chittenden County Public Health Alliance to broaden the focus on social determinants of health, with racial justice and mental health the current focus areas. The CCRPC also served as the lead agency for the Chittenden Prevention Network’s Regional Prevention Partnership grant (<http://www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drug-abuse/programs-services/prevention-programs>). Accomplishments include a sharps disposal kiosk at the Williston Fire Department, expansion of Rx drug take-back locations, promoting Rx drug takeback events, fake ID enforcement to discourage underage drinking, and community education about substance use prevention for youth.
- **Regional Energy Planning:** In coordination with the adoption of the 2018 ECOS Plan, the CCRPC has been moving forward with initiatives to support the Region’s Enhanced Energy Plan (<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/regional-energy-plan/>). In order to advance the climate and energy goals within the State’s Comprehensive Energy Plan, the CCRPC has continued to conduct outreach with municipal energy committees/planning commissions, municipal legislative bodies, and state agencies to assist with the development of local energy plans. Nine municipalities have adopted enhanced energy plans and five municipalities have plans in development. The CCRPC also participated in Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) stakeholder meetings, organized a regional [Button Up Vermont](#) event with 400 participants, participated in Drive Electric Vermont meetings, worked with VEIC on a resource guide to support EV charging at multi-unit properties (<https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CCRPC-MUD-EV-Charging-Survey-Report-Final-20200807.pdf>), reviewed Public Utility Commission proceedings, and provided municipal assistance to move forward with the energy planning recommendations established in Act 174.
- **Emergency Management:** During the unprecedented time of global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CCRPC staff worked extensively with municipalities, state health officials, and the

public to relay important updates, resources, and general information about the pandemic. A COVID-19 Municipal Response webpage was developed and maintained (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/covid-19/>), and staff developed community guides for seven municipalities that were mailed to residents. In addition to focusing resources on addressing the pandemic in our region, the CCRPC continued to host Local Emergency Planning Committee meetings (LEPC 1, <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/local-emergency-planning-committee/>) and participate in a wide array of emergency management-related workshops and exercises to enhance resilience to disasters in our region. 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.

- **Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study:** The CCRPC in collaboration with VTrans, municipalities, and other stakeholders continues to move forward with this multi-year study to assess safety, capacity, multimodal access, resilience, and other transportation and land use issues along the I-89 corridor and its interchanges within Chittenden County. The 2050 Vision for the I-89 Corridor through Chittenden County is an interstate system (mainline and interchanges) that is safe, resilient, and provides for reliable and efficient movement of people and goods in support of state, regional, and municipal plans and goals. As the study progresses, the project team continues to evaluate transportation alternatives that best achieve the study goals related to safety, livability and sustainability, mobility and efficiency, environmental stewardship and resilience, economic access and vitality, and system preservation. For more information, please visit the project website at <https://envision89.com/>.
- **Transportation Demand Management:** In partnership with VTrans, CCRPC staff continued the **Way to Go! Challenge** ([www.waytogovt.org](http://www.waytogovt.org)) as a school-focused K-12 program to encourage sustainable transportation and demonstrate the environmental and financial benefits of non-single occupant vehicle travel. In 2019/2020, 33,138 Vermont students and staff from 83 schools participated in program. 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:** An integral component of our region's transportation system is the public transit service provided by Green Mountain Transit (GMT). Throughout the past year, the CCRPC has been engaged 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. The CCRPC hosted a series of Rural Transit Roundtable meetings to bring together state agencies, municipal staff, legislative representatives, TDM partners, and members of the public to evaluate opportunities to enhance transit services in rural areas of our county. CCRPC staff also hosted Tilley Drive transit meetings, participated in ADA Advisory Committee meetings, worked with municipalities to coordinate FY21 transit-related UPWP requests, and worked with UVM and GMT to conduct the Commuter Bus



Ridership Pilot Project (<https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CCRPC-Final-Report-3.pdf>).

- **Elderly and Disabled (E&D) Transportation Program:** Beginning in FY19, the CCRPC embarked on a plan with GMT and United Way of Northwest VT to evaluate program improvements for E&D transportation in Chittenden County. The program evaluation included goals to enhance collaboration between program stakeholders, develop better public-facing information for riders, and prioritize opportunities to create a more equitable program for all Chittenden County residents. After program recommendations were made in fall 2019, CCRPC staff worked with VTrans to update the statewide E&D Program Guidance and prepare for the first annual E&D Transportation Summit. The CCRPC now also hosts the quarterly E&D partner meetings, which were previously hosted by GMT.
- **Neighbor Rides:** Since 2013, the CCRPC has been investing in the United Way Neighbor Rides program to improve the integration of volunteer drivers into SSTA's services and increase access to transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities by offering a lower-cost mode of transportation (<http://www.unitedwaynwvt.org/Neighbor-Rides>). Throughout the past year, CCRPC staff have continued to work with United Way and other Neighbor Rides stakeholders in an effort to identify opportunities to increase the number of volunteer drivers in the program. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had an adverse impact on the Neighbor Rides program. Beginning in FY21, the program stakeholders will be working to address existing COVID-related barriers to the volunteer driver program.
- **Active Transportation Planning:** The CCRPC has remained committed to supporting active transportation initiatives in our communities. CCRPC staff continue to collaborate with TDM partners and local municipalities on planning efforts to expand the Greenride Bikeshare system and move toward a fleet conversion to electric assist bicycles ([www.greenridebikeshare.com](http://www.greenridebikeshare.com)). The CCRPC also assisted with planning efforts for the 2020 Vermont Walk/Bike Summit, provided VTrans with support on the development of the State's Bike Ped Strategic Plan, promoted TDM strategies and provided bike/ped-related technical assistance to municipalities and businesses, assisted municipalities with grant and UPWP applications, managed UPWP projects, and conducted bike/ped counts on paths, designated bike lanes, and other roadways. The CCRPC also continued to host the webinar series from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycling Professionals for municipalities and regional partners.
- **Clean Water:** Water quality projects have become an integral part of our regional planning efforts. 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 has continued to assist our member municipalities to achieve these goals. 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, participated in Vermont Clean Water Network meetings, assisted municipalities with developing stormwater master plans and implementing Clean Water Block Grant projects, supported education programs such as the Rethink Runoff (<http://www.rethinkrunoff.org>), assisted with watershed resiliency mapping, participated in water quality-focused policy discussions, and submitted an application to

become the Clean Water Service Provider for the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages Basin (Basin 5).

- **Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Compliance and Water Quality Planning Assistance:** The CCRPC continues to work with a team of consultants to develop Road Erosion Inventory (REI) concept plans and REI datasets for member municipalities in order to address road erosion issues on municipal roads to meet MRGP requirements. For an interactive dashboard of the REI progress in our communities visit <https://map.ccrpcvt.org/reidashboard/>. CCRPC staff assisted municipalities with FY21 **Better Roads** grants to secure funding for erosion control and maintenance techniques that protect and enhance water quality around our region. The CCRPC also provided funding to municipalities through the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for inspection and inventory of their stormwater system, development of Phosphorus Control Plans (PCPs) for MS4 communities and conceptual plans for transportation-related water quality projects on local roads.
- **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Bluetooth Technology:** Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies are aimed at enhancing transportation safety and increasing mobility through the integration of advanced communications technologies into transportation infrastructure. The CCRPC has been involved in a variety of ITS-related projects, initiatives, and trainings that encompass a broad range of wireless and traditional communications-based technologies for transportation systems. The CCRPC has continued to monitor deployed corridor-level Bluetooth (BT) devices along five corridors in Chittenden County. The data from this system will also be utilized by the VTrans Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) and Traveler Information System (TIS) for 511.
- **Regional Technical Assistance:** This includes, but is not limited to, municipal technical assistance for various transportation issues, GIS mapping, bylaw and ordinance revisions, Act 250/Section 248 application reviews, grant administration and grant application assistance, build-out analyses, Congestion Policy development for urban areas to replace the current LOS Policy, Transportation Resilience Planning Tool development for sub-watersheds in the county (<https://roadfloodresilience.vermont.gov/#/map>) and improving the VT Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool (<http://www.vtculverts.org/>). In addition, we have created an online, searchable database of funding opportunities across a variety of planning sectors (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/funding-opportunities/>).
- **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/>).

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