

FY2023 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. The CCRPC also serves as the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and is responsible for transportation planning with our municipalities, state and federal agencies and other key stakeholders in Chittenden County. The CCRPC is governed by a 29-member board consisting of one representative from each of the County's 19 municipalities, transportation representatives and, at-large members representing the interests of agriculture, environmental conservation, business, and housing/socio-economic. CCRPC's 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. [Click here](#) to learn more about the CCRPC.

In FY23, the CCRPC invested over \$7 million in regional land use, transportation, emergency management, energy, natural resources, public engagement, training, and technical assistance. The program leverages around \$6.5 million in Federal and State investment with \$255,408 in municipal dues and around \$250,000 in local match for specific projects—a 13:1 return on local investment.

Essex representatives to the CCRPC Board and other committees in FY23 were:

- CCRPC Representative: Andy Watts | Alternate: Tracy Delphia
- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): Aaron Martin
- Planning Advisory Committee (PAC): Katherine Sonnick
- Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC): Annie Costandi
- Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC): Police Chief Ron Hoague, Fire Chief Charlie Cole
- Long Range Planning Energy Sub-Committee: Daniel Parkins

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<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-communities/essex/>

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 FY2023, the CCRPC provided assistance to Essex on the following projects and initiatives:

- **Essex Phosphorus Control Plan (PCP) Treatment Practices-** This project included developing conceptual plans, updated construction costs, and a project priority ranking system to help with project

prioritization and planning efforts for the top 5 PCP water quality improvement projects. The project was completed in June. Total consultant budget: \$89,482

- **Essex Build-Out for Bylaw Modernization:** CCRPC began work with Essex Town to design a 3D model using ArcGIS Urban to evaluate the impact of zoning and land–use changes on sewer capacity within the sewer service area core. This work will inform drafting new bylaws to encourage infill housing in pedestrian-oriented smart growth areas.
- **Energy Implementation:** The CCRPC assisted Essex with application materials for the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program and with technical support regarding the [Municipal Energy Resilience Program](#) for municipal buildings. The CCRPC also assisted Essex in the investigation of a micro hydro installation at Indian Brook Reservoir, and in developing an energy revolving loan fund.
- **Essex Stormwater CCTV Inspection (Phase 2 and 3):** This project focused on inspection of existing storm drainage infrastructure in Essex and development of an asset management database of the assessed drainage system. 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 was completed in FY23, and Phase 3 is expected to be completed in FY24. Information from all 3 phases will be consolidated and the findings will be used to schedule implementation of pipe repairs, lining or replacement. Total consultant budget for Phases 1, 2, and 3: \$192,340
- **Water Quality Planning Assistance-** The CCRPC continued to provide planning and reporting assistance with Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) compliance and the Grants-In-Aid Program. In FY23, CCRPC assisted Essex in finalizing their FY22 Grants in Aid project on Sawmill Road that brought 2 segments up to standards using their award amount of \$36,400. Using their FY23 offer of \$57,625, Essex and CCRPC staff planned for and upgraded 2 segments on Old Pump and Gray Way, and will be completing a project in FY24 on Greenfield Road using the remaining FY23 dollars.
- **Chittenden County Brownfields Program:** In May 2023, CCRPC secured a competitive EPA grant of \$500,000 for Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Planning over the next four years to aid property owners, potential developers and municipalities in investigating environmental issues before potential property redevelopment. This year in Essex, the Potvin Automotive property on Center Road was assessed for contamination.
- **Geographic Information Systems:** Essex Town specific GIS work by CCRPC included:
 - Creating a Local Option Tax online map;
 - Pulling inventories and delivering an updated pavement condition database and maps; and
 - Identifying 15cm imagery buy-up areas.
- **Technical Assistance:** CCRPC staff provided a variety of technical assistance to Essex Town, including:
 - Conducting mid-term Plan implementation consultations and responding to an inquiry about Essex Town's enhanced energy plan status;
 - Consulting with Essex and ACCD staff on strategies to pursue planning designations;
 - Assisting the Essex / Essex Jct Housing Commission with inclusionary zoning and housing trust fund initiatives;
 - Reviewing an Act 250 application for 150 Red Pine Circle;
 - Reviewing Essex Town's bylaws for National Flood Insurance Program compliance; and
 - Preparing for and completing an Essentials of Land Use Planning training with Town of Essex Selectboard, Planning Commission, and staff.

- **Traffic Counts:** 2 Automatic Traffic Counts were conducted in Essex this year. Traffic counts conducted in support of Essex’s transportation projects and studies can be [found here](#).
- **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. In FY23, 118 trips were provided to Essex residents as part of this program.

Essex Projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The [TIP](#) 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 included in the Vermont Agency of Transportation Capital Program.

- **Stormwater Detention Pond Design and Construction at LDS Church:** 2018 and 2022 Municipal Highway and Stormwater Program awards for a stormwater treatment project scheduled for construction in 2024.
- **Stormwater Retrofit at VT289/VT15:** \$798,000 for design and construction of stormwater retrofit to implement VTrans flow restoration plans. Construction scheduled to begin in 2024.
- **Susie Wilson Road Corridor and Intersection Improvements:** \$1.8 million CIRC Alternatives Phase III project to improve the VT15 corridor including intersections with Susie Wilson Road and Kellogg Road. Construction to begin in 2025.
- **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:** \$2.1 million CIRC Alt Phase III project. Construction scheduled for 2025.
- **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:** \$650,000 for replacing a culvert on VT128 in 2023.
- **VT 15/Sand Hill Road Intersection Improvements:** \$2.5 million CIRC Alt Phase II Project for installation of a signal. Construction scheduled to begin in 2026.
- **Resurface VT15:** \$2.5 million to resurface VT15 from Winooski City Line to Susie Wilson Road in 2024.
- **VT15 Traffic Signal Replacement:** \$1.7 million to replace traffic signals on VT15 from Campus Avenue to Ethan Allen Avenue in 2025.

FY2024 CCRPC Work Program

Project Name	Brief Description	Total Budget
Official Map for Essex Town Center Mix Use Districts	CCRPC Staff will assist Essex Town in developing an Official Map for Essex Town Center (area of approximately 125 acres).	CCRPC staff assistance only

Regional Activities

- **ECOS Plan Implementation and Update:** The [2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan](#) (Environment;

Community; Opportunity; Sustainability) is the regional plan for Chittenden County and combines the Regional Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy into one. [The ECOS Scorecard](#) monitors the accomplishments and progress indicators for all 17 of the ECOS goals. CCRPC began updating the ECOS plan for the next five years in FY 2023 for intended adoption in 2024.

- **Public Engagement and Racial Equity:** The CCRPC continued to build organizational capacity to address systemic racism and inequities in our communities through the following actions:
 - Hiring a full time Equity & Engagement Manager to lead organizational and project-specific equity and racial justice efforts.
 - Facilitating, providing, and/or taking advantage of educational opportunities for our staff, municipalities, and other local and regional partners.
 - Strengthening existing relationships and partnerships and forging new ones with community organizations, grassroots organizers, and individuals working directly with marginalized communities.
 - Supporting and facilitating an [Equity Advisory Committee](#) to guide CCRPC's equity work.
 - Drafting an organizational Equity Statement and Equity Action Plan, building off of recommendations from the Creative Discourse Group's [Organizational Equity Assessment](#).
 - Beginning to explore and design a community capacity building grant program using FHWA funds to increase trust, education, and participation from marginalized communities in CCRPC's transportation decision-making.
- **Chittenden County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** With federal funding from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), CCRPC completed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in concert with the Addison, Rutland and Central VT regions -- collectively called the [West Central Vermont CEDS](#). The CEDS identifies priority economic development strategies and projects and will be used by a variety of federal and state funding programs when making grant decisions. The West Central Vermont CEDS was approved by EDA in June 2023.
- **Housing:** The Building Homes Together campaign is a collaboration between CCRPC, Champlain Housing Trust, and Evernorth that focuses on the production of much-needed housing in Chittenden County through outreach, education, and advocacy efforts. The Building Homes Together 2.0 campaign was launched in fall 2021 with the goal of building 5,000 homes by 2025 for people of all incomes, including at least 1,250 affordable homes. Review the latest housing data, infographics, and press releases [here](#). In 2023, the Legislature passed the [HOME Act](#) (S.100/Act 47) changing municipal zoning requirements in an effort to encourage more housing production.
- **Mapping Assistance:** The CCRPC has many [mapping applications](#) to assist municipalities with planning. Applications include dashboards, town plan mapping, zoning maps, thematic and analytical mapping of natural, cultural and transportation resources. CCRPC has also built an [ArcGIS Urban](#) model that supports land use scenario planning and impact assessment.
- **Regional Energy Planning:** The CCRPC continued initiatives to support the [Region's Enhanced Energy Plan](#), Statewide Comprehensive Energy Plan, and emerging climate goals. With guidance from CCRPC's Long-Range Planning Committee's Energy Sub-committee, the CCRPC drafted the ECOS Plan's enhanced energy plan sections to be consistent with the 2022 Department of Public Service's Energy Planning Standards. CCRPC shared guidance on how to address climate change in land use regulations with municipal planning offices and planning commissions, and via state-wide presentations with VT Fish & Wildlife. Lastly, with Drive Electric Vermont, the CCRPC engaged municipal planning offices regarding strategies on how to develop electric vehicle charger plans.
- **Regional Energy Implementation:** The CCRPC provided information regarding the federal Energy

Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program, the Inflation Reduction Act, and electric vehicle incentives. CCRPC provided technical support to municipalities regarding the state-wide [Municipal Energy Resilience Program](#) for municipal buildings.

- **Public Transportation Planning:** The CCRPC remains engaged with [Green Mountain Transit](#) (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. Within the CCRPC's FY23 [UPWP](#), \$442,840 was allocated to GMT for transit planning in Chittenden County.
- **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, federal grant assistance, projects and initiatives at the local level.
- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM):** CCRPC and VTrans managed the second year of [Park Your CARbon](#), formerly the Way to Go! Challenge. This outreach and education program encourages sustainable transportation by demonstrating the environmental and financial benefits of non-single occupant vehicle travel. The CCRPC participated in CATMA's inaugural [Transportation Summit](#) and their [Transportation Coordinator](#) (TC) Network program and events to learn from other TC Network members about employee TDM benefits and programs. TDM partners include: the Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA), CarShare VT, the University of Vermont, Green Mountain Transit (GMT), Local Motion, Bird Bikeshare, Go! Vermont/VTrans, NetZero Vermont/Walk to Shop, and United Way.
- **Walk/Bike Planning:** The CCRPC completed the [2022 Regional Active Transportation Plan \(ATP\)](#), which serves as the active transportation element of the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The ATP includes a recommended regional network with prioritized project list, as well as programs and policies to support active transportation throughout the region. CCRPC staff collaborated with TDM partners and local municipalities to relaunch the regional bikeshare program. 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.
- **Clean Water:** The CCRPC continued to host the [Clean Water Advisory Committee and the MS-4 Sub-Committee](#) and provide guidance to the State on disposition of the Vermont Clean Water Fund. CCRPC staff also sit on 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 supported education programs such as the [Rethink Runoff](#) on behalf of nine of our municipalities, assisted with watershed resiliency mapping, and participated in water quality-focused policy discussions. CCRPC appoints representatives to three different Basin Water Quality Councils which work with their Clean Water Service Providers (CWSP) to oversee the development and implementation of non-regulatory water quality improvement projects that reduce phosphorus loading into these streams and Lake Champlain. These three Councils are the [Basin 5 Water Quality Council](#) (BWQC) for the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages, the [Basin 7 Water Quality Council](#) for the Lamoille River watershed and the [Basin 8 Water Quality Council](#) for the Winooski watershed. Essex is in Basins 5 and 8. Additionally, CCRPC is the designated [CWSP](#) for Basin 5.
- **Emergency Management:** CCRPC continued to staff the Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC) which consists 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 State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) when called upon. The CCRPC 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 completion of the [2022 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan](#) and its municipal annexes except for Colchester which developed its own stand-alone Local Hazards Mitigation Plan.

- **Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Compliance and Water Quality Planning Assistance:** CCRPC staff continued 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 (see [REI dashboard here](#), click on upper right for individual municipalities). 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 FY23, 14 Chittenden County municipalities signed up to participate in the GIA program. An estimated 33 non-compliant segments will be upgraded using the allocated \$410,000.
- **Health Equity:** A grant from the Vermont Department of Health enabled CCRPC to work with all the RPCs in the state and Vermont Health Department staff to create the [Vermont Health Equity Planning Toolkit](#). CCRPC hosted a training on the healthy equity toolkit for the Planning Advisory Committee, shared health equity project information with the CCRPC's Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) and will work with the EAC as part of toolkit implementation. CCRPC staff also developed an [online Chittenden County Equity Mapping Tool](#) showing a collection of maps on race, disability, poverty status, and English ability.
- **Traffic Alert:** CCRPC compiled and sent out 32 traffic alerts about activities impacting traffic in Chittenden County over 8 months (no alerts January-March).
- **Chittenden County Park and Ride Plan Update:** This plan identifies opportunities for improvements to the existing facilities and evaluates the potential for new facilities that will benefit commuters and residents throughout Chittenden County and the adjacent communities. The [final plan](#) was completed in October 2022.
- **VT Culverts:** [The VT Culverts website](#) can be used to view a town's bridges and culverts on a map, or in a chart based on condition or inventory date. CCRPC staff is one of two RPCs that manage the website. VT Culverts continues to gain traction in our region and throughout the state. At the end of June, 9 of our municipalities have actively used VT Culverts to inventory town-maintained bridges and culverts.
- **Chittenden County Communications Union District (CUD):** CCRPC assisted [the CUD](#) as they started up to plan, contract, build, and manage infrastructure for high-speed internet access throughout Chittenden County. Mission Broadband was hired for consulting and project management services in June.
- **Northwest VT Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** CCRPC received a grant from the US Department of Transportation in the fall 2022 to develop comprehensive plans for transit-oriented development for up to 12 communities across a five-county region in Northwest Vermont. The grant funding will also support planning work to improve bus services and/or commuter rail to connect economically disadvantaged rural residents to employment opportunities and services. Work will begin in late 2023.
- **Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study:** The CCRPC, in collaboration with VTrans, municipalities, and other interested parties, completed the [I-89 2050 Study](#) in late 2022. The study developed an implementation plan that will guide short, medium, and long-term transportation improvements to the corridor over the

next 30 years.

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