CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together

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FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT

-UNDERHILL-

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.

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

- CCRPC Representative: Brad Holden | Alternate: Kurt Johnson
- Planning Advisory Committee (PAC): Nick Atherton
- Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC): Nick Atherton
- Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC): Bob Stone, Brad Holden

To access this report online follow the below link or QR code. Then look for Annual Reports in the right column:

https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-communities/underhill/

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

Underhill Activities

In FY2023, the CCRPC provided assistance to Underhill in the following projects and initiatives:

- **Water Quality Planning Assistance:** The CCRPC continued to provide assistance with Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) compliance. CCRPC staff worked with Underhill on funding and eligibility questions for a section of English settlement road and facilitated the development of a conceptual improvement plan for this site. These conceptual plans and cost estimates were critical in developing a

FY24 Vtrans Better Roads application for upgrading the road. CCRPC staff facilitated a region-wide training (hosted by Underhill) for municipal representatives and other RPC staff, where DEC staff trained field inspectors on conducting Road Erosion Inventories. The Road Erosion Inventory for the updated MRGP started in FY23 but will not finish until FY24.

- **Technical Assistance**: CCRPC staff provided a variety of technical assistance to the Town, including:
    - Drafting and reviewing the Underhill Climate Action Plan.
    - Providing Underhill with a report about forest carbon storage and sequestration.
    - Providing EV charging information to Underhill's energy committee
    - Assisting Underhill's energy committee with information request on the cost of EV charging and examples of local ride share/van share programs.
    - Responding to an inquiry about a potential sidewalk scoping project, and a request for assistance with sourcing roadway salt and gravel.
    - Reviewing Underhill's floodplain regulations to ensure compliance with National Flood Insurance Program minimum standards.
- **Traffic Counts:** No traffic counts were conducted in FY23 in Underhill. Historic traffic counts conducted in support of Underhill'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, 85 trips were provided to Underhill residents as part of this program.

Underhill 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. Underhill projects included in the TIP are listed below. These projects are also included in the Vermont Agency of Transportation

- Currently there are no Underhill projects in the TIP.

FY2024 CCRPC Work Program

Project Name	Brief Description	Total Budget
Underhill Center Active Transportation Scoping Study	This study will examine routes, budgets, and timelines for a sidewalk, path and/or other active transportation infrastructure that connects the Underhill Central School with the rest of the village and its many important places for Underhill residents and visitors.	$80,000

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 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. Underhill is in Basin 7. 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.
- **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. The CCRPC has also received $50,000 from ACCD in May 2023 for site assessment and cleanup planning with the potential to receive additional funds if more sites are identified needing such assistance.

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