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At Work
The Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) serves 21 of the 23 municipalities within Addison County (Granville and Hancock lie within Addison County, but fall on the other side of the green mountains and are served by the Two Rivers Ottaquechee Regional Planning Commission). ACRPC’s assists towns in the Addison Region (the “Region”) to help provide effective local government and works cooperatively with them to address statewide, regional and local issues.

Municipalities choose to be members of ACRPC. Each municipality’s legislative body appoints 1, 2 or 3 Commissioners, depending upon the size of the municipality, to represent the municipality’s interest on ACRPC’s Board. Additionally, ACRPC has up to six citizen-interest commissioners who represent other regional interests such as business and industry, natural resources, agriculture and social services. ACRPC delegates a significant portion of its work to six (6) sub-committees. These committees review various aspects of the commission’s business. Commissioners serve on these committees and make recommendations for action to the full Commission. All ACRPC’s committees are advisory. Only the full commission has the authority to make decisions to bind ACRPC. Six highly-qualified staff with more than 100 years of combined professional experience provide support to the Commission and its committees and execute the Commission’s program of work.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Regional Planning Commissions act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through a combination of Federal, State and Local funding sources. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the “At Work” map; highlights include:

- ACRPC helped the Towns of Ferrisburgh, Panton, New Haven, Lincoln, Whiting, Addison, Shoreham and Goshen work on their Town plans within FY17. ACRPC helped bring these plans up to meet statutory requirements, including focusing on economic development and flood resiliency.
  - Addison: ACRPC approved the Addison Town Plan at its February 20, 2017 meeting.
  - Whiting: Completed a town plan update, including incorporation of flood resiliency, energy, and economic development sections within their town plan.
Addison County Regional Planning Commission

- Panton: Completed a town plan update process, including a community wide survey, statistical update, flood resiliency and energy siting standards.
- Waltham: Waltham completed a plan update with technical assistance provided by ACRPC. ACRPC approved the Waltham Town Plan in November, 2016.
- Goshen: ACRPC supplied mapping and technical assistance to the Town of Goshen in support of its plan re-write.
- Ferrisburgh: ACRPC supplied technical and mapping assistance to the Town of Ferrisburgh in support of its plan re-write.
- New Haven: ACRPC supplied mapping and technical assistance to the Town of New Haven in support of its plan re-write. ACRPC approved the New Haven Town Plan at its annual meeting in May 2017.
- Lincoln: ACRPC supplied technical and mapping assistance to the Town of Lincoln in support of its plan re-write.
- Shoreham: ACRPC supplied technical and mapping assistance to the Town of Shoreham in support of its plan re-write.

- ACRPC helped the Towns of Leicester, Bristol and Ripton draft new zoning regulations to implement their plan.
- ACRPC provided technical support to all Zoning Administrators within the Region and held two Zoning Administrator Roundtables.
- ACRPC helped create a proposed Village Center in Whiting.
- Conducted consultations with Starksboro, Cornwall, Addison and New Haven and informally reviewed plans for the Towns of Lincoln, Bridport and Goshen.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

This year ACRPC spent significant amounts of time working to revise the Transportation and Energy Sections of its Regional Plan. It expects to adopt both sections prior to the end of the 2018 fiscal year and readopt the entire Regional Plan.

ACRPC implemented its Plan by focusing a significant portion of its work this year on downtowns and village centers. In Middlebury, ACRPC continued to serve as the Municipal Project Manager on several community infrastructure projects that create sidewalks or shared use paths to tie neighborhoods and industrial areas to downtown Middlebury. It completed zoning regulations in Bristol that should help spur infill development in the village area. In Vergennes, it supported Vergennes reapplication for its downtown designation. It also wrote and is helping to implement a Lake Champlain Basin Program Grant to create a plan to improve wastewater and stormwater infrastructure in the City. In Shoreham and Whiting, it helped the local planning commissions.
focus on village centers. Please see Economic and Community Development and Special Projects for more details on each of these undertakings.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

- ACRPC does not have any Brownfields funding of its own at this time. However, ACRPC continues to work with the Town of Whiting to remediate a contaminated property in its village, school and fire station, which will open that property for redevelopment potential. That project is funded through the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission’s Brownfield’s program.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- ACRPC continued to work with the Town of Bristol to revamp its zoning regulations to support increased development within its Village Planning Area. It also continued to support the Stoney Hill Master Plan that it helped write the previous year to create a business park within Bristol’s Village Planning Area. Bristol has traditionally had problems retaining its commercial businesses because they outgrow its infrastructure. This business park is being designed within the Village Planning Area to create new spaces for growing businesses within Bristol’s village, supporting the growth of this area.
- ACRPC worked for the City of Vergennes to help implement the City Master Plan funded by a Better Connections Strong Communities Grant it helped write the previous year. The Master plan prioritized transportation and infrastructure projects within the City to help promote economic development. ACRPC helped the City of Vergennes apply for a Lake Champlain Basin Program Grant to assess and plan for improvements to stormwater and wastewater systems, one of the community’s highest priority projects.
- ACRPC worked with the Addison County Economic Development Corporation to support several grant applications for local businesses.
- ACRPC helped eight municipalities (Listed under municipal technical assistance) include individualized economic development sections in each of the town plans it created.
- Staff completed an update of the Lake Champlain Byway Corridor Management plan intended to help improve rural economic development along the byway.
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contracts with the Vermont Agency of Transportation ("VTrans"), RPCs coordinate the federally funded Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort provides a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the State’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, Regions and Municipalities:

- ACRPC’s TAC held 9 meetings with an average percentage attendance of 44% (10 out of 21-member municipalities)
- Hosted VTrans Long Range Transportation Plan Update
- Facilitated Transportation Board Hearing Oct. 16 Vergennes regarding rail
- Hosted Outreach meeting on VTrans Otter Creek Bridge Rt. 7.
- Hosted On - Road Bike Plan meeting

TAC Outcomes:

- The TAC funded two planning studies during FY2017
  - Phase II of the Middlebury Creek Road Erosion Stability Study, which examined mitigation alternatives to continually rebuilding Creek Road after flooding events.
  - The Addison County Regional Transportation Update (See below)
- The TAC continued to provide a forum for the City of Vergennes and its neighboring municipalities to discuss a truck bypass around the City.

Other Outreach:

- 8 road foreman meetings held (September – April, including meeting with foremen and local legislators)
- 1 Road Safety Audit: Weybridge
- Public Transit E&D meetings: 4
- Go! Vermont meetings: 2
- Trainings facilitated by ACRPC
  - Hosted a Regional Transportation Summit in Vergennes on alternative forms of Transportation available in the Region.
  - Presented Vergennes’ Master Plan at an RPC meetup, an AARP conference and at the Downtown Conference.
Trainings attended by ACRPC
- VTrans Annual Construction Project Meeting
- FEMA NFIP Training – Josh and Tim
- VTrans Stakeholder workshop
- Rivers & Roads Tier II Training – Josh & Tim
- MRGP Road Erosion Evaluation & Inventory Training – Josh
- RPC meetups x 2 – Josh & Claire
- VLCT Planning & Zoning Forum - Adam
- Vermont Local Roads Workshop

Data Collection:
- Traffic Counts: Shoreham x 4, Bridport, Ferrisburgh x 2
- Culvert/bridge inventories: 3
- Bike/ped counts: Middlebury x 2, Bristol
- Park & Ride Counts: 3
- HMEP Truck counts 3x at 3 locations (Middlebury, Vergennes, Addison)
- Cornwall Traffic Study

Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making:
- Status of Regional Transportation Plan
  - Adopted May 14, 2008
  - Incorporated into Addison County Regional Plan and readopted 2016
  - Currently being updated, with anticipated adoption date of January 2018
- Participation in Project Development Activities
  - Provided ongoing support on regional construction projects
  - Worked with the Local Project Management Team on the Middlebury Rail Tunnel
  - Worked to oversee the Merger of ACTR and Stagecoach Transit Services
  - Worked on the development of a rail platform in Middlebury

Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities:
- Continued to develop mobile apps for culvert and road erosion inventories
- Worked with Local Motion to support the Addison County Walk-Bike Advisory Council and facilitated the formation and growth of this regional council
- Created Whiting and Waltham Transportation Plan updates

Other:
- VTrans Bike/Ped Grant Program:
  - ACRPC serves as the project manager to construct the Exchange Street Sidewalk/Shared Use path and Seymour Street/Pulp Mill Bridge Road sidewalk project
ACRPC helped Middlebury and Shoreham apply to the Transportation Alternatives Program
- Better Roads Program – provided support for numerous grant applications 21 grants funded
  - 11 Category A grants funded, ACRPC working with 7 towns on road and culvert inventories.
  - 6 Category B funded
  - 1 Category C grant
  - 3 Category D grants
  - Middlebury Art’s Place Grant support
- Grant in aid Program app for 17 municipalities in the Region
- Legal review of Waltham Speed ordinance
- Maintained database of high crash locations

Addison County Bike Ped Coalition Planning
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont’s Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws create FEMA-qualified hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans and assisted as needed in special circumstances and declared disasters.

- Sixteen of the twenty-one of municipalities in the Region (76%) currently have a hazard mitigation plan either adopted or under review.
- Fourteen of twenty-one of municipalities in the Region (66%) currently have an updated local emergency plan.
- ACRPC developed, participated in, and/or hosted 2 emergency management exercises this fiscal year. They included the Statewide Vigilant Guard exercise and a functional exercise with Middlebury College, Porter Medical Center and the Town of Middlebury as players. Each exercise helped improve the community’s preparation for disaster management.
- Staff attended the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference and the Resilient Vermont workshops to learn and bring local perspective to the discussions.
- ACRPC hosted and/or developed trainings for local officials in hazardous materials reporting, water/wastewater operators’ emergency training, cyber-security training for local businesses, active shooter training for schools, emergency response training for museums, and floodplain field trip for state floodplain managers. Each workshop improved local communities and agencies ability to respond to disasters.
- Staff assisted in the coordination of a regional School Safety Group for Addison Northwest Supervisory Union and an Addison County business safety group. Staff attended regular Regional Safety meetings, regional museum staff emergency planning meetings and meetings of the Addison County Emergency Planning Committee, helping local groups prepare for and coordinate a regional response to disasters.
- Created flood safety checklists for towns receiving planning assistance, consultations or hazard mitigation planning.
- Created flood resiliency model plan language for use by municipal planners.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- ACRPC’s mapping supports nearly every planning function it performs. Every town plan or zoning bylaw created contains maps produced by ACRPC
• ACRPC provided mitigation planning maps and data for the Towns of Ferrisburgh, Goshen, Leicester, Monkton, New haven, Panton, Salisbury, Shoreham, and Starksboro.
• ACRPC created an app to support the data gathering efforts that its transportation planner is undertaking to map hydrologically connected roadways within the Region and improved a similar app previously developed that collects and provides culvert data. The apps, built on an existing software platform, allow for the quick and efficient collection, storage and transmittal of road and culvert data collected to improve water quality.
• ACRPC maintained all regional databases

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

• ACRPC started work on the Energy Section of its Regional Plan, including creating maps and land use projects regarding the region’s ability to host local generation resources sufficient to meet its share of generation necessary to support the State of Vermont’s goal of producing 90% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050.
• ACRPC started work with three municipalities within the Region to help them revise their local energy plans and control their own energy future. Each new plan includes all data necessary to satisfy state requirements for enhanced energy plans. Plans meeting these goals will receive a higher level of deference from the Public Utilities Commission.
• ACRPC organized a consortium of towns adjacent to Lake Champlain to determine whether electrical infrastructure located under Lake Champlain is subject to municipal property tax. This effort could yield over $1,500,000 annually to municipalities bordering Lake Champlain and over $9,000,000 annually to the State Education Fund.
• ACRPC participated in numerous proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission (Formerly the Public Service Board), including representing the Town of Whiting to help defeat a poorly sited 500 kw solar array (ACRPC also supported many other solar arrays in the Region that met the criteria it created for siting solar facilities).

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.
• ACRPC continued its support of and participation as part of the Addison County River Watch Collaborative (ACRWC). ACRWC provides water quality sampling in 6 watersheds and submits samples to the state lab. ACRPC hosts the ACRWC meetings and sampling events, maintains the website with current sampling data for the public and supports presentations to targeted community boards and hosted ‘kitchen water chats’.
• ACRPC staff participates in the Lake Champlain Basin Program’s Technical Advisory Committee.
• ACRPC works regularly with its municipal members to improve water quality data for their local road systems. See Transportation Planning.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

ACRPC serves as the municipal project manager on two sidewalk/shared use path improvement projects within the Towns of Middlebury and Weybridge connecting Middlebury’s downtown with other portions of town including its industrial area and neighborhoods in Middlebury and Weybridge that provide a popular walking route around the downtown.

This year ACRPC continued its partnership with Local Motion of Burlington to support the Addison County Walk-Bike Council it created last year. The Council includes representatives from across Addison County with a mission to improve and increase the opportunity for safer walking and cycling to all in Addison County. The key topics the council is focused on include: infrastructure improvements, education and outreach, safety and law enforcement and cultural shift. The Council completed its workplan and began to implement program activities, like creating Safe Routes to School Programs in Vergennes and Bristol and making educational information concerning biking available on its website.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

ACRPC receives most of its funding through grants, and through a performance-based contract with the state. Town assessments constitute a small but very important percentage of our funding. For the 2017 fiscal year, ACRPC’s total projected revenue of approximately $682,000 dollars was derived from 88 percent state and federal grants supporting regional projects, 6 percent municipal project grant funding, and 6 percent from town assessments. While percentages may vary slightly from year to year, the year was typical of our revenue.

Virtually all of the ACRPC’s revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines and/or performance measures. This means that the ACRPC has limited control over how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through town assessments and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (“ACCD”) are the exception, which makes these funding stream particularly important. They provide the Region with the greatest latitude to respond to the Region’s needs. Town assessments, and the funding received through the ACRPC’s performance contract with ACCD, are also necessary to provide matching funds required by grantors. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as
transportation, emergency planning, community development, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires matching funds, and typically non-federal matching funds. Required match ranges from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant).

ACRPC has an audit on an annual basis. For FY 2016, its most recent audit as in past years, there were no significant findings. ACRPC’s audit for FY 2017 will be completed by December 2017.
The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) was created by the seventeen towns and villages it serves and works with on behalf of those municipalities to build strong, resilient, and sustainable communities, to foster economic prosperity, and to promote a high quality of life for residents of the region. This mission is accomplished through direct planning and community development assistance to town and village governments, through preparation and implementation of regional plans and studies, and through synergistic working relationships with local and regional organizations. The BCRC works cooperatively with local governments to establish and advance regional cohesiveness, actively advocates for adherence to adopted regional policies, and facilitates effective communication between local, state, and federal levels of government.

The BCRC maintains an office in an historic building in the center of Bennington’s downtown. The Commission is overseen by municipally appointed commissioners representing each of the member towns and villages as well as eight commissioners representing specific interests such as economic development, housing, transportation, and public health. The BCRC employs ten full-time staff and supervises two full-time AmeriCorps VISTAs. Principal program areas with assigned staff responsibilities include: municipal and regional planning, transportation, environmental/water quality planning, community and economic development, emergency management planning, energy planning, public health, and solid waste planning and management.

**MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Regional Planning Commissions act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and regular consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, assisting with implementation of local development review boards, support for development in downtowns and village centers, and meeting new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Municipal plans and regulations that are clear and up-to-date are essential in smooth state and local permitting. The BCRC’s work in municipal planning is supported through municipal and regional planning funds, payments from member towns and villages, and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map (attached); highlights include:

- The BCRC helped develop new comprehensive plans or plan updates for Old Bennington Village, Stamford, Landgrove, and Pownal. Each new plan is reviewed for conformance with statutory requirements and implementation projects are clearly delineated.
• BCRC staff helped the Town of Shaftsbury complete a comprehensive set of revisions to their land use regulations. Important aspects of the work have included ensuring consistency with statutory requirements and the Town Plan as well as supporting appropriate development in the designated village center of South Shaftsbury. Staff also assisted Landgrove in revisions to bylaws and related forms and procedures, various permitting issues in Glastenbury, and with regulations related to siting solar energy facilities in Bennington.
• The BCRC assisted with new/renewal applications for village centers in Peru and North Bennington, and continued to help Dorset move toward village center designations in Dorset and East Dorset, and addressed village center opportunities and mapping requirements for three village centers in Pownal. Staff also worked closely with Shaftsbury as that town explored opportunities to encourage mixed use development in the designated village center in South Shaftsbury.
• Following completion of a planning study that examined a key block of underutilized and vacant properties in the center of downtown Bennington, the BCRC has continued to work with the town and with a private redevelopment group to complete market studies and actively explore redevelopment opportunities.
• BCRC staff responded to requests for assistance with various planning and zoning issues in all 17 of its member municipalities and conducted training for municipal officials on a variety of planning and land use topics including: procedures for land use administrators, boards, and commissions, new water quality rules/stormwater management; planning for affordable housing, parcel mapping, Act 174 and energy planning, public transit and rail connectivity, natural resource conservation, and economic development planning. Representatives from each municipality attended at least one of the training sessions.
• BCRC staff presented at a Drinking Water Protection workshop – focused on municipal planning and regulations related to protection of public water supplies.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

The Bennington County Regional Plan, most recently updated in 2015, is a significant resource document for local officials, organizations, and residents of the region. The Regional Plan includes extensive information about the region and its communities, specific policies to guide growth and development, and direct links to numerous sources of information on a wide variety of topics.

An important aspect of this plan update was inclusion of closer ties between the plan and various topic specific plans developed by the BCRC. The plan also includes implementation guidance supported by specific recommendations for projects and improvements that will benefit the
region. Implementation tasks are identified in each of several key areas: comprehensive municipal planning (specific schedules for assistance with plan and bylaw updates and training), regulatory review (guidelines for participation in Act 250 and Section 248 reviews – BCRC participated actively in eight Act 250 and six Section 248 hearings during the year), transportation (a list of priority projects and initiatives and links to action-oriented plans), environmental planning (identification of water quality improvement projects, partner organizations and key areas of focus), community and economic development (including links to strategy based economic development plans for the northern and southern parts of the region), emergency management (grant funding obtained to support specific municipal hazard mitigation planning work), energy planning (a comprehensive new regional energy plan with policies and targeted actions for conservation and efficiency as well as maps and data for each town in the region), and solid waste (a variety of education, outreach, and regulatory actions designed to help meet waste reduction and recycling targets).

Improved regional planning for community and economic development has been a key component of the BCRC’s work over the past five years. Implementation of these plans has been greatly facilitated through a contract with the Bennington County Industrial Corporation (the Regional Development Corporation) that establishes a direct link between planning and business development activities, and facilitates engagement with other economic development interests across Southern Vermont. The BCRC worked with municipalities and economic development organizations in the Northshire and Southshire, as well as with the RPC and RDC in Windham County, to move toward a consistent regional approach to planning for economic development.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

The BCRC applied for and was awarded a new US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for the coming year. The Commission has continued to identify sites that would benefit from assessments, provide information on brownfield redevelopment, and monitor redevelopment of sites that have been assessed in the past. BCRC staff has provided advice to owners of several potential brownfield sites in anticipation of future Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments. The BCRC has re-established its Brownfields committee and will begin to prioritize sites for assessment and clean-up planning. Brownfield sites identified for assessments include:

- Sage Street Mill – petroleum assessment and evaluation of mill building for other potential hazardous materials. Redevelopment potential for residential.
- Downtown Bennington Sites - Former hardware store, former manufacturing/retail site, and former Benmont Mill. Redevelopment potential for retail, residential uses.
- Putnam Block (Bennington Downtown) – Follow-up work associated with recent area-wide plan for mixed use redevelopment of this critical downtown block.
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with effective planning functions. RPCs work with towns and Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

The BCRC has maintained a staffed program in community and economic development for several years. Successful economic development planning in both the Southshire (Bennington area) and Northshire (Manchester area) led to increasing levels of collaboration with the Bennington County Industrial Corporation (BCIC, the RDC for the area), and the BCIC now contracts with the BCRC for the conduct of its annual work plan. This partnership, together with BCRC’s active role in redevelopment projects, has allowed for the hiring of additional staff, supporting economic development initiatives throughout the region and in cooperation with the Windham Region through the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone initiative. Highlights from the past year include:

- Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone: The BCRC built capacity for regional economic development work by establishing relationships with key businesses, institutions, and individuals. The BCRC also facilitated creation of a steering committee that has started to integrate regional needs and opportunities into a Southern Vermont Economic Development Strategy in cooperation with the Windham Region. As part of this effort, the BCRC organized and held a Southern Vermont Economic Development Summit attended by over 100 people.
- The BCRC has continued to work with the Bennington Redevelopment Group, the Town of Bennington, and private developers to undertake a major development project involving historic buildings and vacant land in the center of Bennington’s downtown. Related efforts have resulted in receipt of a Community Development Block Grant for the project, as well as a pending Tax Increment Financing application, and other innovative funding sources to be used for the project.
- The BCRC is continuing its efforts to support workforce development through regular consultation with businesses and educational institutions, fostering of a business-based internship program, and conducting regular outreach and educational programs in cooperation with the BCIC’s workforce development committee. Many of these programs are being operated from Bennington’s downtown co-working space, the Lightning Jar.
- The strong emphasis on state designation programs described above has been used to support economic development planning and initiatives in several communities, including Dorset, Peru, and Shaftsbury.
- BCRC staff have met with existing businesses to understand and support job retention and growth, and have facilitated communication between prospective new businesses (relocation and new start-ups) and local and state officials.
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through a contract with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state, and federal transportation network advancement. Accomplishments over the past year as they relate to the BCRC’s TPI work program include:

- **Cooperation and coordination between VTrans, RPCs, and Municipalities**
  - The BCRC’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met quarterly during the past year. TAC meeting attendance has consistently been at about ten members; the full TAC consists of 15 members. Over the course of the year, all TAC members have attended at least one meeting. Principal functions of the TAC are to provide input on specific projects and to prioritize projects in several program areas.
  - The BCRC also conducted outreach and education through the following means:
    - Direct outreach to each town and village regarding codes and standards, hazard mitigation planning, stormwater management, and related funding and financial considerations.
    - Organized and participated in road foreman/commissioner meetings, focusing on the municipal roads general permit, pavement management, spring flooding, and VOSHA requirements.
    - Presentations on bicycle and pedestrian system connectivity and streetscape improvement projects.
    - Review of transportation energy goals and roundtable discussions of possible ways to support alternative transportation modes, including extensive participation in public meetings about the new bus link to the intercity passenger rail network.
    - Participation in road safety audit reviews – particular focus on the Route 67A/Silk Road/Mattison Road/College Road intersection.
    - Outreach to encourage participation in the annual Way to Go commuter challenge.

- **Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Centralized Decision Making**
  - The BCRC’s Regional Transportation Plan was updated and adopted in 2015, at which time it was formally incorporated into the comprehensive Bennington County Regional Plan.
The BCRC has been actively involved in development activities for a wide range of transportation projects, including:

- Planning and project management for the Willowbrook-Applegate Path in Bennington.
- Working with VTrans, local officials, regional economic development organizations, and local businesses to ensure successful launch of the new bus link to Amtrak.
- Project management for sidewalk design and construction in North Bennington.
- Project management for the Ninja Trail scoping and design-build project in Bennington.
- Project management for the Benmont Streetscape improvements project in Bennington.
- Project management for the Kocher Drive-US 7 crossing and pathway project.

The BCRC participated in the review of several major Act 250 projects. Transportation issues included: traffic access and safety at a commercial development near Bromley Mountain in Peru, supporting in-town housing/walkable neighborhood project in Bennington, taxiway and related improvements at the WH Morse State Airport in Bennington, need for pedestrian connection/safe highway crossings at an apartment project/mill redevelopment in North Bennington.

Providing Transportation Planning Support for Municipalities

- Provided Better Roads Program assistance to Arlington, Dorset, Peru, Rupert, Sandgate and Shaftsbury.
- The BCRC worked closely with the Town of Manchester to develop a complete redesign of Depot Street (Routes 11/30) and is assisting with project development activities.
- The BCRC provided assistance to the Town of Sunderland in the completion of a “Safe Roads” plan for the community, with targeted improvements. Several identified improvements already have been implemented by the town and an application for funding to improve road shoulders along a dangerous section of highway has been submitted.
- Provided assistance to Sandgate and Bennington for planning and grants to acquire new salt sheds for highway departments.
- Conducted site visits and coordinated planning work related to roads, bridge, and parking area improvements in the town of Glastenbury.
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff support to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees, and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPCs also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans, and assist as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.

- The BCRC continued to support municipalities in developing and updating Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOPs); all municipalities in the region have updated and approved LEOPs (16) or are in the process of working with BCRC and DEMHS to finalize approval (1).
- The BCRC provides support for development and updates to municipal hazard mitigation plans. The BCRC assisted with the development of new HMGPs for Manchester Village, North Bennington Village, Peru, Manchester, Pownal, and Bennington. As part of the planning process, flood resiliency and stormwater actions, assessments of threats from forest insect pests, and economic development planning relevant to hazard mitigation were considered.
- The BCRC provided assistance with revisions and updates to flood hazard area regulations and has supported development and use of new regulatory flood maps through workshops and direct technical assistance.
- Ongoing support for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is provided by BCRC staff; focus areas during the past year included: facilitating emergency response exercises, completion of a hazardous materials emergency planning study, crisis planning for schools, emergency planning for mobile home parks, support for local emergency management directors, and region-wide emergency planning activities.
- Work was completed on the Hoosic River Corridor Plan in Pownal – a hazard mitigation plan addressing residential developments and municipal infrastructure in that community.
- Lye Brook Study: The BCRC worked on a project along Lye Brook in Manchester developing plans for removal of a berm, possible reconnection of Lye Brook with adjacent wetlands, and needed improvements to Richville Road.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

The BCRC uses its geographic information systems capability to produce maps and conduct analyses in support of virtually all of its programs. RPCs also provide municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects. Particularly valuable GIS projects completed during the past year have included:
• Energy resource maps showing locations having high potential for renewable energy development as well as areas with significant constraints to development. These maps were developed at a regional level and BCRC staff subsequently worked with towns to refine the maps at a more local level.

• River corridor mapping to support resiliency planning for each town in the region including depiction of former and new flood hazard areas, and maps to support watershed planning and development of river corridor regulations.

• New maps to support municipal plan updates in five municipalities; mapping of proposed adjustments to zoning bylaw revisions were completed for three towns.

• Detailed mapping of natural resources and potential alignments for a multi-use pathway between Bennington and North Bennington, including identification of a stand of locally rare black maple trees.

• Various maps and geographic analyses completed in support of the Bennington downtown redevelopment project, including maps required for TIF and other funding applications.

• Comprehensive map and plan for a system of trails and supporting facilities in the region, building on the Bennington town trail map completed previously.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

• The BCRC has taken a lead role working with the Public Service Department, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, Energy Action Network, and other regional planning commissions to develop new regional energy plans that focus specifically on energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable generation targets tied to Vermont’s energy goals and new comprehensive energy plan. The BCRC’s new regional energy plan was completed, adopted, and approved by the Public Service Department as being consistent with Act 174 planning standards. The plan is being used to support development of municipal energy plans and to represent the region’s position on applications for new generation projects before the Public Service Board.

• The BCRC has provided energy use and future energy demand projections to towns, has held workshops on development of municipal energy plans, and has helped three towns complete new draft municipal energy plans.

• BCRC staff appeared before state agencies, local and regional planners, legislative committees, and various organizations and interest groups to provide background and examples of energy resource mapping, planning for future energy supply and demand, and integration of land use and transportation planning with energy planning.
The BCRC conducted workshops on Act 174 and municipal energy planning, and assisted with presentations on building energy codes, cold climate heat pumps, and projecting future energy demand.

The BCRC worked closely with NeighborWorks of Western Vermont to promote and extend that organization’s “Heat Squad” building weatherization and alternative energy program throughout the region.

The BCRC continued to work with a hydroelectric developer and town officials in Bennington and Pownal to advance two hydroelectric projects with a combined capacity of approximately 1 MW.

The BCRC reviews and comments on proposals for new renewable energy development in the region and participates in most Section 248 proceedings. The BCRC also has actively engaged with large energy users such as the regional medical center in planning for energy projects; after working with the BCRC, for example, the regional medical center agreed to install a new boiler that can be converted to use biomass instead of compressed natural gas.

The BCRC has worked with towns and villages concerned about the large number of new commercial solar energy projects being proposed in the region. Information on specific sites as well as guidelines for siting such facilities have been shared with local officials. The BCRC’s energy and development review committees meets with developers and invites local officials to participate in those meetings and technical reviews.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

The BCRC has worked with the Agency of Natural Resources and local officials to develop watershed plans and to pursue flood resiliency projects in the Batten Kill, Walloomsac, Hoosic, and Mettawee river basins. The BCRC has organized public meetings on the Basin Plan that covers these watersheds involving river corridor engineers, watershed association managers, land conservation experts, and fisheries biologists.

Assisted VT ANR with completion and associated outreach on the Basin 1 Tactical Plan and integrated recommendations into local hazard mitigation plans and projects.

The BCRC prepared tables characterizing flood and fluvial erosion hazard mitigation projects and draft language for use of the tables in resiliency elements of town plans – for Sunderland, Arlington, and Dorset.

The BCRC prepared river corridor maps by incorporating updates and administrative revisions to the Statewide River Corridor Base Map consistent with the VT DEC Procedure for Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Protection Procedure.

BCRC staff attends monthly meetings of the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance and assisted with their education and water quality improvement projects.
• The BCRC coordinated stormwater master planning projects in Sandgate and Sunderland.
• Actively engaged all municipalities in water quality/stormwater management projects through launch of the Grants-in-Aid program.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The BCRC has developed programs in solid waste management and planning and healthy community design that have led to numerous special projects and ongoing actions. The BCRC has helped organize, developed a plan for, and provides staff support for a thirteen-town solid waste alliance. Some of the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance’s ongoing activities include:

• Household hazardous waste collection events in the northern, central, and southern portions of the region, and investigation of options for establishment of a permanent household hazardous waste collection facility.
• Education and outreach to schools, municipalities, solid waste service providers, and the general public on requirements of the new state and regional solid waste plans and requirements.
• Provide education and actively promote recycling and organics management/composting.
• Study and document current sludge disposal operations and future options.
• Expand available information and services related to construction and demolition debris, focusing especially on clean wood and asphalt shingles.
• Cooperation with developers and local officials in the establishment of a new recycling center in Pownal and expansion of operations at the new regional composting center.
• Production and distribution of a regular newsletter on solid waste issues and maintenance of a web page dedicated to solid waste information.

Other special projects pursued in cooperation with local community coalitions, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and local governments in the past year have included:

• Working to improve regional food systems. Specific activities have included development of a market study and related coordination related to the potential for a downtown food store in Bennington’s “food desert,” and work with a regional nonprofit organization to complete a USDA-funded project assessing the regional food system with particular emphasis on food security issues in Bennington.
• Obtaining multi-year grant funding of approximately $125,000 per year to support the Alliance for Community Transformation’s work in the area of “Drug Free Communities.” Programs cover activities including youth engagement, coordinated planning among social service organizations, development of community facilities, and support for recovery efforts.
• Support for business groups and arts organizations in Bennington in furtherance of a “Cultural Bennington” plan and strategy. Initiated regional cooperation in cultural planning activities throughout the “Shires” region.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

Each program manager at the BCRC is responsible for work plan and budget development. The executive director/planning coordinator, financial manager, and assistant director/economic development coordinator cooperate to ensure that all required tasks and reporting are completed and advance the Commission’s mission. The BCRC reported total revenues of approximately $1.468 million in FY 2017 and total expenditures of approximately $1.430 million. The majority of revenues are derived from grants that support specific work programs. Municipal appropriations and a portion of funds allocated to the BCRC from the municipal and regional planning fund provide critical support and matching funds to all of the diverse program areas operated through the Commission.

An annual financial audit is completed during August of each year. The FY 2017 audit has confirmed the accuracy of the BCRC’s financial records and reports no significant findings.

Regular meetings of the BCRC are held bimonthly with special meetings held during the intervening months. Most meetings include presentations and information on specific topics that support commissioners’ understanding and involvement in regional planning projects. The BCRC also is responsible for organizing regular meetings of the Bennington County Industrial Corporation, the Regional Economic Development Committee, the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance, the Local Emergency Planning Committee, and the Alliance for Community Transformations. Several board members attend special training each year (e.g., financial management, land use practices, energy planning) to assist in the carrying out of their responsibilities to the organization. Staff regularly attend trainings and participate in online webinars on a variety of topics specific to their program areas.
Founded in 1967, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) leverages the value of people working together to assist its 23-member municipalities in providing effective local government and working cooperatively to address regional issues. CVRPC is governed by representatives from the 20 municipalities of Washington County and the three Orange County towns of Orange, Washington, and Williamstown. The legislative body of each municipality selects the community’s representative to the Commission.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Developed village master plan for East Montpelier using Municipal Planning Grant funds. Combining the open house for the school with one for the master plan involved youth in planning and gave community voice to a preferred vision for the future of the village area.
- Completed nine statutory consultations with municipalities; used the results to target 2018 planning assistance, including building an online data library and providing capital budgeting, forest integrity, and energy planning assistance.
- Acted as extended staffing for municipalities to assist five towns with plan updates.
- Assisted three towns with bylaw amendments and updates. Towns are modernizing 1980s bylaws and working to achieve consistency between bylaws and municipal plans.
- Assisted five towns with grant writing to support three municipal plan updates, to maintain Cabot’s village center vitality, and to connect land use with rural transportation in Calais.
- Hosted training and responded to ten towns regarding the statewide parcel mapping effort.
REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

In 2017, CVRPC adopted Regional Plan updates. Commissioners reviewed and set priorities for implementation actions, which the Commission uses to direct its annual work plan and budget. CVRPC completed a housing plus transportation affordability analysis for Central Vermont. Traditional measures of housing affordability ignore the cost of transportation, typically a household’s second largest expenditure. The analysis furthers the concept of location affordability in Central Vermont. Its findings will be incorporated into the Regional Plan update. CVRPC is using the analysis for workforce education about the benefits of living and working in Central Vermont.

CVRPC also built an enhanced regional energy plan. Seventeen (17) individuals, representing utilities, private business, municipalities, state agencies, public transit, and regional non-profits, worked cooperatively to develop draft policies and actions. The plan was submitted to the Public Service Department and other State agencies for comment prior to releasing it for public comment. CVRPC also initiated an update to its Substantial Regional Impact definition and criteria and its project review process. These items guide the Commission’s participation in Act 250 and Section 248.

To foster plan implementation, CVRPC assessed its municipal services and responded with two changes. The GIS Services Policy was modified to increase municipal access to mapping services. CVRPC initiated hiring of new staff to increase its land use planning services.

CVRPC maintained and expanded its commitment to fostering regional and intermunicipal activities, a high priority of the Regional Plan. CVRPC invested more than $12,000 in staff support to joint stormwater planning for five Mad River towns, $3,000 to assist the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District with financial management and strengthening internal controls, and $1,700 to support financial services for the Resource Management Alliance. CVRPC continued to implement its mission by facilitating intermunicipal conversations about stormwater planning, flood resilience, forest integrity, and energy planning. These conversations resulted in joint municipal initiatives for 2018.

CVRPC reviews state permit applications to ensure proposed projects conform with the Regional Plan. The Project Review Committee reviewed two major Act 250 applications and determined both conformed to the plan.
Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

CVRPC has an active brownfields assessment grant. In 2017, the Commission worked with owners and prospective developers at six (6) properties to sample sites or plan for contaminate remediation.

- **Bonacorsi-Capital Candy, Barre City:** CVRPC invested in a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment to assist Capital Candy understand its environmental obligations prior to acquiring the Bonacorsi property, which it leases. Impacts from historic dry-cleaning operations may require installation of an air quality system in the building, similar to a radon mitigation system. The project facilitates Capital Candy’s business expansion, allowing it to add jobs.

- **Woodbury Country Store, Woodbury:** CVRPC assisted the Town of Woodbury to guide a multiagency effort to buy out a former general store and gas station and restore the floodplain in Woodbury’s village center. When completed, the project will reduce flooding and flood damages to other properties. CVRPC will invest $40,000 in EPA brownfield funds for assessment activities in addition to staff time to help ensure multiple funding sources are coordinated and used efficiently. VEM, DEC, and VTrans have partnered with the Town.

- **12 Keith Avenue, Barre City:** To implement its North Main to Summer Street Master Plan, the City of Barre committed to building a parking area for Downstreet’s redevelopment of 22 Keith Avenue. CVRPC invested brownfield funds for sampling and a Corrective Action Plan for the parking area to help insure sealing the site with pavement does not exacerbate contaminate movement onto other properties.

- **Former Ernie’s Garage, Barre City:** Ayer’s Autobody previously participated in CVRPC’s brownfields program to develop a brownfield property. Based on that success, the company purchased a second property for redevelopment and plans to expand operations. CVRPC invested in a Phase II assessment to investigate potential challenges at the new site.

- **Fire and Recycling Station, Whiting:** The statutory relationship of Vermont’s regional planning commissions allows RPCs to maximize federal brownfield investments by sharing resources across boundaries. CVRPC supported a Phase II assessment at a Town-owned property in Whiting (Addison County) to leverage the property’s redevelopment into a municipal facility.

- **Former Clark’s Feed, Barre City:** CVRPC is supporting Barre City’s Merchants Row redevelopment through site characterization at the former Clark’s Feed Store property. When redeveloped as parking, this site will support full use of the Blanchard Block, a former brownfields property, where use by large tenants is hindered by a lack of dedicated parking.
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- Continued inventory and mapping of more than 1,300 sewer manholes in Barre Town, supporting the Town’s effort to strengthen its infrastructure management and maintenance.
- Assisted Barre City to implement recommendations of the Vermont Economic Resiliency Initiative. CVRPC developed maps and provide grant writing assistance for floodplain buyouts, helping the City reduce damages and recover more quickly after disasters.
- Successfully managed a Community Development Block Grant for Washington to increase access to the Calef Memorial Library. CVRPC staff successfully guided the town and library through a myriad of federal and state award conditions.
- Assisted Calais with a successful grant application to develop a Village Revitalization Plan, which aims to revitalize the village and reestablish it as an economic and civic hub.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through a contract with the VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

Objective #1 - Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, Regions and Municipalities

- **TAC Activity** - Hosted 10 TAC meetings with an average municipal participation of 52%.
- **TAC Outcomes**
  - Evaluated and ranked 8 State paving projects.
  - Evaluated and ranked 15 Town Highway Bridges pre-candidate for consideration of future VTrans Capital Program funding.
  - Funded 2 intersection studies and a enhanced transit ridership survey.
  - Fostered support for implementing road diets using a tour of the Barre-Montpelier Road project.
- **Other Outreach**
  - Facilitated 2 local road foreman meetings. One highlighted hydro seeders, which reduce erosion by restoring vegetation more quickly than hand casting seed.
- Provided direct training to 6 communities about the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Convened human service and health care sector representatives to discuss needs as part of Green Mountain Transit’s Net Gen Transit Plan. Project will enhance service through route adjustments or reconfigurations and elimination or addition of service.
- Assisted Cabot and Marshfield with a request to VTrans to reclassify Route 215.
- Facilitated Marshfield’s request for a Road Safety Audit of Cabot Road to address safety and vehicle speed concerns.

**Data Collection**
- Inventoried bridge and culvert locations in 5 communities.
- Conducted 22 traffic counts in Barre Town, Berlin, Cabot, Marshfield, Middlesex, Montpelier, and Waitsfield.
- Conducted 3 park and ride surveys.
- Conducted 6 road erosion inventories for Calais, Duxbury, Montpelier, Roxbury, Waitsfield and Warren.
- Conducted pedestrian counts in Waterbury and Northfield.

**Objective #2 - Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making**
The Central Vermont Regional Transportation Plan was adopted September 8, 2008. The plan has been updated and will be incorporated into Plan Central Vermont. Adoption is scheduled for fall 2018.

CVRPC participated in 2 project scoping efforts, 1 accelerated bridge meeting. CVRPC participated in the redesign of VTrans’ project prioritization process and public involvement guidebook.

CVRPC’s Project Review Committee reviewed 1 Act 250 application for transportation issues. The Committee determined the project did not have substantial regional impact.

**Objective #3 - Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities**
Short-range transportation planning providing direct assistance to municipalities is 48% of CVRPC’s transportation budget. A large portion of the coordination activities also includes municipal assistance. Municipal projects included:

- Managed the Vermont On-line Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool for RPCs and towns, participated in its upgrade, and coached users.
- Lead a site visit of RPC and Vermont Youth Conservation Corps staff to standardize road inventories for the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Trained Calais road staff on data collection for hydrologically connected road segments.
- Worked with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to identify towns for Class IV road inventories and installation of best management practices to address gully erosion.
Wrote or provided significant technical assistance to 13 transportation-related grant applications. Includes Better Roads Program, Transportation Alternatives, Better Connections, and Bicycle and Pedestrian.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans and assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.

- 23 (100%) of municipalities in the region currently have a hazard mitigation plan either adopted or under review.
- 21 (91%) of municipalities in the region currently have an updated local emergency plan. CVRPC supported towns with LEOP Annex development for Tier II summary reports, Animal Disaster Response Plans, Debris Management Plans, Emergency Contact databases by support functions, mutual aid lists, Delegation of Authority lists, and maps.
- Hosted an Incident Command System training for local officials. Municipal officials are required to be ICS-trained to certify LEOPs. Having an LEOP increases town disaster readiness, and is a factor for higher reimbursement under the Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF).
- Collaborated with VEM to support 4 other preparedness trainings - spring flood preparedness, the role of Emergency Management Directors, rail car incident response, and dam safety.
- Assisted LEPC 5 to recruit 7 new members, increasing its active members by 54%. LEPC’s are voluntary partnerships of local governments and industries. They work to increase awareness about the presence and potential release of chemicals and plan for responses.
- Completed a flood model for the Mad River Valley and sections of the Winooski River and Thatcher Brook in Waterbury. The model identifies vulnerable infrastructure and buildings so landowners and municipalities can amend flood maps and mobilize resilience projects.
- Assisted Plainfield and Waterbury to develop high priority, hazard mitigation project packets. Towns will add the information to hazard mitigation plans and use it to leverage funding.
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Mapped historic districts for all municipalities. The districts will be posted online by VCGI.
- Completed E911 maps for all municipalities for use by town officials, emergency responders, and others. The maps are posted on our website and accessible to the public.
- Created web maps for Calais and Berlin to enhance public accessibility to town parcel, zoning, flooding, and natural resource data.
- Created maps for Waterbury’s wayfinding project, which will enhance its economic vitality.
- Prepared maps for Waterbury and Moretown’s successful village center designations.
- Completed zoning maps for Northfield and Plainfield and Town Plan maps for Woodbury.
- Updated Duxbury’s emergency zone road maps.
- Developed transportation vulnerability assessments for nine communities for incorporation into their local hazard mitigation plans.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- Participated in Green Mountain Transit’s Next Gen Transit Study to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the region’s transit services.
- Developed an enhanced regional energy plan to position the region for its energy future and support the state’s goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050. The project includes energy demand and generation modeling and mapping of areas with renewable generation potential.
- Hosted two general trainings and three one-on-one trainings about Act 174’s requirements.
- Reviewed 4 municipal plans and coached municipalities on compliance with Act 174.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments.
in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Worked with ANR and other RPCs to develop procedures for ranking water quality projects. Fostered understanding that using statewide priorities may not maximize benefit in all basins.
- Assisted communities on grant applications for stormwater mitigation projects.
- Managed two stormwater master plan projects, a regional effort for Barre City, Barre Town, and Plainfield and a local effort in Berlin. Towns will set priorities for clean water action.
- Developed a statewide procedure to refine ANR’s river corridor mapping, and worked with Waterbury to pilot the process.
- Assisted the state’s Watershed Coordinator with municipal engagement for the Winooski River basin.
- Fostered an intermunicipal project with Cabot, Marshfield, and Plainfield to explore how forest integrity can support watershed resiliency. Friends of the Winooski River and Vermont Woodlands Association are co-leaders with CVRPC.
- Assisted the Mad River Ridge to River team to address stormwater issues. The team established a menu of regulatory actions that foster thoughtful site planning and layout by taking advantage of existing stormwater controls. Friends of the Mad River lead the effort.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

CVRPC collaborated with Plainfield, Milone and MacBroom, and UVM for the Plainfield Village Bridges Alternatives Analysis. The project used cutting-edge unmanned aerial systems, or drone technology, with hydraulic analysis to devise alternative designs for two bridges. Extreme weather events, which wash large woody debris to the bridges, resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in damage to both bridges on multiple occasions over the past decade. The National Association of Development Organization awarded the project a 2017 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award.

CVRPC continued its collaboration with the Washington County Regional Prevention Partnership on Healthy Community Design. For 2017, CVRPC provided guidance on working with municipalities to inventory ordinances and policies as they pertain to alcohol and other substances. Central Vermont communities strongly support physical exercise and nutrition. The Partnership’s work to build Community Health Profiles will assist communities to understand how and whether their ordinances and policies compliment their healthy community efforts.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The FY 17 CVRPC budget was approximately $1.3 million. Revenue sources included state and federal performance contracts, grants, and local assessments. Virtually all of the CVRPC’s
revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines, and/or performance measures. This means CVRPC has limited flexibility in how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through town assessments is the exception, which makes this funding stream particularly important. It gives us the greatest latitude to respond to the region’s needs. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires non-federal matching funds ranging from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant). Town assessments and regional planning funds passed through to CVRPC under a performance contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development provide matching funds.

CVRPC opened a line of credit in 2017, partially in response to the prevalence of product-based contracts in its budget. CVRPC maintains Board designated reserve funds to cover operating shortfalls, accrued leave time, and equipment replacement. The Commission maintains a four-year plan for equipment and software upgrades and replacement.

CVRPC’s annual audit will be completed in the fall of 2017. CVRPC has had no audit findings in recent years and as such is considered a ‘low risk’ grantee by federal agencies. Staffing in 2017 included 13 employees: the Executive Director, Program Manager, Senior Planners (2), Planners (2), Assistant Planners (2), and Finance and Office Manager. CVRPC leases 2 employees to the Mad River Valley Planning District and 1 employee to the Cross Vermont Trail. CVRPC supports workforce development through use of summer planning technicians for transportation and planning services.

In 2017, CVRPC updated its procurement procedures, personnel policies, GIS services and other policies, and substantially revised jobs descriptions and its performance appraisal process. CVRPC initiated development of a Commissioner Handbook to orient Board members to the Commission.

In 2017, CVRPC experienced the passing of three long-time family members: Transportation Planner Steve Gladczuk, retired Grants and Office Manager Laurie Emery, and Town of Orange Commissioner, George Malek. Their laughter and contributions remain in our hearts.
The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) is a cooperative regional forum 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 to all citizens of the region to ensure the implementation of the best regional and transportation plan for Chittenden County. The CCRPC also 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), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the 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 Commission 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 FY17, the CCRPC invested about $5 million in regional land use, transportation, emergency management, energy, natural resources, public engagement, public health, training, and technical assistance. The program leverages more than $4.5 million in Federal and State investment with $245,000 in municipal dues and another $187,000 in local match for specific projects—an 11:1 return on investment.

**MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, municipal dues, and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:
• **Town Plan Assistance**: Continued work with Bolton to draft their Town Plan, and get it adopted. Other Town Plan update assistance includes: Provided an initial review of Shelburne, Winooski, Milton, Colchester and Burlington’s existing plans. Created Town Plan maps for Bolton, Buels Gore, Charlotte, Richmond and St. George. Continued working with St. George on their flood resiliency, water quality and forestry sections.

• **Town Plan Approvals**: Approved the Comprehensive Plans and confirmed the planning process for Bolton and Shelburne (an amendment).

• **Zoning**: Assisted Huntington with an overhaul of their zoning regulations, by ensuring they’ve addressed statutory changes and consistency with their Town Plan (which calls for protection of the rural landscape, and appropriate growth in the Village districts). Continued assistance in development and adoption of Form Based Code zoning in Shelburne.

• **CIP**: Provided Capital Improvement Plan development assistance to Bolton.

• **Development Review Services**: Provided temporary development review services for South Burlington.

• **Training**: The CCRPC held the Development Review Board Summit & Land Use Essentials training; Economic Development Strategies training – 21 people from 9 of our 19 municipalities participated. CCRPC also participated in the Town Plan Training webinar hosted by ACCD; hosted two Act 174 energy trainings; and a Building Energy Code training. We continued hosting meetings and online webinars open to municipalities and regional partners covering topics such as: Advancing the Intersection of Health, Equity, and Transportation; Guide to Running a Bike Share; VOBCIT/VTCulverts (http://www.vtculverts.org/); and the entire 12-webinar series from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycling Professionals (over FY16 and FY17).

### REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

• **Plan Updates**: CCRPC began working on the 2018 update to the *Chittenden County ECOS Plan* which combines the regional plan, comprehensive economic development strategy, and metropolitan transportation plan. Updates are being made to the energy, transportation and economic sections. To prepare for the 2018 update of the *ECOS Plan*, the CCRPC updated the county’s population, housing, and employment projections. These projections to 2050 will serve as inputs to the Energy Plan and to the Travel Demand Model, which will have implications for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. (http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/ecos-regional-plan/).

• **ECOS Plan Annual Report and Indicators**: The 2016 Annual Report is a summary that highlights a number of regional accomplishments, trends, and high priority actions. The ECOS Scorecard hosts the ECOS Partners’ shared measurement and indicator system
that monitors how well Chittenden County is doing relative to achieving our shared ECOS goals. (https://app.resultsscorecard.com/Scorecard/Embed/8502)

- **Plan Implementation**: CCRPC implements the Plan through collective impact relationships and projects with the GBIC, Department of Health, United Way, UVM-Medical Center, UVM, our member municipalities and many other partners. As an example, we’ve implemented Strategy #2 (Strive for 80% of new development in areas planned for growth, which amounts to 15% of our land area) through the zoning projects mentioned above, permit reviews, and planned transportation investments in those places resulting in 83% of residential growth in these areas in 2015. CCRPC used the ECOS Plan to evaluate applications and participate in Act 250 and Section 248 hearings.

- **Legislative Forum** – CCRPC hosted our annual Legislative Breakfast in December to discuss priority issues of housing, water quality, and municipal shared services. (http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/policies-positions/).

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- **Lake Champlain Byway** – As part of the Byway (www.lakechamplainbyway.com) CCRPC continued to promote improvements to traveler information and to interpretation of the area’s historic, recreational and scenic resources. Four bicyclist “rest stops” (consisting of a large picnic table with a roof accompanied by an information kiosk) were constructed along the Byway - two in the Islands and one each in Colchester (at Airport Park) and Shelburne (at Shelburne Vineyard). Improved the Lake Champlain Byway online resource sites map - http://map.ccrpcvt.org/lcbyway/. Relaunched the Byway’s website, www.lakechamplainbyway.com and launched a cell phone audio tour available for listening by phone and on the web at www.lcbyway.oncell.com

- Continued our strong partnership with GBIC/LCRCC working together to advance plans, policies, and projects that improve our economy such as the Brownfields program below.

**BROWNFIELDS**

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.
• CCRPC obtained a $400,000 Brownfield Assessment Grant from EPA in FY16. The CCRPC’s Brownfields Advisory Committee funded the following redevelopment studies through this grant. In Burlington at the following locations: 207 Flynn Avenue (City Market); 316 Flynn Avenue (apartments + commercial space); 339 Pine Street (potential new road); 400 Pine Street (artist studios + office); 453 Pine (potential office) and Burlington Waterfront (soil cleanup); and at the following locations in Winooski: 4 Abenaki Way (hotel) and 70 Main Street (theatre, office& commercial). Interested property owners should contact dalbrecht@ccrpcvt.org.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contracts with VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public and municipal involvement in planning for improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

The CCRPC serves as the only metropolitan planning organization (MPO) operating within Vermont. MPOs are federally mandated and funded transportation planning organizations governed by representatives from local municipalities and state transportation agencies/departments. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process. Congress created MPOs in order to ensure that transportation projects and programs in urbanized areas (population greater than 50,000) are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (“3-C”) planning process that serve the needs of the municipalities in the area.

Objective #1 - Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, Regions and Municipalities

TAC Activity - The TAC met 10 times in FY17. Attendance varied from 14 to 19 members, more than 50% of total membership.

TAC Outcomes – The TAC approved consultant selection for the following projects:

• Regional Travel Demand Model Update
• Road Erosion Inventory Prioritization Project
• Malletts Bay Stormwater and Transportation Management Plan
• Shelburne Form Based Code

The TAC approved discussed, heard presentations on and/or made recommendations on the following projects/tasks:

• The FY17 Transportation Improvement Program
• The FY17 Unified Planning Work Program
• I-89 Exit 14 Systems Engineering Analysis
Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

- Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP)
- Road Erosion Inventories & Prioritization Methodology Updates
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan Updates
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan
- Active Transportation Plan
- CIRC ROW Management Plan
- Flood Damage Reporting
- Way to Go! Challenge Report
- FY 18 Better Roads Grant Applications
- Roadway Functional Class Evaluation and Updates
- Town Highway Bridge Pre-Candidate List Priorities
- VTrans Funding Priorities
- Chittenden County Population Forecast Update
- I-89 Exit 14 Bike Ped Crossing Study
- VTrans Bike Ped Program
- VTrans Long Range Transportation Plan
- Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Project

Other Transportation Outreach Assistance Provided by CCRPC:
- Road manager meetings – hosted a meeting on October 19, 2016. Also shared events and funding opportunities as appropriate.
- Codes & Standards – solicited updated forms via email.
- Transportation Board Forum: Fall 2016, Main Street Landing, Burlington.
- Facilitated municipal participation in numerous MRGP meetings and updates.
- North Avenue Pilot Project (Burlington) survey.
- Promoted participation in Sept. 26-Oct 7 Way to Go! Challenge. TDM outreach to businesses and partners countywide through CATMA.
- Provided Annual Traffic Alert! Communications outreach program.
- Staff participated in public transit planning activities including:
  - The Elderly & Disabled program advisory committee
  - GMT’s ADA Advisory Committee
  - United Way’s Neighbor Rides volunteer driver program Advisory Committee
  - GMT’s NextGEN Transit Plan Advisory Committee

CCRPC Data Collection in FY 17:
- 14 Municipal Infrastructure Inventories (culverts, sidewalks, signs, parking and pavement) for the following municipalities: Burlington, Bolton, Charlotte, Hinesburg, Huntington, Milton, Richmond, St. George, Westford, Williston and Winooski.
- Park-and-Ride counts were completed in Charlotte, Colchester, Essex, Hinesburg, Huntington, Richmond and Westford.
Objective #2 - Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making

Status of Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – CCRPC began updating the 2013 MTP which should be adopted by June 2018. Updated the Regional Transportation Model to provide the best possible analysis for the MTP.

Participation in Transportation Planning and Project Development Activities – Below is the list of 12 Project Definition (Scoping) and 4 Municipal Construction Projects (Local Project Management (LPM)) that the CCRPC managed in FY 17:

- Winooski River Bridge Scoping (Burlington/Winooski)
- I-89 Exit 14 Bike & Pedestrian Scoping (South Burlington)
- Colchester Ave/Riverside Ave/Barrett St/Mill St Intersection Scoping (Burlington)
- Railyard Enterprise Scoping/PEL Project (Burlington)
- Shelburne Southern Gateway (US 7) Scoping
- Richmond Road Bike & Pedestrian Scoping (Hinesburg)
- South Burlington Sidewalk/Path Connecting-the-Gaps Scoping
- Mountain View Rd Bicycle/Pedestrian Supplemental Scoping (Williston)
- North Williston Rd Scoping Study (Williston)
- Bank St/Church St Intersection Scoping (Burlington)
- Bay Rd Bicycle and Mobility Study (Shelburne)
- Allen Martin Drive and VT 15 Intersection Scoping Study (Essex)
- LPM services for Underhill sidewalk construction on VT 15
- LPM services for Shelburne sidewalk construction on US 7
- LPM services for South Burlington sidewalk construction on VT 116
- LPM services for Hinesburg Village South VT 116 sidewalk design and construction

Participation in Act 250 review related to transportation issues – CCRPC staff reviewed all applications in Chittenden County but participated only in major applications and a small number of minor ones with potentially significant impacts. In FY 17, staff reviewed 9 major Act 250 applications and provided written comment to the District 4 Environmental Commission.

Objective #3 - Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities and the Region

- CCRPC invests about 50% of our MPO funding in municipal planning.

During FY 17, the CCRPC initiated, managed and was involved in major regional and local transportation plans, studies and initiatives; conducted various studies and provided technical assistance and support to municipalities and partners on transportation issues. Please see below for more information on these activities:

- Initiated and managed the following multimodal Corridor and Area-wide Studies:
  - Malletts Bay Stormwater and Transportation Management Plan (Colchester)
  - Kimball Ave/Kennedy Dr/Old Farm Rd/Tilley Drive/VT 116 Transportation Needs Analysis (South Burlington)
  - Williston Road Network Transportation Study (South Burlington)
- Riverside Future Street Network Study (Jericho)
- Exit 12 Transportation Improvement District Evaluation (Williston)
- Winooski Ave Corridor Study - Phase 1 (Burlington)

- Completed road erosion inventories for the 8 municipalities that received FY 17 Better Roads Category A grants. The CCRPC submitted applications and was awarded FY 18 Better Roads Category A grants for the other 10 municipalities in our region.
- Completed the Regional Active Transportation Plan.
- Evaluated current traffic signal system along VT 15 from Exit 15 to Susie Wilson Road.
- Completed a scope of work and selected a consultant to evaluate traffic signal system at the Exit 14 area (US 2 and Dorset Street).
- Completed Systems Engineering Analysis (SEA) for the Advance Traffic Monitoring System using Bluetooth Technology project, in close cooperation with VTrans and FHWA, and implemented a pilot system for Williston Rd (US 2) from University Heights to Industrial Ave.
- Assisted with the planBTV Walk Bike, Burlington’s walk/bike master plan.
- Funded and assisted Burlington with Downtown Parking Assessment and Innovations.
- Completed the Winooski River Bike/Ped Bridge Feasibility Study
- Initiated the ADA Study on Sidewalks/Paths/Crossings/Intersections (Essex and Essex Junction)
- Initiated and managed the Path & Sidewalk Impact Policies Study (Essex)
- CCRPC Staff provided technical assistance to the following municipalities:
  - Huntington – Speed and safety analysis study for Camels Hump Road
  - Williston – Speed study for Oak Hill Road and Blair Park Road intersection analysis
  - Shelburne – Crosswalk feasibility study along Falls Road
  - Shelburne - Pedestrian improvement study at the railroad underpass on Bay Road. Provided conceptual improvement plans and evaluated the performance of a pilot project that implemented proposed improvements.
  - Burlington – North Ave Pilot Project/road diet data gathering and analyses
- Staff reviewed road safety audit reports and proposed safety improvements for local roads in Richmond, Burlington and Milton and completed before and after crash data analysis for Richmond and Milton as part of High Risk Rural Roads evaluation.
- Provided Capital Improvement Program assistance to Bolton.
- The CCRPC was involved in the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives and studies:
  - Travel Smarter, an online trip planner providing directions and displaying the impacts -- time, cost, calories -- of walking, biking, busing, or driving. www.TravelSmarterVT.org
  - 13th annual Way to Go! Challenge to encourage non-single occupant vehicle travel and demonstrate the environmental and financial benefits. www.WayToGoVT.org
  - Provided funding for TDM projects to CATMA, CarShare Vermont, and Local Motion.
- Since 2013, the CCRPC has been investing in United Way’s Neighbor Rides program to integrate volunteer drivers into human services transportation in order to increase access to transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities by offering a lower-cost option.
RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center when needed, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees, and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPCs also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency operations plans and assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other disasters.

- **Hazard Mitigation Plan**: In FY17, CCRPC, in consultation with municipalities, wrote the 2017 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan (AHMP) which was formally approved by FEMA in March 2017. This also included the approval of the template for the municipal AHMPs which are annexed to the Multi-Jurisdictional document. As of June 30, 2017, 15 of the 19 municipalities in the CCRPC region had had their 2017 AHMPs approved by FEMA for adoption, while drafts for the remaining four had already been submitted to Vermont DEMHS and thus remained eligible for a favorable ERAF rate. These plans outline key municipal actions to address and mitigate against common hazards such as severe rainstorms and flooding. ([http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/emergency-management/hazard-mitigation-plan/](http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/emergency-management/hazard-mitigation-plan/)).

- **Local Emergency Operations Plans**: 18 out of 19 (95%) of municipalities in the CCRPC region currently have an updated local emergency operations plan.

- **ERAF**: Staff continued assisting with information and details regarding new rules for Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) and flood resiliency planning requirements.

- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program**: As sub-grantees to ANR in a FEMA-Funded Hazard Mitigation Grant, developed a Project Readiness Workbook template which all RPC’s will replicate for 2 towns in their region. The readiness workbook includes specific problem areas identified in All Hazard Mitigation Plan that could have a fix funded through several grants. The workbook provides the towns with key pieces of information about the problem area that can be used in various grant applications.

- **Local Emergency Planning Committee**: CCRPC, with Local Emergency Planning Committee 1 (LEPC 1 [http://www.ccrpcvt.org/em/lepc/](http://www.ccrpcvt.org/em/lepc/)), served as a key conduit between municipalities and the State in collecting and sharing damage assessment information after disasters, helped with emergency preparedness for hazardous materials incidents, hosted workshops on a wide array of emergency preparedness topics, and facilitated Incident Command System, Active Shooter, School Safety, Fire Safety, and Public Information Officer training.

- **Hazardous Materials**: Worked to help make “Tier II” hazardous materials information more easily accessible and usable by first responders, by identifying challenges with existing software reporting systems and opportunities for improvements.
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- **Town Plan Maps**: Created for Bolton, Buels Gore, Charlotte, Richmond, and St. George; and a data update for Williston.
- **GIS Data**: Developed or updated numerous GIS datasets (zoning, bridges, culverts, housing points, signs, sidewalks, pavement, parking lots, scenic resources, state designations, groundwater source protection areas, trails, conserved land, utilities, etc.) for Bolton, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Jericho, Milton, Shelburne, Underhill, Westford, and Winooski.
- **Colchester Map Service**: Continue to provide updates to their map service which links to the Town’s VueWorks Asset Management system. Also, Collector App maps for Colchester Public Works to use in tracking street sweeping and work conducted on catch basins and outfalls.
- **Shelburne Sewer**: Developed an online map with Town staff providing information about sewer and water accounts, and showing sewer and water easement information.
- **Colchester Bayside Build-out Analysis**: Conducted a build out analysis of the Fire District No.2 sewer expansion area to understand the development potential under various scenarios.
- **Winooski Map Service**: Providing an interactive digital map service for Winooski’s NexGen Asset Management system.
- **VOBCIT**: CCRPC continues to work with partners to improve, enhance and support the VOBCIT website (https://vtculverts.org).

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- **Regional Energy Plan**: The CCRPC is developing an enhanced Regional Plan (ECOS Plan) with a particular focus on energy to advance the State Comprehensive Energy Plan’s climate and energy goals while also being consistent with municipal and regional land use plans. CCRPC conducted 21 presentations in 16 of our municipalities; and two regional presentations in December 2016 and May 2017 to gather input.
- **Municipal Energy Plans**: The CCRPC also developed Municipal Energy Data Guides for each municipality to support local planning and to assist municipalities with understanding their role in meeting their State’s energy goals [http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/regional-energy-plan/](http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/regional-energy-plan/). Also began providing specific technical assistance to Shelburne, Winooski and Colchester to help them develop their local energy plans.

- **Municipal Energy Elements**: Reviewed and made recommendations on 5 (Shelburne, Winooski, Milton, Colchester and Burlington) municipal energy plan elements to ensure content meets state statute.

- **Energy Building Code Training**: Hosted an Energy Building Code training with VEIC for planners and zoning administrators regarding updates to the codes, and reminders of the municipal role. The training also included a presentation from South Burlington on inclusion of energy codes in their zoning regulations.

### WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA-required watershed tactical basin plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations for better and safer growth management decisions.

- **Water Quality Outreach**: CCRPC is managing, with all RPCs as sub-grantees, a grant provided from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to conduct a multi-pronged outreach effort focused on improving water quality in compliance with the Vermont Clean Water Act (VCWA). CCRPC continues work with municipal staff and boards to provide information about the requirements for municipalities triggered by the VCWA and also work with them on options such as stronger municipal protections against flood hazards and river corridor erosion, stormwater master planning, and other town plan or zoning changes to improve water quality. CCRPC assisted in completion of the Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan including providing recommendations about priorities; and have begun work on development of the Winooski Tactical Basin Plan.

- **Clean Water Advisory Committee**: Provided ongoing staff support to the Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) to oversee CCRPC activities and policy development regarding but not limited to, the Vermont Lake Champlain TMDL Plan and its related plans and programs.

- **Stormwater** – Provided ongoing staff support to the Chittenden County Stream Team and Chittenden County Regional Stormwater Education Program to facilitate multi-municipal cooperation to comply with ANR stormwater permit requirements for public education and involvement. In April 2017, these two efforts were merged under a single identity, Rethink Runoff [http://rethinkrunoff.org/](http://rethinkrunoff.org/) overseen by the MS4 Subcommittee of the CWAC described above.

- **Stormwater Master Plans**: Worked with Town of Jericho to complete the Jericho Stormwater Master Plan; and entered projects into DECs project database. Secured DEC
grants for Stormwater Master Plans for Underhill and Richmond; and began managing these projects. The Winooski NRCD and Friends of the Winooski who will assist with outreach on the Richmond stormwater master plan.

- **River Corridors**: Assisted Huntington in an overhaul of their zoning regulations, including review of the floodplain and river corridor regulations.
- **Road Erosion Inventories**: Worked with DEC and fellow RPCs to develop and refine a GIS-based methodology to conduct municipal road erosion inventories to comply with pending Municipal Roads General Permit. Road erosion inventories were completed for Jericho, Bolton, Richmond, Huntington, St. George, and Essex Junction. Partial inventories were completed for Essex and Williston.
- **Malletts Bay Stormwater in Colchester**: Helped fund and manage a stormwater plan to address runoff from the current and planned transportation system in the Malletts Bay area.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- The CCRPC continues to use the 2014 Public Participation Plan (PPP) to guide our focus on diversity and equity in all projects. ([http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/public-participation-plan/](http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/public-participation-plan/))
- **Chittenden County Opioid Alliance**: CCRPC has continued to provide back-bone support (including hiring three staff and fiscal management) for the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance. The Opioid Alliance is a unique commitment from state, local government, and non-profit leaders to put forth a comprehensive mutually reinforcing approach to reducing opioid abuse and the ancillary burdens they bring to our community. ([http://www.ecosproject.com/chittenden-county-opioid-alliance](http://www.ecosproject.com/chittenden-county-opioid-alliance))
- **Building Homes Together** – The CCRPC, Champlain Housing Trust and Housing Vermont continue to lead a coordinated campaign to strengthen Chittenden County communities by building 3,500 homes by 2021 for people of all incomes, including 700 affordable homes. ([http://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together](http://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together))
- **Prevention Network**: Continue to serve as the lead agency for the Department of Health’s Partnership for Success to reduce alcohol and substance abuse among youth.
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The CCRPC receives most of its funding through performance-based grants and contracts with the state. Town assessments constitute a small but very important percentage of our funding. For the 2017 fiscal year, the CCRPC’s total revenue of approximately $5 million dollars was derived from about 73% federally funded grants, 16% state funding, 19% from municipalities, and 2% from state and regional charitable and non-profit organizations to fund the Chittenden County Opiate Alliance. About $2.6 million, or 52% of the total funding was passed through to consultants or sub-grantees.

All of the CCRPC’s revenue sources are tied to federal, state or municipal agreements with scopes of work, guidelines and/or performance measures. CCRPC works with our members and VTrans to decide the best way to invest our MPO funding annually in developing our unified planning work program. Municipal dues, and the funding received through the CCRPC’s performance agreement with ACCD, are also necessary to provide matching funds required by grantors. The grants we receive enable us to work with our municipalities on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, energy, public health, and natural resources. Revenue from federal and state grantors typically requires non-federal matching funds. Required match ranges from 10 percent (transportation planning) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant).

The CCRPC conducts a single audit on an annual basis. The federal single audit field work will be conducted in September of 2017, with the full report to be completed before December 2017.
Founded in 1966 as the Lamoille County Planning and Development Corporation, the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) continues to be an important resource to the 15 municipalities of Lamoille County, including 10 towns and five incorporated villages. The county’s economy is primarily tourism-based - including two major ski resorts - with a growing number of home-grown, nationally-renowned businesses, such as Concept 2, MSI, and Butternut Mountain Farm. LCPC’s mission is to ensure the protection of the region’s environment and conservation of natural resources, and to facilitate sustainable economic development for the benefit of all residents and visitors through a coordinated and cooperative planning process at the local level.

Each municipality’s legislative body (Selectboard or Trustees) determines who will represent them on the LCPC Board of Directors. Member municipalities of 2,500 residents or greater appoint two directors and municipalities under 2,500 appoint one director to represent that municipality’s interest in regional affairs. Additionally, the LCPC has five at-large, elected directors to represent regional interests. Directors serve on committees that make recommendations to the full 23-member Board of Directors. The LCPC has seven highly-qualified full-time and part-time staff that provide support to the Board and its committees and execute the Commission’s multifaceted work program.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving municipal plans and local permitting through education and consultations, bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing statutory requirements for flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- After a multi-year process with the full assistance of the LCPC staff, the Town of Hyde Park and Village of Hyde Park both adopted Unified Development Bylaws. The Village’s bylaws replace large setbacks with more flexible standards that better reflect the Village’s traditional development pattern. The Land Use and Development Regulations (LUDRs) also contain some elements of Form Based Code, such as roof design and building façade standards, aimed at fostering pedestrian scale, mixed use development.
- With assistance from LCPC, the Town of Cambridge amended its subdivision regulations. And the Town of Wolcott adopted zoning and subdivision bylaws that enhance existing...
provisions for “conservation subdivisions” in rural areas and modernize site plan standards to facilitate infill/redevelopment in the Village, in light of the closure of Buck’s furniture.

- With assistance from LCPC, Cambridge and Jeffersonville continue to implement major aspects of the “Jeffersonville Flood Mitigation Master Plan.” The mitigation measures are funded through a mix of HMGP, CDBG, and State ERP funds, and, once implemented, will reduce flood levels in the Village core by up to 1.5 feet. Had such measures been in place during the flood of 2011, evacuation of the Village’s Senior Housing would not have been needed.
- LCPC began assisting the Village of Jeffersonville in updating the Village’s Flood Hazard Bylaws to reflect recommendations from the Lamoille Flood Modeling Study.
- With LCPC’s assistance, the Town of Eden revised its Town Plan and the Town of Waterville drafted a flood resiliency chapter of their Town Plan. LCPC provided ongoing assistance to Belvidere for transportation project planning and management including project management services for replacement of the culvert on Bog Road as well as project management services for the Better Back Roads Florence Road project.
- The Commission was active in water quality issues including, implementing water quality projects and programs to protect water resources, ensuring safe water supplies, enhancing recreational opportunities, and addressing known sources of pollution. Staff provided Vermont Clean Water Fund Outreach and Assistance and assisted in the development of the Lamoille River Tactical Basin Plan and begun assisting in the development of the Winooski Tactical Basin Plan.
- LCPC provided assistance identifying appropriate funding sources, defining project scope, and writing applications for numerous municipalities which among other grants resulted in municipal planning grants for Jeffersonville, Wolcott and Waterville.
- The Commission provided application development and mapping services to assist Johnson Village, Jeffersonville Village, and Hyde Park Village with Village Center Designation renewal. With LCPC’s assistance, the Town of Hyde Park successfully obtained Village Center Designation status for North Hyde Park Village.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

The Lamoille County Planning Commission completely revised their Act 250 review process, making the process more transparent, understandable and accessible to both developers and municipalities. The Commission has engaged in extensive outreach to increase regional understanding of the Commission’s role in the Act 250 process. The Planning Commission
reviewed and commented on seven major Act 250 applications and four Section 248 applications
with hearings.

The revised Lamoille County Regional Plan was adopted in November 2015. This year, the
Commission continued the process of redefining Substantial Regional Impact (SRI) criteria. The
SRI criteria included in the Lamoille Regional Plan had not been updated since 1991 and we
believe that this update will be crucial to further improving LCPC’s Act 250 review process. The
Board of Directors held their first hearing on the proposed revisions in May 2017, and will hold
the Second Hearing in September 2017.

Adoption of the new Regional plan furthered the implementation of responsible infill and LCPC
is considered a leader in assisting with the implementation of the new criteria 9L in the Act 250
process.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic
development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed
or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and
increase housing opportunities.

The LCPC received a total of $400,000 in Assessment Grant Funds from the US EPA. ($200,000
for hazardous sites and $200,000 for petroleum sites). In FY 17, the LCPC’s brownfields Grant
Funds advanced environmental assessments in the Village of Jeffersonville, the Town of Hyde
Park, the Village of Johnson and former foundry property in Morrisville. The Village of
Jeffersonville strives to transform the former Bell Gates lumber yard into a gateway park to the
Village and regrade uncontaminated portions of the property for flood storage and conveyance.
The property will be a test case for creative reuse of soil under Vermont’s new “I-Rule.” The Town
of Hyde Park would like to develop a vacant parcel adjacent to the former railroad as a trailhead
facility serving Lamoille Valley Rail Trail users. Johnson Village received an area-wide planning
grant to prepare an economic revitalization plan for the Railroad Street Corridor connecting the
former Talc Mill plant, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and downtown Johnson. Johnson Village is
also undertaking a Phase I assessment to better understand their options for the Old Village
Power House located on the Banks of the Gihon River.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning
functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development
Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive
strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.
This year marked the culmination of LCPC’s four-year assistance, funded by the Northern Border Regional Commission to six municipalities to construct trailside amenities, develop a wayfinding system and produce trail maps. Thanks to this work, Jeffersonville, Cambridge and Wolcott now have beautiful trailhead kiosks. Hyde Park installed attractive wayfinding signs throughout Hyde Park Village to enhance connectivity between the Village and the trail. Work on the Wayfinding signs included creation of a Village logo using the familiar clock tower of the courthouse. The LCPC coordinated with municipalities, volunteers, VAST, and Friends of the LVRT on the design and production of information brochures and outdoor maps for municipalities along the open section of the trail.

Lack of critical infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and broadband is an impediment to economic development in much of rural Vermont. LCPC continues to work with municipalities to identify new funding sources for this infrastructure, and to seek creative means to maximize use of existing but limited capacity, such as encouraging mixed use development, relaxed setbacks and frontage standards so that more users can be accommodated within existing service areas, and flexible parking standards.

The Wolcott, Hyde Park, and Hyde Park Village bylaw amendments noted earlier contain simplified review process, including administrative review. All three bylaws also contain provisions for “agricultural enterprises” and forest products processing that will ensure these activities can occur in rural areas of the working landscape.

LCPC reached an agreement with the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation such that the Executive Directors of each organization now serve ex officio on the others’ boards. This new level of coordination allows for improved communication, development and community outreach.

In 2016, the Executive Director of LCPC, Tasha Wallis, served as Co-Chair of the Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD). The NVEDD completed work on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and is poised to further contribute to economic development throughout the Lamoille County region.

The Commission, along with members of the Smugglers Notch Partnership, completed another successful summer of operations at the Barnes Camp Visitor Center. The renovated Barnes Camp at the base of the Notch on the Stowe side, has become a popular spot for tourists exploring the area. This summer, LCPC is managing construction of a Boardwalk behind Barnes Camp that will be the first universally accessible segment of the Long Trail. Finally, LCPC facilitated a series of beautifully designed interpretive panels and timber framed kiosks in Smugglers Notch State Park. These improved visitor facilities and amenities will strengthen Lamoille County’s tourism and recreation economy.
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contract with VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

In this reporting period, the Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met nine times, with an average member participation rate of 39.1%. Three outcomes of this year’s TAC activities include:

1. Multiple engaging discussions about the Municipal Road General Permit and development of informal comments on the permit’s draft framework.
2. Overview and renewed understanding of the VTrans project prioritization process and the role TAC provides in state-level decision making.
3. Fostered communication and coordination between municipalities and various agencies and organizations who offer grant funding opportunities.

The Lamoille County Road Foremen Network has met three times during this reporting period (Sept 22, Jan 26, May 9). This group has been very important in communicating across towns throughout the region and heightening awareness of regional planning, road networks and water quality issues.

Other Outreach and Municipal assistance included the three road foremen network meetings, one parcel update meeting with VT Center for Geographic Information, three meetings about road and bridge codes and standards and twenty-four outreach meetings and site visits about water quality issues related to town roads.

LCPC Transportation planning staff facilitated the Green Mountain Byway Committee in partnership with CVRPC. This grassroots committee is working to update the current Byway Plan and add seven new municipalities (three towns with 4 villages) to the Byway.

LCPC staff continues to work with the Smugglers’ Notch Partnership; this year’s focus was preparing for the installation of ADA accessible wetland boardwalk and developing a parking analysis and study for VT108 within Smugglers’ Notch State Park.

LCPC staff participated in multiple meetings of three ongoing transportation planning focus groups: development of an “all-in-one” transportation survey with UVM and VTrans; VT100 and
VT108 Corridor Planning with VTrans; project prioritization and selection process review with VTrans. Staff also attended the Vermont Municipal Highway Association annual meeting, which helps to build good relationships with municipal highway department staff. LCPC staff attended the annual VTrans Regional Construction meeting for the third year; attending this internal VTrans meeting as a guest fosters good communication between RPC staff and VTrans staff in both Montpelier offices and Maintenance Districts.

The LCPC conducted or completed road erosion inventories in Stowe, Hyde Park, and Elmore. Road erosion inventories are an important tool for towns to use in prioritizing water quality projects and complying with the Municipal Road General Permit.

The Commission collaborated on a road safety audit in Stowe, participated in two elderly & disabled public transit meetings, attended one Vermont Aviation Council meeting, and conducted one road surface inventory.

LCPC staff regularly participates as voting members to Rural Community Transit and Green Mountain Transit Boards and sub-committees.

Data collected by the LCPC for VTrans included: 2 bridge/culvert inventories (Stowe and Wolcott), 24 traffic counts, 14 bike/ped counts, and 5 park-n-ride counts. LCPC conducted culvert mapping updates for the Towns of Cambridge and Elmore. The staff concluded four project scoping efforts, and participated in three VTrans project public meetings.

LCPC staff attended the National Association of Development Organizations annual meeting of Rural Transportation Planners in Denver, CO. LCPC accepted an Award for Excellence in Regional Transportation Planning on behalf of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Municipal Trailheads and Wayfinding Signs project.

The TPI Short Range Planning Task budget, which supports municipal planning, is approximately 20% of LCPC’s total TPI budget. Example projects that fall under Short Range Planning are:

- Water Quality: provided coordination with ANR and facilitated group and individual discussions with municipal staff and boards in all 10 towns.

- Road Erosion Inventories: LCPC GIS Planner continued coordination and software development input with other RPC staff and ANR; combined other funds with TPI budget to optimize resources and outcomes.

- Feasibility Study: in coordination with staff and volunteers from Wolcott, LCPC staff managed a bicycle and pedestrian scoping study for the North Wolcott Road area, and concluded two intersection studies and one speed study in Stowe.
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans and assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.

The LCPC developed a hydraulic model of the Lamoille River Main Stem to identify potential actions to reduce flood impacts in Lamoille County towns. This model was then refined with surveyed data for specific areas in Jeffersonville, Cambridge and Johnson to develop a range of potential measures to reduce flooding. Examples of measures include infrastructure retrofits, flood plain restoration, or elevation of structures. The findings of this investigation will be incorporated into town plans and hazard mitigation plans. The flood modeling was made possible thanks to a grant from High Meadows and the consulting work of Milone & MacBroom engineers.

- Ten of 10 (100%) of municipalities in the region currently have a hazard mitigation plan either adopted or under review.
- Ten of 10 (100%) of municipalities in the region currently have an updated local emergency plan.
- The LCPC continued to provide administrative and technical assistance to LEPC#11 (Local Emergency Planning Committee) to host trainings and emergency preparedness discussions.
  - Emergency preparedness trainings/presentations held in FY 2017 include:
    - Shelter Fundamentals training
    - Presentation on the Mobile Home Program
    - Critical Infrastructure Project
    - Closed Point of Distribution Partnerships
    - Training on the role of RPC/DEMHS/VTrans in a disaster
- Assisted LEPC#11 in conducting a Tabletop Exercise to prepare for responding to local hazards in Lamoille County. The scenario presented was a hypothetical dam breach at
Stowe Mountain Resort during heavy rains. The Exercise was conducted at Smugglers’ Notch Resort.

- Assisted 5 towns (Cambridge, Elmore, Johnson, Wolcott, Stowe) in updating hydrant and/or E-911 maps to aid emergency response navigation.
- Assisted in developing and analyzing a Lamoille County survey to gauge interest in rebuilding the Lamoille Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).
- Assisted in drafting six Local Hazard Mitigation Plans in (Johnson, Stowe, Belvidere, Elmore, Eden and Waterville.
- Assisted Belvidere with administration and project development of Bog Road culvert replacement mitigation project.
- Assisted in developing a Flood Resilience Plan for the Town of Waterville.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Developed Road Erosion Inventory (REI) application to collect REI information and employed the application in data collection for the town of Hyde Park.
- Updated available town parcel information and sent to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for inclusion in the statewide parcel layer.
- Conducted analysis of primary and secondary wind generation potential (acres) in Wolcott.
- Developed a Geodatabase of Historic Districts in Lamoille County.
- Conducted Town Road Infrastructure and Flood Damage Susceptibility GIS analysis and field visits to examine areas in Belvidere and Stowe that may be vulnerable to flood damage. This effort can help the towns improve their flood resiliency.
- Continued mapping support for the Friends of Bobolink volunteer monitors that enabled them to pinpoint and document the location of these grassland birds, which have declined in number by 75 percent since 1966.
- Used GIS technology to develop road erosion inventory procedure for Hyde Park and future inventories. The procedure is part of the interim guidance for ANR’s Municipal Roads General Permit and will help Hyde Park be better prepared for future permit applications.
- Developed maps for the following:
  - Maps of hydrologically connected road segments for Wolcott and Hyde Park.
ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

In FY 17, LCPC began drafting an amendment to the Regional Plan. The amendment consists of a new energy element of the Regional Plan. With LCPC’s assistance, five municipalities also drafted new energy elements for their municipal plans. The new, draft municipal plan elements were written by Elmore, Wolcott, Stowe and the Town and Village of Hyde Park.

The new energy element for the Regional Plan and the municipal plans focus on accomplishing the goals of the State Comprehensive Energy Plan, most notably the goal of having renewable energy sources provide 90% of the state’s total energy demand by 2050. The new energy elements contain an analysis of current energy use, targets for future energy use, and strategies for reaching future energy use targets. They also include a mapping effort that will help guide the future siting of renewable energy facilities. The new energy elements were drafted to meet the Energy Planning Standards developed by the Vermont Department of Public Service. Meeting the Energy Planning Standards will enable Regional Plan and the municipal plans to be considered under a higher regulatory standard by the Vermont Public Utilities Commission during permit proceedings for energy generation facilities. This means that LCPC and the towns will have a greater "say" in where solar and wind facilities should be located.
In FY 17, LCPC assisted the Town of Wolcott in providing supplemental project management support and administering an RFP to hire Sanborn Head Associates to complete a Solar Feasibility Study for the former Wolcott landfill site. LCPC assisted in coordinating and participating in a site visit at the landfill with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department to discuss deer wintering impacts and potential vegetation management plans in regards to the proposed solar project.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- As part of the Clean Water Initiative, conducted outreach on the Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan and assisted ANR with the development of the plan. Also conducted outreach on updates to water quality standards, river corridor planning, storm water master planning, and flood resiliency. LCPC began outreach for the Winooski Tactical Basin Plan and has been attending regularly scheduled Winooski Tactical Basin Plan Steering Committee meetings regarding the development of the plan.

- Provided project management, administered an RFP to hire a consultant (Bear Creek Environmental), and assisted with fieldwork for the Seymour River Geomorphic Assessment. The assessment and River Corridor Plan will help to identify restoration and protection projects in Cambridge to be included in later versions of the Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan and be eligible for upcoming grant opportunities.

- Assisted the Cambridge Conservation Commission and Cambridge Elementary School in hiring a storm water specialist to design two mitigation projects to control runoff from impervious surfaces on school grounds, which will improve water quality in the Brewster River. Provided project management support to see this project through the final design plans stage. LCPC assisted the Cambridge Conservation Commission in applying for an FY 18 ERP grant to implement the Cambridge Elementary School Storm water Project design.

- As part of the High Meadows Grant, LCPC assisted in acquiring, designing and installing a rain barrel at the Cambridge Elementary School. A second rain barrel was donated to the Cambridge Rescue Station.

- As part of the High Meadows Fund, hired and managed a consultant to develop a flood model to help Lamoille watershed communities understand their risks and prioritize roads and other infrastructure for restoration, conservation, or adaptation. Also conducted flood resiliency workshops with High Meadows funds to educate businesses, residents, and contractors about ways to reduce risks and flood damage to their
properties. LCPC staff provided outreach regarding modeling results thus far to the Towns of Cambridge, Johnson and Wolcott.

- Hosted a River Corridor protection workshop and provided outreach and field verification assistance regarding River Corridors in the Towns of Elmore, Hyde Park and Johnson. With LCPC’s assistance in drafting bylaws and River Corridor maps the Towns of Elmore and Hyde Park recently adopted River Corridor bylaws.

- Provided grant writing technical assistance to Elmore to apply for a Better Roads Grant (awarded) to conduct an updated road erosion inventory. LCPC staff developed a road erosion app to collect field data for the assessment summer/ fall of 2017. This assessment will result in toolkit for Hyde Park to repair damaged area themselves or to apply for future grants to comply with the upcoming Municipal Roads General Permit. LCPC assisted the Town of Stowe in completing a Road Erosion Inventory in 2017.

- Worked with Town of Wolcott on updating flood hazard regulations for stronger protections. Currently, assisting the Village of Jeffersonville in updating Flood Hazard regulations based on Lamoille Flood Modeling results.

- Assisted the Belvidere Planning Commission in exploring reclassification of Belvidere Bog to a Class 1 wetland.

- Through a DEC Hazard Mitigation Grant, LCPC developed a Project Readiness Workbook for the town of Wolcott to aid next steps and grant application development for priority hazard mitigation projects in Wolcott.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Last year, LCPC in partnership with the Town and Village of Cambridge, Village of Jeffersonville, Town and Village of Johnson, and Town of Wolcott, received a grant from the High Meadows Fund. A major component of this grant is creation of a model of the entire main stem of the Lamoille River through Lamoille County. The model is designed to show floodwater levels during various sized storm events. The model can also show the impacts of structures such as roads and bridges on upstream and downstream flood levels. A similar model developed several years ago in Jeffersonville identified alternatives with the potential to reduce flood levels by more than a foot-and-a-half in the Village. While this may not sound like a significant decrease, had these mitigation measures been in place, the 30 plus residents of the Jeffersonville Senior Housing would not have needed to evacuate their homes during the spring 2011 floods.

With the model complete, the next step is to test potential alternatives. The model can be adapted to local conditions and the specific needs of a community by testing a range of mitigation alternatives such as retrofits of bridges and culverts, elevations of structures, and conservation. The Town of Cambridge utilized the model to evaluate solutions to flooding on
Pumpkin Harbor Road. The Model was also provided critical data needed to complete a feasibility study of flood proofing the Johnson Public Library. Additional modeling is underway in the Town of Wolcott. In the future, the model will be another tool for communities working to become more flood resilient. The model is a public document available to any community, and was also recently used by a University of Vermont PhD candidate to test alternative “river friendly” abutment designs.

The project also included three flood resiliency workshops. LCPC worked with Stevens and Associates in Brattleboro, VT to run the workshops. The first workshop was geared towards business owners. A second workshop was targeted towards homeowners and business owners.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

In 2017, The Commission implemented all updated internal financial processes and procedures to ensure compliance with all federal, state and grant requirements. The LCPC also updated both the Personnel and Procurement Policies to be in conformance with all State and Federal statutory changes.

The LCPC is audited on an annual basis. The Organization received a clean audit for 2017 and reviews all policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

The Commission continued to actively engage in Board recruitment resulting in more board seats being filled from a diversity of municipalities and a newly energized and engaged board. The Commission also updated the new Board Member Handbook and assisted in training new Board members.

The LCPC receives most of its funding through grants, and through performance-based contracts with the state. Town assessments constitute a small but very important percentage of our funding.

Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires matching funds, and typically non-federal matching funds. Required match ranges from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant & Northern Vermont Economic Development District).

For the 2017 fiscal year, the LCPC’s total projected revenue of approximately $975,000 dollars was derived from a mix of regional project grant funding, municipal project grant funding, EPA brownfields funding, state performance contract funding, non-profit organization grants and a small amount from town assessments.

Virtually all of the LCPC’s revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines and/or performance measures. The commission’s performance contract with the state is also necessary to provide matching funds required by grantors. The grants we receive enable us to
work with municipalities on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, water quality, energy, and natural resources.
NVDA is unique in that it combines economic development and planning to deliver a broad array of services to more than 50 communities in Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans counties. Collectively, our planning and economic development staff deliver thousands of hours of technical assistance annually in support of our mission of “improving the quality of life in the Northeast Kingdom through planning, promoting economic development, and preserving the region’s natural environment.”

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Our region, the most rural area of the state, covers one-fifth of the state’s land mass with only the state’s population. As a result, few of our communities have dedicated planning staff – even though 37 of our towns have current plans (and more are in development), and 34 enforce zoning. NVDA is therefore one their few cost-effective resources in keeping abreast of statutory change, not to mention the first call for technical assistance. While our support provided this year is shown on the At-Work map, highlights include:

- NVDA’s participation in the Vermont Council on Rural Development’s Community Visit Program allowed our planning staff to engage deeply with the towns of Lyndon and Burke. The visits generated large turnouts in the host communities, and their prioritization processes yielded projects that residents and local leaders are ready to tackle.
- Plans for the revitalization of Bay Street and the connection of the 3 Rivers Bike Path to the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center have been underway for well over 15 years. A variety of factors have posed roadblocks, including the barrier presented by the active freight rail yard, brownfield issues, and lack of funds. Planning fatigue was well set in when a Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit in 2015 resulted in renewed optimism and a riverfront task force was formed that summer. A Municipal Planning Grant awarded to St. Johnsbury in early 2016 resulted in the Riverfront Access Master Plan, which formed the basis for the 2017 NBRC application prepared by NVDA on behalf of co-applicants Town of St. Johnsbury and the St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce. A transportation infrastructure grant in the amount of $425,000 was awarded in August 2017. This grant will fund the extension of the 3 Rivers Recreation Path/Lamoille Valley Rail Trail into the heart of downtown St. Johnsbury, and will include a marked side trail to the river, providing a put-in/take-out along the Passumpsic River Paddlers Trail. The project also involves the renovation of a derelict industrial building owned by the Town into a new trailhead center. This transportation hub for walkers, paddlers, and cyclists will provide satellite space for retailers engaged in the sale or rental of outdoor sports-related equipment, to be managed by the Chamber.
The Fairbanks Museum of Science, Catamount Arts and the St. Johnsbury History and Heritage Center are important partners and will contribute to the development of interpretive exhibits at the trailhead center. The project is expected to result in increased activity in St. Johnsbury’s downtown, increased sales at local businesses, improved quality of life for local residents, and increased use of alternative transportation options.

- Another outgrowth of the 2015 Community Visit to St. Johnsbury was the creation of a housing committee with a mission to “identify strategies and projects that improve the quality and diversity of housing as a key component to building a thriving community.” NVDA staff continues to attend monthly housing committee meetings in St. Johnsbury, providing assistance with a variety of housing initiatives. NVDA also provided assistance to the Town of St. Johnsbury in developing a scope of work and procuring a consultant for a VCDP-funded housing assessment study. The housing assessment report is due to be completed by Bowen National Research by the end of 2017, and is expected to contain the detailed information needed by the Town and housing developers to improve the quality and range of housing options, and to foster re-investment in St. Johnsbury’s historic neighborhoods.

Other FY2017 highlights include:

- Our efforts to revitalize the region’s downtowns and village centers continued in FY2017, as NVDA helped the Towns of Brownington and Canaan earn Village Center designations, making tax credits available for important investment projects.
- NVDA’s five-year effort with the Town of Sutton culminated in the adoption of the region’s first-ever density-based zoning overlay, which minimizes the fragmentation of productive forestry and agricultural lands. This is a significant development in the Northeast Kingdom, where traditional low-density zoning is typically tied to a minimum lot size of five or ten acres, resulting in rural residential lots that are "too big to mow and too small to plow." Although the density-based approach has been successfully applied in other Vermont farming communities, Sutton -- with its 11 working farms -- is the first to do so in the Northeast Kingdom. The bylaw amendment was made possible with the support of two Municipal Planning Grants to the Town.
- In FY2017, NVDA staff helped the Towns of Canaan, Holland, and Groton adopt updated municipal plans. This work was made possible with funding from Municipal Planning Grants. MPG-funded work with Ryegate and Waterford on a plan and bylaw amendment (respectively) continues.

**REGIONAL PLANNING**

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.
• The rollout of Act 174 made energy planning a major focus for our planning staff in FY2017. We worked arduously on an updated regional that would support the ambitious statewide energy goal to meet 90% of our energy needs with renewable resources by the year 2050. A draft regional energy plan is now complete, and other sections of the regional plan will be updated in its entirety to ensure that policies in land use, transportation, and utilities and facilities support and further the regional energy goals.

• The Northeast Kingdom’s thriving food production and processing sector is a significant economic asset, as well as a resource in reducing the region’s carbon footprint. We are the only region in the state to adopt a comprehensive Food System Plan, one that is built on a “soil to soil” model that seeks to localize the production, processing, distribution, consumption, and composting of our region’s agricultural resources. The Plan was adopted in late 2016, and the implementation efforts have begun with the creation of a Regional Food Cycle Coalition that is establishing a distribution network to redirect discarded edible food from the landfill (where it can contribute to CO2 emissions) to populations that can use it. In May, NVDA planning staff went to the American Planning Association National Conference to present the Plan to attendees.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is most effective when partnered with solid planning functions. Because we are a fully integrated organization, holistic economic and community development is an NVDA forte.

• In FY2017, NVDA continued to play an active role in the Vermont-Quebec Enterprise Initiative as we worked with the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Agency of Commerce & Community Development to recruit Quebec companies. We succeeded in bringing another manufacturer to our industrial park, and we are currently assisting others who also want to locate in Vermont.

• Another new venture for NVDA this year was a partnership with Northern Community Investment Corporation and the St. Johnsbury Chamber to participate in a New Market Tax Credit project to facilitate the expansion of St. J Auto. This was important for bringing new facilities and 30+ good-paying jobs to the community. Because most of the NEK region is NMTC-eligible, we will be looking for other projects in the coming year.

• The Town of Hardwick, home to numerous ag-related-business startups, is looking for the “next-level” entrepreneurial resource. NVDA, in partnership with the Center for an Agricultural Economy, and the Town of Hardwick has launched an economic planning and feasibility study for a multi-tenant commercial business facility that will accommodate existing producers that are expanding, as well as next-stage businesses that are ready to graduate from the Vermont Food Venture Center. The initiative is already funded by a Municipal Planning Grant to the Town of Hardwick (partially matched by NVDA) to hire a business planning consultant. The endeavor also gained momentum when NVDA assisted in securing funding from a Northern Border Regional Commission Grant to acquire a downtown building with significant potential to
accommodate local agricultural enterprises.

- In FY2017, NVDA continued its work with the Newport City Renaissance Corporation (NCRC), the organization that maintains the City’s designated downtown district. NVDA is providing training and technical assistance to the Board of Directors as it restructures the organization to address the priorities for downtown development in light of the failed EB-5 projects in the designated downtown district. This restructuring includes creating a downtown development steering committee comprised of Newport business owners, financial institutions, and real estate developers, to work in an advisory capacity with the consultants (White + Burke) hired by the City of Newport to provide a comprehensive review of options for development of a razed city block on Main Street in downtown Newport. NVDA is also providing guidance to NCRC as it applies for redesignation of its downtown district in November 2017.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) through a contract with VTrans. This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state, and federal transportation network advancement.

For the past three years, NVDA has worked with Lyndon State College to collect and field verify town highway "short structure," between 6 and 20 feet long. These are not inspected by the state and have become something of an infrastructure black hole. A large portion of these bridges have been converted to large culverts over the years but many still remain bridges and are reaching the end of their serviceable life. When replaced, they will likely become "long structures" due to the requirement to complete a hydraulic study to properly size new structures. The cost of replacing these structures will be considerable and will require budgeting and forethought so as not to create a hardship for the towns.

The data collection is complete. LSC has conducted site visits and developed a GIS based inventory. NVDA has begun to upload the data to the Vermont Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool (VOBCIT) and is conducting outreach to our towns to verify structure conditions. Over the next year NVDA staff will visit with all of our towns to discuss the data collected and update each town’s respective VOBCIT data.

Other highlights for FY2017 include:

- NVDA facilitates quarterly E&D (elderly and disabled) Transit joint working group meeting for Lamoille, NEK service providers and RCT. These are productive working
meetings that bring service providers and transit administrators together to improve work flow as well as address concerns and prepare for special events. These meetings are also used to assist in alleviating funding shortfalls between providers involved in the Grant.

- Staff facilitates Road Foreman meetings in VTrans Districts 7 and 9. These meetings have been very productive venues for addressing the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) requirements, as well as in-stream permit procedures, and ditching and road maintenance best management practices. We also continue to train road foremen on the use of the VOBCIT and ROW issues common to Road Maintenance practices.
- NVDA facilitates and coordinates the NEK Rivers and Roads Working Group. This group includes staff from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans County Conservation District Managers, regional watershed managers, and VTrans District Maintenance Project Managers. This group collaboratively assists towns in the region with issues related to erosion inventories (to comply with the MRGP), Better Backroads applications, and project implementation.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and emergency preparedness through its work with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. NVDA provides staff assistance to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees, and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. NVDA also helps update local floodplain bylaws, prepare FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans and assist as needed in special circumstances like federally declared disasters.

- Staff regularly assists with the development of FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation plans that can minimize local out-of-pocket costs in federal disasters. NVDA has refined a highly cost-effective process for developing the plans. This process requires a “cost share” from each participating municipality, since FEMA funds cover 75% of the cost of plan development. To date, each town has met its share exclusively through in-kind participation, meaning no out-of-pocket cash expenses have been incurred. In 2017, Newport City, Greensboro, Brighton, Lowell, Canaan, Albany, Walden, Glover, Kirby, Waterford, and the Unified Towns and Gores all adopted FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plans. More plans are in development.

Other FY2017 highlights include:

- Forty-one towns (82%) in the NVDA region have up-to-date Local Emergency Operations Plan.
- NVDA hosted an EPA Tier II training this year, as well as FEMA Public Assistance Applicant briefing and a FEMA/VEM Debris Training.
• Staff worked with the Town of Charleston to receive Red Cross Sheltering Training so members of the town are now authorized to manage a shelter.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the local and regional planning, NVDA provides municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects. GIS mapping is arguably the most effective technology for connecting abstract planning notions with “on-the-ground” analysis and strategies.

NVDA’s GIS specialist is constantly refining new ways to visualize changes in growth and development patterns. In FY2017, he applied a variation on the methodology from the 2014-15 Agency of Commerce & Community Mapping Growth & Development project. Instead of using the community centers previously mapped, he analyzed development along roads, running a 200-foot buffer along all public and named private roads. (The 200 ft buffer is where the bulk of development has been found to occur.) Roads were divided into segments, using intersections as break points, and the buffered road segments were joined with the town polygons. Polygons could then be analyzed against 2016 E-site data, using all classifications, not just residential development. The result is one way to analyze development patterns over time, especially development hotspots. Although the segmenting process is time-consuming, NVDA’s GIS specialist is eager to refine and build on this methodology.

Other 2017 highlights include:

• GIS digitization of state historic districts
• Energy maps for every municipality, meeting one of the essential requirements for Substantial Deference under Act 174.
• Village Center maps for Brownington, Canaan, and Brighton
• Plan maps for Greensboro, St. Johnsbury, Waterford, Irasburg, Jay, Glover, Canaan, Holland, Coventry, and Groton
• Zoning maps for Waterford, Canaan, Barton, Lyndon, and Ryegate
• Flood hazard and river corridor maps for Hardwick

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

NVDA integrates energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and economic development to assist with project implementation. We also participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

Our recent redevelopment of a brownfield site exemplifies NVDA’s unique abilities to consolidate and deliver services to achieve results:
NVDA partnered with a Vermont solar developer to purchase, remediate, and sell a former manufacturing site with environmental issues in Lyndon. Northeast Tool was a metals manufacturing business in Lyndon that employed hundreds of workers while it was in existence. The property, over its lifetime, had a number of contamination issues and remediation challenges – and that history likely kept new businesses from locating there. NVDA was approached by the solar developer, and an agreement was entered that allowed NVDA to facilitate the development through ownership.

NVDA was assigned the rights to purchase the property from the owner, but first entered Vermont’s Brownfields Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation Act (BRELLA) for protection from liability. NVDA also entered into an agreement with the Vermont Secretaries of Commerce & Community Development and Natural Resources whereby NVDA agreed to work with the solar developer, the agencies, and the EPA to further site investigation and remediation as needed.

Once NVDA became the property owner, ground water monitoring wells were placed on the property. NVDA and the developer also met directly with adjoining property owners and local officials who expressed concern about what problems a new development might create given the property’s history. Early results have indicated that there are no issues with groundwater, and NVDA and the developer are now moving toward getting a Certificate of Completion from DEC and moving ahead with the development of two solar arrays on site.

The “standard offer” solar projects – with a total capacity of 975 kW -- have each received their Certificates of Public Good. This collaboration is a model we hope to pursue in the future, as we look for more ways to generate affordable renewable energy in a manner that fits the needs and character of our communities.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Nonpoint source pollution, such as phosphorous loading, is an issue of key concern statewide. NVDA has engaged in a number of partnerships with state agencies, municipalities, and various public and private organization to achieve holistic solutions that focus on local actions with far-ranging impacts.

In the first half of FY2017, NVDA formed a Water Quality Advisory Committee made up of NVDA board members and citizen scientists. We have assisted with public outreach and engagement in the basin planning processes for the Basin 6 Missisquoi Bay and Basin 7 Lamoille River, as well as review of their respective plans. For Basin 17 Lake Memphremagog, the committee worked closely with the basin planner to provide review and feedback for both the Lake Memphremagog TMDL and basin plan.

Road erosion inventories have begun in the region. The road erosion inventories are required for the Municipal Roads General Permit which is one step the state has taken to reduce phosphorus in Lake Champlain meet the Lake Champlain TMDL and improve water quality across the state. We have worked diligently to keep our municipalities current on
the information available for the upcoming Municipal Roads General Permit. Our towns with inventories currently in process are Peacham, Barnet, Ryegate, Hardwick, Kirby, Walden, Guildhall, Granby, Coventry, and Derby.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Two projects, both located in Newport City, demonstrate how multiple stakeholders can contribute to the economic development goals of supporting of business growth in addition to contributing to the quality of life for area residents and visitors, all while contributing to a healthy and scenic environment by protecting local natural resources:

- NVDA is working with the City of Newport, the Newport City Renaissance Corporation, and Pomerleau Family LLC, the property owner, to create the Waterfront Plaza Recreational Path and Lake Access project behind the Waterfront Plaza located in the heart of the designated downtown. This recreational path is designed to link to the existing walking and biking path along Newport’s existing downtown boardwalk, forming a beautiful crescent of lakefront recreational land on Lake Memphremagog’s southeast shore in downtown Newport. In addition to the path, two docks will be constructed for additional access to the lake: one dock to accommodate motorized watercraft which will allow boats to tie off so that people (lakefront home owners, campers, etc.) can dock to pick up groceries and shop at the plaza; and a second dock for small non-motorized watercraft (kayaks, canoes) where the Great Outdoors Sporting Goods Store can demonstrate its products and expand its watercraft product line. The recreational path is slated for completion in fall 2017. Future plans of the property owner include creating windows and outdoor decks on the back of the existing buildings along the path to create interest in new business development such as a waterfront café.

- The proposed development of the Waterfront Plaza Recreational Path along the shoreline of Newport’s Lake Memphremagog represents a thoughtful and forward-looking model of land use that serves multiple goals of economic development, protection, improvement and enhancement of the shoreline ecosystem of Lake Memphremagog and creation of public access to the lake on privately-owned land. Pomerleau Family LLC, the property owner, is building into the design of this project several riparian buffer restoration management strategies that will improve and protect the existing shoreline ecosystem. These best management practices include no-mow zones, revegetation within the protected shoreline area, and discontinuation of snow plowing practices of pushing snow into the storm BMPS and/or the Lake. These design strategies and practices will also address stormwater runoff from both new walking path as well as from the 6.3 acres (or 73%) of the existing impervious surface on the site reducing phosphorous loading into the Lake, thereby improving water quality of the Lake in addition to contributing to the health of Lake Memphremagog’s shoreline ecosystem.

- Additionally, NVDA has been working with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) to develop
recreational trails on the Bluffside Farm property, owned by VLT since 2015, that will link downtown Newport City to the Canadian border. The Bluffside Farm trails will connect with the Beebe Spur Rail Trail to the north leading to the Canadian border 6-miles away. At the border, the recreational path connects to an impressive and high-use network of bicycle and hiking trails on the Canadian side. To the south, the Bluffside trails will connect over the Newport City-owned Prouty Beach property directly into downtown Newport. In downtown Newport, there are 259 businesses employing 3,444 employees concentrated in the area surrounding this waterfront corridor. This new, 4-season recreational asset will be a direct benefit to these businesses by connecting downtown Newport businesses to a new market of Quebec visitors and consumers who will be drawn directly into Newport’s downtown business district from the trails.

In the spring of 2017, NVDA assisted VLT with a grant application to the Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC). In August 2017, NBRC awarded Vermont Land Trust a grant of $425,000 toward creating this four-season waterfront recreational trail through Bluffside Farm property in Newport City. VLT will leverage these funds to securing additional funding partners to begin construction on this new waterfront recreational trail system that will provide a new model of economic development for Newport based on the magnificent natural assets of the lake and surrounding forested and agricultural land.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

NVDA’s revenues came from numerous sources, including a share of the state’s property transfer funds; private, state, and federal grants; and annual appropriations from each of our 50+ member communities. We also received rental income from the Charles E. Carter Business Resource Center, the Gallery Building, and other income from contracted services, such as grant administration, as well as municipal plan and bylaw development, which is usually funded by Municipal Planning Grants.

NVDA also has two Nonprofit Community Development Organization (NCDO) relending funds capitalized by loan repayments from Community Development Block Grants. Two loans totaling $160,000.00 were made from one NCDO in FY2017.

Our FY2016 audit, like previous years, produced no significant findings. Our FY2017 audit will be available in December.

Since 2012, NVDA has published a monthly e-newsletter covering a broad range of news and announcements, training and incentive programs, funding opportunities, a calendar of events, information relating to energy & natural resources, and important updates for municipalities relating to planning, zoning, and economic development. The newsletter mailing list reaches a diverse audience of more than 1,200 individuals within Essex, Orleans, Caledonia counties and beyond.
Northeastern Vermont Development Association

NVDA at Work: 2016-2017

Assistance
- Bridge and Culvert Inventory
- Brownfield Assistance
- Clean Water Assistance
- Enhanced Energy Planning
- Emergency Planning
- Guest Writing
- Economic Development
- Mapping
- Planning and Zoning Assistance
- Road Erosion Assistance
- Traffic Control
- Designated Downtown
- Designated Village

Town Plan Status
- Current
- Expired
- No Town Plan

Zoning Bylaw Status
- Adopted
- Flood Regulations Only
The Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) serves the 23 municipalities (19 towns, 3 incorporated villages, and 1 city) located in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties in northwestern Vermont.

Municipalities in the region appoint two representatives to serve on the Board of Commissioners. This board governs the policies and activities of the Commission, and elects an Executive Committee and officers to oversee NRPC programs and staff. The Mission of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission is:

- To assist local municipalities, through education, technical assistance, grants and funding; and to aid municipalities in their planning efforts as authorized by Vermont planning laws.
- To serve as a center for information and as a resource to support the region and its municipalities’ interests, growth patterns and common goals.
- To provide a forum for the discussion of issues which are regional in nature and/or unique to our area of the state, and to serve as a mediator to resolve conflicts as appropriate. Common sense and a spirit of compromise must be allowed to enter the discussion so that the impacts of development may be mitigated.
- To conduct regional planning programs.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions, and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Completed workshops attended by municipal staff and volunteers from 18 municipalities on the Essentials of Land Use Planning and the State Planning Manual.
- Assisted Richford and Franklin in basic updates to their municipal plans, including the addition of a new flood resiliency section as required by statute.
- Completed updates to the municipal development regulations for the Town of Bakersfield, Town of South Hero, and the Village of Enosburg Falls with Municipal Planning Grant funding. The Bakersfield and Enosburg Falls projects were general
updates to ensure compliance with the municipal plan and statute. The South Hero project focused on the development of a village zoning district.

- Reviewed and provided regional approval to 4 municipal plans.
- Consulted with Richford, St. Albans City, and Fletcher on local planning and confirmed their planning efforts to retain eligibility for municipal planning grants.
- Began working with the Town of Berkshire to complete bylaw amendments with Municipal Planning Grant funding.
- Began working with the Town of Fairfax on a town plan update through technical assistance and funding from the Town.
- Helped Highgate, North Hero, and Swanton complete their renewal applications for designated village centers.
- Completed an “Issues and Actions” Report on the Fairfield Subdivision and Zoning Bylaw to aid municipal efforts to obtain grant funding next year to rewrite the bylaw.
- Drafted amendments to the Richford Housing Code to ensure compliance with state statute.
- Answered general planning and zoning technical assistance questions for the towns and villages of Alburgh, Berkshire, Bakersfield, Enosburgh, Enosburg Falls, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Georgia, Grand Isle, Highgate, Montgomery, Richford, Sheldon, St. Albans City, St. Albans Town, and South Hero.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

The Northwest Regional Plan was amended by the Board of Commissioners in June 2017. The amended plan included a new energy element meant to comply with the new statutory requirements for regional “enhanced energy plans.” It also included adoption of the Regional Energy Plan by reference.

NRPC published its first annual regional plan implementation report in July 2016. The report showed that NRPC has already made progress on 33 of its 39 short term and ongoing implementation priorities. NRPC also published its first indicator report, outlining points of data to show progress on the goals of the regional plan.

NRPC reviews state permit applications to ensure proposed projects conform with the regional plan. The Policy and Project Review Committee reviewed nine Section 248 and five Act 250 major applications for conformance with the regional plan. The committee made final determinations on eleven of the projects and determined they conformed with the plan but in some cases offered comments and suggestions for permit conditions.
BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

NRPC currently has 4 active EPA Brownfields grants, including one Revolving Loan Fund (awarded in 2010), two hazardous materials assessment grants (awarded in 2013 and 2014) and a petroleum assessment grant (awarded in 2013). During FY17, the following projects were either finished, ongoing or started:

Assessment Projects:

- **Catherine St., Stebbins St., Market St. Targeted Area Wide Plan.** NRPC worked with a team of consultants to prepare a targeted area wide plan around an intersection of the planned Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector Project. The area wide plan will encourage and guide public and private investment around a community supported vision. The plan includes market based re-use concepts and feasibility analysis that can be used to attract investment.

- **Swanton Northern Gateway Area Wide Plan.** NRPC worked with a team of consultants to prepare a targeted area wide plan around the northern gateway area in Swanton Village. The scope of this project was the same as for the Catherine, Stebbins, Market Block targeted area wide plan, including market based re-use concepts and feasibility analysis that can be used to attract investment.

- **1, 3, 5 Canada Street and Municipal Lot at Merchants Row, Swanton Village.** The property owner of 1, 3, 5 Canada Street and the Village of Swanton have entered the Brownfields Program and NRPC has funded a phase 1 assessment, quality assurance project plan (QAPP), a phase 2 and supplemental phase 2 Assessment. The property will be redeveloped as an Ace Hardware store.

- **Former Machia Estate and Former Town Garage property, Highgate Center.** The Town of Highgate has entered the Brownfields Program and NRPC has funded a phase 1 assessment for the Former Machia Estate and the adjacent former town garage property. NRPC also funded a QAPP and will be funding a phase 2 assessment. The Town of Highgate is considering these properties for a library, community center and/or commercial space.

- **14 Stebbins Street, St. Albans City.** The property owner of 14 Stebbins Street has entered the Brownfields program and NRPC has funded a phase 1, QAPP and is currently funding a phase 2 assessment. The property owner is planning to renovate the space into a ballet studio.

- **St. Albans City Department of Public Works.** St. Albans City entered the Brownfields Program to explore redevelopment opportunities for the property currently housing their Department of Public Works, which may be relocated to the Fonda property. NRPC funded a phase 1 assessment, QAPP and a phase 2 assessment. There are no
major environmental issues, but there will be some level of cleanup required when the property is redeveloped. This report provides the City with a good understanding of the environmental liability associated with this site as they consider redevelopment opportunities.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- Re-established the Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD) in partnership with the three RDCs and RPCs in the six northern counties. A new advisory Board helped to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that was adopted in April 2016 and approved by EDA. NRPC serves as the administrative coordinator for NVEDD.
- Completed an update to the Lake Champlain Byway Corridor Management Plan for Grand Isle County that supports projects that balance the promotion, preservation, enjoyment, and stewardship of the Byway’s intrinsic resources in the Lake Champlain Islands.
- Key partner and organizer of In Good Taste, an annual local food event.
- Assisted with promotion and grant writing for the Northern Border Regional Commission implementation grants.
- Contracted with Northern Borders Regional Commission grantees to provide grant administration assistance.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contract with the VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

Objective #1 - *Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, Regions and Municipalities*

*TAC activity* - NRPC Held 8 TAC meetings. Attendance ranged from 11-15 TAC members per meeting, a 58% average municipal participation rate.
**TAC Outcomes**
Reviewed the draft Missisquoi Bay Causeway Scoping Report and made recommendation to full NRPC Board of Regional Commissioners that the remaining earmark funding be used on other types of transportation and water quality related projects in the region;
- Provided initial comments on the 2040 Vermont Long Range Transportation Plan; and
- Reviewed proposed functional classification changes for sections of US Route 2, US Route 7 and Arrowhead Lake Road that are adjacent to Chittenden County.

**Outreach**
- Hosted a November 2016 Transportation Board Forum in St. Albans.
- Participated in 1 Public Transit E&D meetings.
- Initiated 8 Roadway Drainage & Erosion Inventories.
- Participated in 2 Road Safety Audit Reviews.
- Provided outreach to 23 municipalities on the General Roads Municipal Permit.

**Data collection**
- 3 bridge and culvert inventories (Fairfield, Highgate and North Hero).
- 1 pedestrian counts.
- 5 traffic counts.

**Objective #2 - Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making**
The Regional Transportation Plan was adopted July 29, 2015 and is integrated into the Regional Plan.

NRPC participated in 2 project scoping efforts. NRPC also assisted with outreach for 3 bridge projects: North Hero/Grand Isle drawbridge, Georgia I-89 culvert, and North Hero Bridge #5.

Through our Policy and Project Review Committee, NRPC reviewed and/or provided comments on 9 Act 250 applications with substantial transportation elements. Because of NRPC comments, sidewalks and/or other pedestrian accommodations were added to 4 projects to conform with the transportation plan.

**Objective #3 - Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities**
Short-range providing direct assistance to municipalities is 28% of NRPC’s transportation budget. A large portion of the coordination activities also include municipal assistance. Municipal projects included:
- Wrote or provided significant technical assistance to 18 transportation-related grant applications for municipalities. Includes Better Roads Program, Transportation Alternatives, Better Connections and ACCD Municipal Planning grant applications.
- Completed culverts inventory updates for Fairfield, Highgate and North Hero.
• Drafting a speed ordinance for the Town of Sheldon.
• NRPC staff serve on the Board of Green Mountain Transit (formerly CCTA) including serving as Treasurer and members of the Strategy and Leadership Committees.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, local Emergency Operations Centers, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws, write flood resiliency sections of Municipal Plans and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency operations plans and assist as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene, the Lake Champlain Flooding of 2011, and other declared disasters. Twenty-one municipalities (91%) in the region currently have an updated local emergency operations plan. Thirteen municipalities (62%) of municipalities in the region currently have a local hazard mitigation plan either adopted or under review. During the last fiscal year, NRPC:

• Staffed the two Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC #4 and #13) within the region, as well as the greater St. Albans Area Incident Management team and Grand Isle County Mutual Aid Association. The activities include improving capacity to respond to all hazards incidents, ensuring that municipalities have hazard mitigation plans in place, and updating Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOPs).
• Served as the Local Liaison to municipalities for the Planning Section of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) following severe weather events. Duties including reaching out to local EMDs /EMCs to assess damages, compiling damage assessments in coordination with Vermont Agency of Transportation and reporting local damages to the Planning Section of the SEOC. Work is performed under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Public Safety.
• Served on the State Emergency Response Committee which oversees the states hazard materials program including carrying out the state and federal requirements of the committee.
• Served on the State Citizens Corps Council Working Group which oversees the Community Emergency Response Teams, Volunteers in Police Service, Disaster Animal Response Team and Neighborhood Watch Program.
• Provided data and information to municipalities for hazard mitigation grant program applications for transportation infrastructure improvements, home buyouts in hazardous areas and landslide risk analysis study.
• Assisted Franklin County Mutual Aid with regional emergency dispatching review of services for participating municipalities.
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Completed Town Plan & Zoning Maps for the municipalities updating their Town Plans and Bylaws.
- Prepared Village Designation Maps for communities seeking village designation.
- Completed E911 Maps for all municipalities for use by town officials, emergency responders and others. The maps include a community poster map, a bound atlas with individual pages for each roadway and basic road map.
- Mapped the Historic Districts for all municipalities in the region.
- Created maps for the Energy chapter of the recently updated Regional Plan.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- Actively participated in the Section 248 proceedings for the St. Albans Solar, LLC, Vermont Green Line Deveo, LLC transmission cable project, and 7 other renewable energy generation projects between 20 MW and 500 kW in size.
- Completed work on a pilot project to draft a regional energy plan focused on achieving the state goal of 90% renewable energy usage in Vermont by 2050 and meeting the requirements of Vermont’s new energy law, Act 174. The project includes energy demand and generation modeling and mapping of areas with renewable generation potential in the region. The plan was adopted by the NRPC Board in June 2017.
- Coordinated statewide RPC efforts to provide custom technical assistance to municipalities seeking to meet the standards in Act 174.
- Drafted “enhanced energy plans” and provided technical assistance to Enosburg Falls, Enosburgh, Fairfax and Highgate. The enhanced energy plans will allow the municipalities to meet the standards in Act 174 and receive a “determination of energy compliance” from NRPC.
- Provided two workshops attended by municipal officials and volunteers about municipal enhanced energy plans.
WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans and implementation of the Lake Champlain TMDL. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Provided direct training to municipal boards and regional commissioners about Act 64, the Vermont Water Quality Bill, which was enacted during 2015 session.
- Continued to work with towns developing water quality related language in town plans and bylaws related to shoreline, stream buffers and river corridor regulations.
- Presented a property owner training that focused on assessing and solving stormwater problems.
- Assisted the state’s Watershed Coordinators with Plan development and implementation for the Missisquoi River and Lamoille River basins.
- Reviewed the Missisquoi and Lamoille River Basin Plans for conformance with the NRPC regional plan.
- Awarded funding from EPA’s Healthy Communities Program to develop two workshops on actions landowners can take to manage stormwater runoff and reduce erosion potential.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Grants in Aid Pilot Project
NRPC is coordinating a new pilot program sponsored by the VT Department of Environmental Conservation. The Grants In Aid Pilot Project provides funding the municipalities to bring segments of roadway into compliance with the draft municipal roads general permit standards. RPCs statewide are providing technical assistance to 186 municipalities to advance $2.5 million in construction of new best management practices.

Regional Stormwater Education Program
The Town and City of St Albans have partnered with NRPC to manage and implement their public education and outreach components of their MS4 stormwater permit. Outreach materials, a website and landowner and teacher trainings have been developed with the aim of reducing negative impacts of stormwater on water quality.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

NRPC purchased a building in September of 2013 to serve as a permanent office location. This provides budget certainty and enables NRPC to hold and manage an asset rather than pay rent. Building costs will increase slightly over the next five years due to renovations and the Board
adopted mortgage repayment plan. Annual building expenses are projected to decline within ten years of purchase.

A Board adopted reserve fund policy provides guidance for long term financial planning. NRPC maintains Board designated reserve funds to cover operating shortfalls, accrued leave time, building renovations and equipment replacement. The Commission maintains a three-year plan for equipment and software upgrades and replacement.

The FY 17 NRPC budget was approximately $1.3 million. Revenue sources included state and federal performance contracts, grants and local assessments. Virtually all of the NRPC’s revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines and/or performance measures. This means that the NRPC has limited flexibility in how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through town assessments is the exception, which makes this funding stream particularly important because it gives us the greatest latitude to respond to NRPC-identified needs in the region. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires non-federal matching funds ranging from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant). Town assessments and regional planning funds passed through to NRPC under a performance contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development provide matching funds required by grantors.

An audit is currently underway and will be completed in the fall of 2017. NRPC has had no audit findings in recent years and as such is considered a ‘low risk’ grantee by federal agencies. Staffing in FY 17 included 8 employees: Executive Director, Assistant Director, Senior Planners (3), Regional Planner, GIS Technician, and Office Administrator; an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer also joined NRPC in FY 17. Six of the eight employees have been with NRPC for fifteen years or more.
The Rutland Region is comprised of 27 communities ranging in population from under 300 to over 16,000. The Region contains one regional center (Rutland City), six sub-regional centers of economic activity and a series of smaller villages surrounded by agricultural and forest land.

The economy of the Region is diverse, with industries including GE, one University, three colleges, Killington/Pico Ski Resorts, renewable energy development and a wide variety of small, family-run businesses. The geology of the Region varies dramatically as well, containing the peaks of Southern Green Mountains, which reach up to 4,000’ in elevation, the gently sloped farmland of the Vermont Valley, the steep Taconic Mountains and Lake Bomoseen, the largest lake within the borders of the state and part of the Champlain Valley.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. Highlights include:

- Worked with Planning Commissions in the towns of Benson, Sudbury, Danby, Poultney, Fair Haven, Chittenden, Pawlet, Hubbardton, Mendon, Fair Haven, Wallingford and Castleton to develop language for municipal plans and land use bylaws.
- Provided assistance to promote state land use goals, ensure consistency with Chapter 117 requirements and provide clear community standards regarding the siting of energy and telecommunications facilities. Significant effort went into flood resilience education.
- Updated the Towns of Hubbardton and Pawlet Zoning Regulations.
- Created a Chittenden Building Registration Form.
- Provided VCDP Implementation Grant Administration for the Town of Proctor.
- Reviewed approximately 30 Act 250 and Section 248 applications.
- Performed five Enhanced Consultations.
- Worked with the towns of Fair Haven, Clarendon, Castleton and Tinmouth on Village Center Designations (both new and renewals).
- Created Model flood resiliency language for use in municipal plans.
- Created model municipal plan language for solar generation siting and provided municipalities with checklists for evaluating solar and wind generation projects.
• Worked with Pawlet on amending its Unified Bylaws to add more current River Corridor Protection language to its zoning.
• Presented Castleton and Hubbardton with water quality protection language for draft municipal plans.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

• Updated three chapters of the Rutland Regional Plan including Land Use, Agriculture/Forestry and Energy. These revisions reflect the required and recommended changes identified by statute and Rutland Region towns.
• Used the Rutland Regional Plan as a guide to review Act 250 and Section 248 applications, grant applications for transportation and water quality projects, municipal planning and village center designation applications.
• The Rutland Regional Plan was used to guide municipal plan land use chapters and serves as an education tool and guide for municipalities to create healthy and economically resilient communities.
• The RRPC offers three conference rooms for use by local, regional and state organizations at no charge. Frequent users include Castleton University, the Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board, Rutland Area Farm and Food Link and VT DEC. The ideas and information exchange resulting from the mix of various groups and participants is a valuable tool, making organizations and the region stronger.
• Provided regional presentations and workshops on topics such as economic development and the essentials of land use planning.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long-term economic gain:

• The RRPC assisted local municipalities to plan projects aimed at revitalizing designated villages and downtowns. One example is the work the RRPC has undertaken with the Town of Proctor, using a brownfields site as key in the plan’s development.
• The RRPC completed a Strong Communities Better Connections study funded by ACCD and VTrans that included the communities of West Rutland and Rutland Town and the Business Route 4 Corridor that connects the two towns. The two municipalities are
currently working with the RRPC and VTrans to redesign the corridor, which will foster walkability and economic growth on adjacent properties.

- The RRPC assisted the Towns of Clarendon, Brandon, Poultnney, Fair Haven, Castleton and Tinmouth with their village center designations. The Town of Sudbury will work with the RRPC this year to explore the possibility of designation.
- The Executive Directors of the RRPC, Rutland Economic Development Corporation, Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce, Rutland Redevelopment Authority and Rutland Downtown Partnership meet monthly to discuss current and future projects with regional impacts.
- Economic Development Chapters were updated in the Benson, Danby, Chittenden, Clarendon, Pawlet, Poultnney, Sudbury, Hubbardton, Wallingford, Fair Haven, Brandon and Rutland Town municipal plans.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff support to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans, and assist as needed in special circumstances such as Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters. Highlights include:

- Provided technical assistance and outreach to all towns in completing Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOPs), including offering an LEOP training session.
- Provided extensive assistance to seven towns with preparing single jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans, through a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant as well as an HMGP grant. Support for other municipality’s’ plans was provided upon request.
- Supported the Rutland Region LEPC #2 by organizing monthly meetings (including mini-tabletop exercises), coordinating special projects and keeping LEPC #2 members informed of training and grant opportunities. RRPC led LEPC # 2 through a full bylaw update (last completed in 2006); and to establish three special task forces to work within the areas of Tier II/EHS facilities; community engagement; and emergency responders.
- Hosted bi-monthly roundtables for local emergency management directors and coordinators October through June to disseminate pertinent information, to share best practices and to provide a platform for municipalities to connect around a common mission.
- Collected and communicated local damage information from towns after two significant storm events affected the region, in coordination with Vermont Division of Emergency Management, VTrans and Agency of Natural Recourses.
• Four RRPC staff were trained to serve in the State Emergency Operations Center, including Incident Command System, SEOC Incident Coordination Team, RPC Local Liaison and DisasterLAN trainings. Four staff participated in Vigilant Guard.
• Provided extensive technical assistance to several towns applying for Hazard Mitigation Grants, particularly with benefit-cost analyses for emergency generators and culvert replacements.
• There are 15 (55%) FEMA Approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plans in Rutland County. There are 10 (37%) expired LHMPs in Rutland County. These expirations will be addressed by the RRPC’s “mega-grant”
• Attended FEMA’s Debris Management training and Continuity of Operations training. RRPC staff attended BACH DA training.
• Twenty-six of the 27 municipalities (96%) in RRPC territory have adopted LEOPs.
• Participated on a state task force to design and create the new Local EMD training course and materials.
• Processed hazardous material reports from Tier II facilities in order to produce meaningful datasets that will aid firefighters and other first responders who are called to emergencies at the facilities.
• Assisted Rutland City with an on-going emergency management gap analysis.
• Coordinated with state agencies and regional partners to provide training and information to the region’s daycare providers so that the providers could meet emergency planning requirements.

ENERGY PLANNING

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process. The passage of Act 174 created another component with its optional enhanced energy planning. In order to give local communities more say in the siting of renewable energy generation projects, state statute now provides for optional enhanced energy plans at the regional and municipal levels.

Energy issues have dominated the Rutland Region recently, stirring healthy debates and leading towns to update land use and economic development policies. The RRPC played a pivotal role in this process over the last year, significant projects included:

• Updated the Energy Chapter of the Rutland Regional Plan to meet the standards of regional enhanced energy planning pursuant to Act 174.
• Assisted all 27 towns with municipal enhanced energy planning by providing energy data analysis and renewable energy maps. The RRPC provided specialized technical assistance
to three towns – Sudbury, Rutland Town and Middletown Springs – so that these municipalities have all of the components needed to meet the standards for enhanced energy planning pursuant to Act 174.

- Assisted the towns of Benson and Wallingford to create new energy chapters in their municipal plans. Clearer community standards were developed to guide the Public Utilities Commission (formerly the Public Service Board) during Section 248 project review.
- Worked with the RRPC Regional Committee and Board to review 15 Section 248 petitions and submitted comments to Public Utilities Commission (formerly the Public Service Board). A majority of the projects were for solar electric generation facilities and telecommunications towers.
- Created solar and wind generation facility checklists as well as model Municipal Plan language to encourage clear concise community standards regarding solar development.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Providing outreach assistance for two Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grants awarded to the Poultney Mettowee NRCD. Both are for Stormwater Master Planning; one for Lake Champlain, the other for the Castleton River Headwaters.
- Assisting VT DEC Watershed Coordinator Ethan Swift with outreach on an updated Tactical Basin Plan for South Lake Champlain Watershed to help address the Vermont Clean Water Initiative and the TMDL for Lake Champlain. Staff also is working to train the region’s municipalities on the various other provisions of the Clean Water Initiative, including several upcoming mandatory permits, and funding opportunities.
- As part of the Clean Water Initiative, RRPC staff is working directly with Castleton and Hubbardton on increased protection designations for area waterways. This work is being done through the towns’ Municipal Plans.
- Worked with the Town of Pawlet to update its Unified Bylaws to include River Corridor protections and the latest state river corridor mapping data.
- Assisting 18 towns in the region with a new pilot grant program funded by VT DEC – the Grants-in-Aid Program. These funds help communities get an early start on some of the Best Management Practices that will be required for the upcoming Municipal General Roads Permit.
- Under a 604b grant, staff is assisting VT DEC with its data management of Clean Water Act projects.
- Partnered with the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District to create a watershed-level flood resiliency checklist template that RPCs and towns can
use. The collaboration also resulted in a tri-town outreach event to promote flood resiliency in a watershed that was greatly impacted in Tropical Storm Irene.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed, or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs, and increase housing opportunities. The Rutland Region Brownfields Reuse Program (BRP) has existed for thirteen years and has received approximately $2.5 million in funding from the US EPA to conduct community-wide assessment activities and redevelopment planning. Funding for this work has been reinvested in the Region and leveraged other funding sources, making the program an essential land use and economic development tool for municipalities. Highlights include:

- Phase I and Phase II assessment work at the former Lynda Lee Fashions manufacturing facility in Rutland City, funded by the RRPC and LCPC, is setting the stage for a redevelopment of this historic building and site by the Housing Trust of Rutland County. The future residential, commercial and civic uses included in the development will further the revitalization of the City’s Northwest Neighborhood.

- Partnering with the Town of Proctor and Preservation Trust of Vermont, the historic Vermont Marble Company facility in Proctor has received two rounds of Phase II ESA work and Corrective Action planning. This work set the stage for a property transfer to the newly created Vermont Marble Museum, a non-profit, which will continue to operate the museum and redevelop the site for other commercial and possible residential uses. Brownfields work at the site was also a driving factor in leveraging a $30,000 planning grant from the VCDP to create the Proctor Prosperity Plan, which expanded on work at this site to identify economic development opportunities and strategies in the village core.

- The RRPC worked on a remediation and redevelopment plan for the former Berwick Hotel site in downtown Rutland. The site, known locally as “the Pit”, has served as a parking lot in the heart of the city since 1973, when the original building burned. ESA work and redevelopment planning has this site on the verge of redevelopment into a multi-story, mixed-use development, which will expand economic development opportunities and add to the vibrancy of downtown Rutland.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through a contract with VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve
as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state, and federal transportation network advancement. The RRPC remains focused on working with its municipalities to establish effective multimodal networks, which will serve as a pillar for the development of strong villages and downtown centers, increasing the economic viability of the region at large.

- The TAC worked with VTrans in prioritizing regional paving and bridge projects.
- Held 3 road commissioner networking meetings, focusing on pertinent issues such as transportation/water quality legislation and regulatory framework, damage reporting in aftermath of storms and emergency protective measures.
- The RRPC completed 6 bridge/culvert inventories, 8 road erosion inventories, two traffic counts, and twice assisted VTrans with Park & Ride counts (one round for state, one for municipal).
- Road surface inventories are performed for municipalities as part of the Better Roads grant, and sign inventories are done on request.
- From July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, the TAC met eight times, with an average participation rate of 41%.
- Worked with other RPCs and state officials in creating and editing a road erosion inventory field template. Participated in several trainings and hosted one training session in Brandon.
- Continued membership on Marble Valley Regional Transit District Board of Commissioners.
- Coordinated quarterly meetings of regional E&D Public Transit Advisory Committee.
- Continued work on Better Roads Category A grants with eleven towns from FY17 application cycle, and assisted towns with applications for FY18 cycle.
- Concluded Better Roads Category A work with eight towns from FY16 cycle.

**GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES**

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- **Bridge and Culvert Inventories** – RRPC GIS staff worked with several town road departments to collect culvert data using the commission’s GPS. RRPC continues to work on the inventory, mapping and updates to [www.VTCulverts.com](http://www.VTCulverts.com).
- **Transportation Mapping** – Provided mapping support for several transportation related town grants and continued to work on identifying and inventorying town long structures for the region. Continued to add and update bridge and culvert inventories, as well as performing road erosion inventory assessments for many towns in the region. RRPC staff also developed an online mapping application to be used in the field for culvert and road erosion inventories.
- **Emergency Management** – RRPC participated in ICS 200 training, and several training sessions at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) including a full scale
statewide emergency exercise, Vigilant Guard, in which GIS staff filled four shifts and had the opportunity to act as GIS Unit Leader and GIS Unit Assistant.

- **Flood Resiliency Support** – Provided several towns with maps of their special flood hazard areas and river corridors. Also worked with a few towns to map site specific flood hazards.

- **Municipal Plans** – Worked with the towns of Shrewsbury, Wells, Middletown Springs, Benson, Pittsford and Fair Haven to create municipal plan maps to support their town plan or zoning documents.

- **Regional Plan** – Continued to update and add maps to the regional plan. Future Land Use, agriculture, forestry and several energy maps were created or updated.

- **Vermont State Register of Historic Districts** - RRPC created a State Register of Historic Districts GIS database for the region, which was based on data from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

- **Energy Planning** – RRPC created a set of energy maps for the regional energy plan as well as a set of six energy maps for each municipality in the region. RRPC continues to work with towns updating their energy maps.

- **Town Planning** – Updated Village Center Designation mapping for Clarendon, Fair Haven and Middletown Springs. Worked with local land owners in several towns on the Use Value Appraisal Program. Continued to provide GIS, mapping and technical support for the Rutland Creek Path project which connects Giorgetti/Pine Hill Park to the College of St. Joseph.

- **Vermont Statewide Property Parcel Mapping Program** – RRPC hosted a regional parcel data informational meeting, collected town parcel data updates and created metadata.

**ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING**

Administration of the RRPC’s programs, policies, and finances continue to be managed effectively and efficiently. Highlights include:

- A complete update and adoption of the RRPC Bylaws, Policies and Employee Handbook.
- Successful completion of FY 2016 Financial and Final Reports as well as Quarterly Reports for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; that included the status of performance measures, budget expenses, and other information.
- Completion of the FY16 Audit which resulted in “No findings“, and was distributed to requesting granting agencies.
- Enhanced presence in the Region by serving on local boards such as WIB, REDC, Chamber, The Bus and Southern Vermont Rutland Region Airport Committee.
- Leveraging of ACCD funds to provide match for grants from VTrans, VEM and EPA, which enabled the RRPC to cover the indirect costs incurred to expand work into diverse areas of planning.
- Increased RRPC visibility through serving on statewide committees, attending Legislative events, newsletters and increased presence on social media. Efforts have been
channeled into our brand identity, promotional materials and the development of a new website which is set to launch in the fall.

- Continued to implement recommendations of the Strategic Plan, including financial and management structure.
The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC) is a compact of ten (10) municipalities in east-central Vermont. It was founded in 1966, and is a political subdivision of state government organized under 24 V.S.A. Sub-Chapter 3. The Commission now serves the towns of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor. The SWCRPC’s activities and programs are governed by a ten-person Board of Commissioners; each appointed by the legislative body of his or her member town, with assistance from up to three “at-large” Commissioners as appointed by the Board of Commissioners. In addition, the Board has the responsibility of hiring staff to carry out the goals and policies of the SWCRPC.

The primary intent of the SWCRPC and its advisory committees has always been to assist with and advocate for the planning and development activities of its member towns. The SWCRPC exists primarily to provide technical assistance to its member towns; assist in mediating inter-jurisdictional planning and development issues that arise between member communities; facilitate discussion and understanding between local and state entities; develop plans, policies, strategies, and procedures for addressing issues that are regional in scope; assist communities with downtown revitalization and community development projects; annually compile, review, and prioritize regional transportation improvement projects for submission to the Agency of Transportation; and to serve as an information resource for member towns and residents.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards, and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Provided a range of services to assist with municipal plan updates for Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Springfield and Weathersfield.
- Helping planning commissions to prepare zoning bylaw updates in Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor. Staff also provided guidance on bylaw updates in Ludlow.
• Assisted with municipal plan implement through the development of supporting plans, including the Rediscovering Chester Village Master Plan and Springfield’s Main Street Master Plan. Staff served on the advisory committees for both projects.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

• The Regional Plan was last updated in 2014. The following updates were worked on during this fiscal year:
  - Developed draft updates to better address water quality for the region.
  - Hired Place Sense and created a Land Use Advisory Committee to assist in preparing significant updates to the Land Use Chapter.
  - Developed a draft Enhanced Regional Energy Plan.
• Efforts this year to implement the Regional Plan included the following activities:
  - Reviewed all Act 250 applications and Section 248 petitions as each relates to goals and policies in the Regional Plan.
  - Provided assistance to the Town of Chester seeking funds to address the storm drainage issues in the Mountain View neighborhood.
  - Continued to assist Windsor with efforts to repair the Ascutney Mill Dam.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

• Provided brownfields assistance for 7 properties in 3 towns.
• Participated in the BERA process to assist with a complex brownfield cleanup effort for the Jones and Lamson site on Clinton Street in Springfield.
• The SWCRC continues to work with Springfield Regional Development Corporation on the clean-up of the Jones Center, Artisan Surfaces, 100 River Street, Jones and Lamson, and Bryant Grinder Buildings.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development
Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- Assisted the Town of Windsor with a successful applications for the Better Connections program.
- Continued to assist with the environmental review for a CDBG-DR project that involves redevelopment of the Jones and Lamson site in Springfield.
- Supported municipal efforts to improve, add, remove and update infrastructure by inventorying and analyzing existing and planned infrastructure projects/needs in Springfield and Windsor.
- Provided capital budget training and created/provided the following resource materials to 4 towns: a fact sheet on capital planning for municipal facilities, municipal capital budget and program FAQ’s, and an information guide on funding options for a capital budget and program.
- Identified specific strategies, with funding requirements, to grow the grand list for area towns.
- Researched and created a “Grand List Expansion Strategies” resource tool which includes strategies to grow both commercial and residential grand list properties, as well as providing a detailed list of funding opportunities for a variety of potential projects.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contract with the VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

- **Objective #1 - Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, Regions and Municipalities**
  - **TAC activity**
    - Total # of meetings held: 8 TAC meetings held.
    - Average member participation rate (expressed as a % of total TAC membership): 74% average member participation rate.
  - **TAC Outcomes** - Identify at least three key outcomes of TAC meetings that relate to tasks/deliverables not specifically identified in your TPI agreement
    - Refined the vision for what they want to accomplish as the Southern Windsor County TAC.
    - Learned about how highway and railroad bridges are replaced with a photo slideshow from a local contractor.
- Heard a presentation on and discussed the findings of A to B Mobility Study
  - **Other Outreach** - assistance provided by RPCs (# of road foreman/commissioner meetings held, # of codes and standards meetings, # of TMDL outreach meetings, Regional Safety Forums held, # of Road Safety Audits held, # of Roadway Drainage & Erosion Inventories conducted, T-Board Forums hosted, Public Transit E&D meetings held, Roads & Rivers Trainings held, municipal road surface management or sign inventories etc.)
    - Held 4 regional road foreman meetings.
    - Participated in 1 Road Safety Audit for VT-131 in Weathersfield between US-5 and I-91.
    - Hosted 1 meeting regarding Municipal Roads General Permits.
    - Completed two Road Erosion Inventories – Reading and Springfield
    - Facilitated 6 public transportation E&D meetings.
  - **Data collection RPCs do for VTrans** – (# of bridge/culvert inventories completed, # of traffic, bike/ped and Park & Ride counts conducted)
    - Completed 2 municipal road condition inventories – Reading and Springfield
    - Developed or updated 3 municipal bridge and culvert inventories – Reading, Springfield and Windsor
    - Conducted 2 road drainage and erosion inventories – Reading and Springfield
    - Performed 14 traffic counts, including speed studies.
    - Completed 12 bicycle and pedestrian counts in 4 locations.
    - Performed 40 park-and-ride counts (monthly at 3 locations, biannually at 2 locations).

- **Objective #2** - Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making
  - **Status of Regional Transportation plan**
    - *What year was it adopted?* The Southern Windsor County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was adopted in 2014.
    - *Is it incorporated into the Regional Plan?* Yes, it is adopted as Volume 2 of the Regional Plan.
    - *If currently being updated, what is anticipated date of adoption?* There are no RTP updates being drafted or considered at this time.
  - **Participation in Project Development Activities** - # of project scoping efforts, # of project 502 hearings, # of accelerated bridge meetings.
    - Participated in 6 project scoping efforts (US 5 Paving in Springfield, US-5 and VT-11 intersection safety improvements, I-91 Bridge 24N&S in Rockingham, Cavendish Depot St Bridge, Cavendish railroad crossing improvements, Springfield County Road Culvert).
    - Participated in one 502 Hearing for the Hartness Airport Avigation Easement Project.
    - No accelerated bridge meetings scheduled within the region.
Participation in Act 250 review related to transportation issues - # of applications involving transportation issues

- Reviewed all Act 250 applications received this year. There were not many projects with notable impacts during this fiscal year. Staff had modest levels of involvement to review and coordinate on two projects: modifications to Okemo traffic mitigation permit conditions and Vermont Packinghouse LLC.

Objective #3 - Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities

- % of TPI budget (Task # 4 Short Range Transportation Planning) that supports municipal planning? Please provide three examples of projects completed in the last year.
  - A significant amount of our TPI activities is for local technical assistance with transportation planning, but this level of effort is difficult to quantify. Task 4 represents 27% of our FFY 2017 TPI contract amount. Examples of work performed under Task 4 include:
    - Reading Road Erosion Report
    - Springfield Road Erosion Report
  - Completed 2 road erosion inventories (Reading and Springfield).
  - We assisted municipalities with Better Road applications, including 4 applications for Category B, C or D work for Reading, Springfield, West Windsor and Windsor, as well as 2 Category A applications for Weathersfield and West Windsor.
  - Special studies completed include:
    - A to B Mobility Study.
  - Participation in public transit efforts:
    - Facilitated regular meetings for the transportation program for elders and persons with disabilities in southern Windsor County and Windham County, in coordination with WRC.
    - Attended Southeast Vermont Transit Board meetings.
    - Attended Springfield Hospital Community Health Team Transportation Committee meetings.
    - Completed the 2017 A to B Mobility Study and attended various meetings in the region to share information about existing transportation resources available in the area.
    - Participated in the Rides to Wellness Project for the Mt Ascutney Hospital area.
    - Participated in Southeast Vermont Transit route amendment process
    - Attended Public Transit Advisory Council as the VAPDA representative.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and
coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans and assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.

- Ten municipalities in the region (100%) currently have a hazard mitigation plan either adopted or under review. Nine municipalities in the region (90%) currently have an updated local emergency plan.
- Assisted all 10 towns with updates to their Local Emergency Operations Plans this year.
- Worked with 6 towns to update Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, including Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Reading, Weathersfield and West Windsor.
- Provided support with the buyout of 3 flood-damaged properties.
- Assisted the Town of Ludlow with their industrial park resiliency planning effort.
- Continued to provide guidance to the Town and Village of Ludlow with flood hazard review, as requested.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Highlights of activities
  - Creation of interactive online map of transportation service areas for the A to B Mobility Project [http://swcrpc.maps.arcgis.com](http://swcrpc.maps.arcgis.com).
  - Developed online maps showing watershed information for the Mill Brook and Williams River [http://swcrpc.maps.arcgis.com](http://swcrpc.maps.arcgis.com).
  - Developed maps to support applications for Village Center and Downtown Designation.
  - Created shapefiles of State Register Historic Districts.
  - Integrated “Collector for ArcGIS” into regular fieldwork activities, including MRGP related erosion inventories.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- Reviewed documents and participated in Section 248 proceedings, including TDI New England Clean Power Link (Ludlow), VELCO Connecticut River Valley Project (Cavendish and Weathersfield), Coolidge Solar (Ludlow), and Ludlow Driver Solar project.
• Organized and facilitated 2 regional educational workshops on Act 174 and enhanced local energy plans.
• Assisted the towns of Andover, Ludlow and Springfield to draft enhanced energy plans.
• Drafted an Enhanced Regional Energy Plan, which is currently undergoing a pre-review by the Department of Public Service.

WATERSHIP PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

• Worked with the towns of Reading, West Windsor and Windsor to implement recommendations from the Mill Brook Stream Geomorphic Assessment including, but not limited to, the removal of the Harrington Dam in West Windsor.
• Worked with the Town of Springfield to complete a Stream Geomorphic Study for Valley Brook.
• Worked with the Towns of Andover and Chester to prepare detailed assessment of priority water quality/hazard mitigation related recommendations from the River Corridor Plans for grant-readiness.
• Worked with all towns to ensure upload of potential water quality related projects to the DEC Watershed Project Data Base.
• Continued to assist municipalities to better understand flood resiliency and to consider adoption of model ANR river corridor bylaws, including Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor.
• Continued with Clean Water Advisory Committee meetings to assist in basin planning and provide updates for grant opportunities for clean water planning and projects implementation.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Use this to described any unique efforts, whether it is your HUD grant, a partnership with your local health department, MS-4 implementation, etc.

• The A to B Mobility Project involved a planning effort to identify and coordinate transportation services in and around southern Windsor County. This project was funded by VTrans and the Springfield Medical Care Systems Community Health Team.
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

Overview of administration, audits, board development, leveraged funds, one-page maximum:

The SWCRPC is funded by performance and project contracts with federal, state and local levels of government, foundation support, and contributions from member municipalities. SWCRPC’s FY 2017 budget was approximately $861,825.00. Core funding provided by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development of $197,225.00 leveraged about $317,000 in additional federal sources.

SWCRPC has an annual independent audit conducted by Certified Public Accountants. A single audit was not necessary for the past fiscal year. No significant findings nor material weaknesses have been identified in recent years.

SWCRPC serves 10 municipalities and operates with a Board of Directors that develop and implement policy and oversee a staff of 10.
The Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) provides technical assistance to a 30-town area in east central Vermont. Our primary goals are to advocate for the needs of our member towns, and to articulate a vision for building a thriving and sustainable regional economy while enhancing the region’s quality of life. TRORC staff provide technical services to local, state and federal levels of government and to the Region’s non-profits and businesses.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

TRORC has a staff with more than 80 years of combined experience providing technical assistance to towns. We regularly field ad hoc questions from zoning administrators and town staff, as well as work under contract on larger projects. Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development, flood resiliency, energy and forest resources planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- As a follow-up to the Newbury Town Plan (written with assistance from TRORC), TRORC helped the Newbury Planning Commission develop a unified bylaw which included combining the zoning and subdivision regulations into a single document, clarifying uses, creates more detailed subdivision standards, and aligns the district list and associated uses with the most recent town plan.
- TRORC assisted the Stockbridge Planning Commission update their Zoning Bylaws to conform with the most recent update of the town plan and to create new land use areas intended to discourage sprawl.
- Downtown/ Village Center Designations- TRORC Staff worked closely with the towns of Barnard, Randolph and Woodstock to renew or apply for state designations.
- TRORC provided technical assistance to seventeen towns on town plan language ranging from full plan re-writes to assistance about specific chapters of a plan.
- Through partnerships with local community access television, TRORC has provided video trainings through public access television and YouTube on energy, land use planning, affordable housing, emergency management, transportation, and water quality.
REGIONAL PLANNING

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

- Regional Plan Updates: The TRORC Regional Plan was adopted in 2017. Over the past year TRORC has been working as one of three pilot RPCs to develop an enhanced energy chapter to meet the standards under Act 174. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze energy use and production across various sectors (transportation, electric, thermal) and to give regional plans greater weight in the Section 248 permitting process. TRORC has also developed a new Healthy Communities chapter to facilitate and encourage municipalities to plan for and encourage healthy lifestyles in our communities.
- Regional Plan Implementation: TRORC used the Regional Plan to evaluate applications and participate in the Act 250 and Section 248 projects. In FY 17, seventeen applications were reviewed for Regional Plan conformance.

BROWNFIELDS

- Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 12 million dollars for this economic redevelopment initiative. Environmental site assessments remove concerns about contamination and allow properties to be sold and redeveloped in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs, provide greenspace, and increase housing opportunities.
- TRORC was awarded $400,000 in EPA assessment funds in FY 16 and has reviewed all known sites in the region with VTDEC, as well as met with our regional development corporation and larger towns to identify their priority sites. We now have a ranked list of sites, are currently finishing a corrective action plan on a site expected to have housing and a transit stop in Hartford, and are talking with other owners.
- We also assisted with a supplemental redevelopment study for the East End in Woodstock.
- TRORC has assisted in the assessment of a Brownfields reuse project in Randolph Village. The project will allow the successful transfer of ownership of the parcel so that it can continue as a thriving business.
- TRORC has assisted in the development of a Corrective Action Plan for remediation of a historically contaminated site in Wilder, a village in Hartford. This will facilitate the development of two residential housing units and a transit stop.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with local and regional development
groups to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- TRORC has released a report titled *Artists, Artisans and Entrepreneurs: Creative Economy of the East Central Vermont Region* which emphasizes that the Creative Economy is a source of economic growth for the region which has a high concentration of people in creative industries. The report laid out seven goals for the region to focus on to strengthen the creative economy. TRORC has partnered with other organizations to continue to work on accomplishing these goals with a focus on building the creative network and leveraging that network to inspire others to recognize the importance of and provide support for the creative economy.

- TRORC continues to work with East Central Vermont Economic Development District in writing and supporting goals, strategies and actions of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

*Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) activity* - Total of 6 meetings held, average member participation rate 37% (expressed as a % of total TAC membership)

**TAC Outcomes**

- Chelsea VT110 bridges BR9 and BR11, TAC continuing to stay abreast of the future plans and discussing Town’s concern over temporary pedestrian bridge access during construction for Summer 2017.
- TRORC participated in numerous policy stakeholder meetings as requested by VTrans and other agencies:
  - VTrans LEAN process on Public Information Officer and how this helps communities and VTrans move projects forward.
  - VTrans Methods and Tools Regional Meeting with town officials and road foremen
  - Staff continued RPC road erosion methodology discussion for road erosion inventory collection for summer 2016 and 2017.
  - Worked with VTrans on public outreach for the Sharon and Thetford Park and Ride Scoping Studies for Alternatives, solicited input from TAC and got final recommendation / approval from TAC on preferred alternative.

- **Other Outreach** - Two road foreman/commissioner meetings held, 4 TMDL outreach meetings, 2 Road Safety Audits held, 2 Public Transit E&D meetings held, 4 Vermont Local Road Stakeholder meetings
Data collection RPCs do for VTrans – Four bridge/culvert inventories completed, 18 traffic studies, 15 bike/pedestrian and 3 Park & Ride counts conducted, 5 municipal road surface management inventories.

Objective #2 - Conformance with Act 200 and Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making

- Status of Regional Transportation Plan – Adopted in September, 2015 as part of the TRORC Regional Plan.
- Participation in Project Development Activities - Four project scoping efforts, 4 accelerated bridge meetings.
- Participation in Act 250 review related to transportation issues - Two applications involving transportation issues.

Objective #3 - Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities

- Thirty-four percent (34%) of TPI budget (Task # 4 Short Range Transportation Planning) supports municipal planning.
- Other Better Roads (BR) - related work – assisted 20 towns with 36 BR grant applications for 2017 and completed 5 town 2016 BR road erosion and culvert inventories.
- Participation in public transit efforts – TRORC staff participated in Advance Transit’s Strategic Planning Committee and participated in the Advance Transit Traffic Signal Priority working group. TRORC staff also participated in Stagecoach’s Strategic Planning Committee and Stagecoach’s 40th anniversary event as well as provided mapping technical assistance.
- Resiliency related work – In addition to spearheading RPC discussion on road erosion inventory methodology, staff were involved in project management of several town CDBG Disaster Recovery transportation projects (Rochester Bean’s Bridge Road Lowering and Bank Stabilization, Royalton Gilman Road Relocation, Woodstock Snow Dump Relocation and Construction, Barnard Mt. Hunger Bank Stabilization, Stockbridge Taggart Hill Road Bank Stabilization and Hancock Churchville Culvert Replacement).
- Staff conducted a bus stop analysis study for downtown Bethel for the Bethel Better Block Initiative (the Town received a grant through AARP) to implement short term improvements on Main Street.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness and recovery phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPCs also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to
municipal emergency plans, help communities access grant funds, arrange training, and assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters. TRORC’s staff played a strong role in regional emergency response.

- We assisted the state in its Vigilant Guard exercise and have six staff trained in ICS and other aspects of emergency management. TRORC staff are often tasked by DEMHS to poll towns for disaster damage in the wake of incidents. TRORC also has a very good working relationship with our VTrans Districts and coordinates with them in times when road damages are expected. We do outreach with our road foremen on disaster recovery and staff our regional LEPC #12.
- All of our municipalities have updated local emergency operations plans.
- Writing Hazard Mitigation Plans for our towns.
  - Overall in TRORC Region: 25 Towns with Final Approval by FEMA for Local Hazard Mitigation Plans
  - In this past year, 8 new Towns that have received Final Approval by FEMA, and 3 additional Towns have received FEMA approval pending formal Town adoption
- TRORC Staff presented at the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference
- TRORC has worked with the Woodstock area on basic preparedness tips and ways volunteers can augment local emergency forces in recovery efforts.
- TRORC continued its lead role in providing HUD and VHCB funds from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for buying out flood damaged properties.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Updated E911 maps.
- Updated town plan maps.
- Supported town asset inventories.
- Created river corridor and flood resilience project maps.
- Completed Hazard Mitigation Plan analysis and maps.
- Act 174 renewable energy generation maps.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.
• TRORC was one of three pilot RPC’s to develop an enhanced energy plan that will give the region substantial deference in the Section 248 permitting process. This plan focuses on thermal efficiency and alternative heat systems, transportation system changes and land use strategies, overall energy conservation and efficiency and mapping energy generation resources based on statewide constraints.

• TRORC provided all thirty-member towns an energy report that included current energy use across all three sectors, town energy targets for 2025, 2035, and 2050, as well as renewable energy generation potential. TRORC also provided renewable generation potential maps for solar, wind, biomass, and Hydro.

• TRORC reviewed and commented on six petitions for a Certificate of Public Good within the region, the bulk of which were for solar projects.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

• TRORC continues to play an active role in commenting on water quality initiatives by the state, as well as promoting high quality waters through basin planning processes. We are active in the Basin 10 planning process and in proposed reclassification of waters to A1 and B1.

• The Kedron Brook Nutrient Management and Flood Resiliency Project examined the stability of Kedron Brook, a major tributary of the Ottauquechee River in Woodstock, and identified projects reduce nutrient runoff into the Brook and to improve the flood resiliency for landowners and the Village of Woodstock.

• TRORC adopted a Clean Water Advisory Council that plays an active role in advising TRORC activities by providing local and regional input regarding storm water, groundwater, wetlands, stream stability, project priorities, and other water quality issues.

• Developed Flood Resilience Elements for Town Plans that identify streams, rivers, infrastructure and properties in town that vulnerable to flooding and/or fluvial erosion and designates these areas for future protection.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

• TRORC continues in its role as the statewide coordinator of CDBG-DR funding for the buyout of flood damaged structures, having completed over 120 buyouts statewide. TRORC has also managed 12 buyouts that have been redesigned as river access points or parks.
- TRORC has partnered with the Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership (MAPP) in working with communities on policies that focus on healthy communities. In combination with SWCRPC, MAPP and other Health agencies, the Supporting Healthy Communities: What Can Towns Do? toolkit was released for town officials who are interested in incorporating health into planning.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

TRORC is funded by performance and project contracts with federal, state and local levels of government, foundation support, and contributions from member municipalities and non-profits. TRORC’s FY 17 budget was approximately $1.2 million, plus a three-year effort of HUD home buy-out funding of $3 million. Core funding passed through by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development of $280,000 leveraged about $950,000 in additional federal sources that addressed the needs of citizens and communities in the TRORC region.

TRORC has an independent audit conducted by Certified Public Accountants and has numerous field audits and reviews by funders. No significant findings, material weaknesses, nor questioned costs were identified. Staff continuously avail themselves of professional development opportunities on program and administrative areas.

TRORC serves 30 municipalities and operates with a Board of Directors that develop and implement policy and oversee a staff of 9. The Board systematically updates all accounting practices and safeguards and organizational policies on an ongoing basis.
Celebrating our 52nd year, the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is an important resource to the 23 towns of Windham County, the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County. Our mission is to assist towns in Southeastern Vermont to provide effective local government and work cooperatively with them to address regional issues. Towns choose to be members of the WRC.

Each town’s Selectboard determines who will represent the town on the WRC. Each member town can appoint two commissioners who represent that town’s interest in regional affairs. The exception is Somerset, where the commissioner is appointed by the Governor. Additionally, the WRC has up to ten citizen interest commissioners who represent other regional interests such as business and industry, healthy communities, agriculture, natural resources, energy, and housing. The WRC is organized around a strong committee structure. These committees are where most of the work gets done and the decisions made. Commissioners serve on these committees and make the decisions. The WRC has 10 highly-qualified staff with more than 80 years of combined professional experience who provide support to the committees, and execute the Commission’s program of work.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Provided assistance to 24 towns with updating town plans and zoning bylaws, and with Village Center designation applications and renewal applications to further community revitalization. This included extensive work with 14 towns on town plans and 11 towns on zoning bylaws, flood hazard area regulations, and subdivision regulations conducted under municipal planning grant funding and municipal services contracts. Also provided general technical assistance with Chapter 117 processes and requirements. Updating town plans included addressing recent Flood Resilience Plan requirements and the new Act 174 energy planning standards.
Presented a regional training session on “Essentials of Land Use Planning and Regulation” to seventeen participants representing 11 towns and one service organization. Ten of the town Planning Commission/Development Review Board/Selectboard members had a year or less experience in those roles.

Conducted four municipal consultation meetings involving town Planning Commissions and Selectboards, and provided individualized “Essentials of Land Use Planning and Regulation” training for Planning Commission members and interested others, e.g., Selectboard and Zoning Board of Adjustment/Development Review Board members in five towns.

Assisted six towns in developing/submitting Municipal Planning Grant applications for town plan updates, zoning updates, flood resilience planning, and a natural resources inventory.

Assisted seven towns with updating flood hazard area regulations to address protection of river corridors and/or with administering current regulations.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

The WRC completed its two-year comprehensive regional plan update and adopted the new plan in September, 2014. This highly public process benefited from the use of a website dedicated to presenting plan drafts and collecting public comment in addition to face to face public meetings throughout the region and other traditional public engagement methods. Comments were also solicited from multiple state agencies and subject area experts.

During this reporting period the WRC reviewed 29 Act 250 applications and 15 Section 248 applications. The latter was mainly solar projects. Act 250 applications included those related to Haystack/Hermitage Resort Master Plan, an affordable housing project, a helipad, a gravel quarry, a psychiatric retreat facility, and the Retreat Farm redevelopment.

WRC is engaged in the Public Service Board docket for Entergy Vermont Yankee’s petition to sell the station to NorthStar for the purpose of decommissioning and site restoration. We are following but not directly engaging in the NRC deliberations about the same.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

- WRC brownfields program since its inception in 2000 has brought a total of $4.4 million dollars in federal brownfields funds to the region for assessment and cleanup of brownfields sites.
- Attended statewide brownfield roundtable meeting with other planners, Vermont Agencies and EPA. Attended Region 1 EPA Brownfields Clean Up Revolving Loan Fund training.
- During this past year WRC Brownfields program has worked on the following sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Town/Village</th>
<th>Brownfields Work</th>
<th>Reuse plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putnam Block</td>
<td>Bennington</td>
<td>Phase I ESA</td>
<td>Provided assistance to Bennington RPC when their program was without funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estey Organ</td>
<td>Brattleboro</td>
<td>Corrective Action Planning (CAP) and WRC Brownfields Clean Up Loan</td>
<td>Redeveloped by owner for light industrial/storage and improved parking. Clean up began in July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arch Street</td>
<td>Brattleboro</td>
<td>Assisted with application for successful EPA Clean Up Grant ($200,000)</td>
<td>Brattleboro Museum and Art Center to redevelop the building with possible arts related business and education space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader Distribution</td>
<td>Dummerston</td>
<td>Phase I ESA</td>
<td>Rent to own by Hermit Thrush Brewery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Church Street</td>
<td>Guilford</td>
<td>Phase I ESA</td>
<td>Property owned by Guilford non-profit to be reused for child care and other social services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pownal Hydro Dam</td>
<td>Pownal</td>
<td>WRC Brownfields Clean Up Loan</td>
<td>To private developer of hydro dam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Site | Town/Village | Brownfields Work | Reuse plan
--- | --- | --- | ---
37 Main Street | Saxtons River | Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA). | Purchased by Main Street Arts for reuse for storage, workshop and eventual expansion of programs.

**Saxtons River Park** | Saxtons River | Project Management assistance for EPA Clean Up Grant. | Redevelopment of former mill and gas station parcels into a community park.

**Robertson Paper Mill** | Village of Bellows Falls | Continue to assist Town and BFADC on brownfield issues related to redevelopment. Participated as part of the Vermont’s BERA team this site. Provided assessment funds for archeological and Corrective Action Planning (CAP). Assisted with application for successful EPA Clean Up Grant ($200,000) | Purchased by Bellows Falls Area Development Corp (BFADC) for Redevelopment.

**Twin Valley High School** | Wilmington | Phase I ESA | Nonprofit purchasing High School for community center.

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### ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- Participated on Southeastern Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) Board and the Windham Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee.
- Continuing to collaborate with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) in assisting the State of Vermont with the administration of the Windham County Economic Development Program, funding for which is provided through the settlement agreement between the state and Entergy Vermont Yankee.
• Participation in the USDA-funded Rural Community Development Initiative being led by the BDCC to develop regional capacity to support economic development across Windham and Bennington counties. The goal of the effort is to improve coordination by and between public and private sector partners concerning economic development initiatives such as workforce training, retention, recruitment, and sustainable business investment.
  
  o Providing data and analysis for the United Way of Windham County’s community indicators.
  o Assisted the Vermont Department of Health and the Windham County Prevention Coalition to update A Primer on Planning for Prevention to make it relevant to the Windham Region.
  o Continue to assist Windham Region communities with village center and downtown applications.
  o The Windham Regional Commission and BuildingGreen Inc. partnered to explore certifying a Living Communities Challenge (LCC) project in the Windham region. A request for letters of interest was sent out to Windham Region towns, communities, and non-profits that might be interested in receiving technical assistance to explore the feasibility of pursuing certification. Algiers Village non-profits were selected for technical assistance.
  o Provided resource assistance to Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit in Vernon. Once completed continued to provide assistance to the community as they work to implement the report.
  o Participated in Windham County Diverse Workforce Recruitment Committee.
  o Began working on exploring Sister City/Region relationship for the Windham Region.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contract with the VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

Fostering Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, Regions and Municipalities
VAPDA ANNUAL REPORT – FISCAL YEAR 2017

TAC activity – WRC held 9 TAC meetings. Attendance ranged from 3-8 TAC members per meeting, a 55% municipal participation rate.

TAC Outcomes

- Continued to support the Aesthetic Evaluation Committee organized to advise VTrans and contractors on the aesthetic elements of I-91 Bridge 9/Vermont Route 30/West River.
- Hosted VTrans to discuss the agency’s long-range plan development process and structure.

Outreach and Education

- Participated in 2 Connecticut River Transit/Deerfield Valley Transit Association Board Meetings.
- Participated in 4 E&D Meetings
- Hosted ANR to explore with road foreman and town officials what to expect regarding the upcoming Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Performed Municipal Roads General Permit and road erosion outreach to 8 towns. (Dover, Marlboro, Readsboro, Stratton, Vernon, Wilmington, Newfane, and Wardsboro.)
- Supported the Southeast Vermont Transit in route studies of Bellows Falls/ Springfield route, supporting route study of Brattleboro routes.
- Attended at least 7 transportation related trainings.
- Attended the Vermont Geospatial Forum in Montpelier. Went to sessions on ESRI mobile apps, ArcGIS Pro and ArcMap 10.5, curve modeling on rural roads, maps in community planning, and landslide hazard mapping.

Data collection

- 5 bridge and culvert inventories (Halifax, Rockingham, Stratton, Weston, and Wilmington.)
- 23 pedestrian counts for 6 towns; (Brattleboro (9), Dover (4), Marlboro (1), Putney (2), Rockingham (2), and Wilmington (5).)
- 16 traffic counts for 7 towns; (Brattleboro (1), Brookline (1), Dummerston (2), Jamaica (2), Marlboro (3), Wardsboro (5), Whitingham (1), and Winhall (1).)
- 5 sign inventories (Brookline, Guilford, Readsboro, Vernon, and Wilmington.)
- 5 road erosion inventories (Grafton, Halifax, Stratton, Westminster, and Weston.)
- Verified town short structures (bridges and culverts) in 8 towns in the region.
- Conducted Park and Ride counts for all state and municipal lots in February, July, and October.
Facilitating Decentralized Decision Making

- The Regional Transportation Plan was adopted in June, 2013 and is integrated into the Regional Plan.
- Attended 4 public meetings related to transportation and safety including; Rockingham I-91 bridge reconstruction project, Guilford Rt 5 Bridge, Brattleboro Safe Streets Forum, and SEVT Brattleboro Bus Route Improvements.
- Attended 5 preconstruction meetings for projects in the Windham Region including; Guilford Rt 5 Bridge, Halifax Rt 112 Spot Repair, Putney Sidewalk, Rt 9 Wilmington Paving, and Rockingham Rt 5 Paving.
- Through our Project Review Committee, WRC reviewed and/or provided comments on 5 Act 250 applications with substantial transportation elements: Hermitage Master Plan, Brady Sullivan helipad, Inner Fire, Rowes Gravel pit, and SE VT Transit park and ride facility.
- Serving on the Municipal Roads General Permit Core Team.
- Met with representatives from the towns of Brattleboro, Dover, Dummerston, Grafton, Jamaica, Londonderry, Marlboro, Newfane, Readsboro, Rockingham, Stratton, Westminster, Wilmington, and Windham; to understand the local concerns that should be considering in upcoming VTrans projects within the towns, and to understand how high a priority each project is to the towns.
- Coordinating Westminster 1-91 bridge deck replacement public meeting.
- Serves on Brattleboro Hinsdale Bridge Project Lead Team supporting the process of getting local input incorporated into the planned bi-state bridge replacement project.
- Updated the 2 regional trail maps and attended a state meeting on The Economic Impact and Future of Vermont’s Trails and Recreation Paths.

Providing Transportation Planning Support to Municipalities

- Short-range provision of direct assistance to municipalities is 41% of the WRC’s transportation budget. A large portion of the coordination activities also include municipal assistance. Municipal projects included:
- Wrote or provided significant technical assistance to 17 transportation-related grant applications for municipalities. Includes Better Roads Program, Transportation Alternatives, Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation, and Bicycle and Pedestrian grant applications. Created maps for 4 grant applications.
- Completed Route 30 Gateway Mini Corridor Study for the Town of Brattleboro and supported the town in a successful study action to request to make permanent the 40mph speed limit zone currently posted as a temporary (work zone related).
- Other examples include Guilford Covered bridge detour signage, supporting Marlboro in two wildlife crossing requests, supporting Jamaica with identification of options for the State Park Bridge, reviewing Putney Sidewalk RFP submissions, serving as the project
manager Readsboro’s sidewalk construction project, supporting the Transportation elements of the Village of Jacksonville Flood Resiliency project.

- Facilitated Safety Audit on Putney Road in Brattleboro. Coordinated Safety Audit request and planning on Route 100 in Weston.
- Provided technical assistance to Wilmington with VT Culverts website and Brattleboro with GIS software and data
- Met with officials from 4 towns to discuss pathway and trail issues and provided mapping support in their town. (Brattleboro, Readsboro, Vernon, Townshend)
- Updated road centerline data and road maps for 6 towns (Guilford, Halifax, Londonderry, Rockingham, Westminster, and Weston).
- Created updated Transportation System maps for town plans for 7 towns (Athens, Dover, Dummerston, Londonderry, Townshend, Wilmington, and Winhall).

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans and assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.

- The WRC develops local hazard mitigation plans for our towns, with the exception of Brattleboro which created its own. Of our 27 towns, 19 (70%) have hazard mitigation plans either adopted or under review. Twenty-five of the 27 (93%) currently have updated local emergency operations plans in place.
- WRC worked with FEMA and the Vermont Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) on the development of a Vermont Local Hazard Mitigation Plan template outline to expedite the review of the towns’ plans.
- The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC-6) is staffed by the WRC. This year it made a big push to improve the collection and organization of Tier II hazardous materials reports from local businesses and other entities, as well as improving access to this information by dispatch and fire departments. LEPC membership increased as a result. Other LEPC-6 topics covered included US Army Corps of Engineers dam failure response and evacuation planning; U.S. EPA Tier II training workshop; Northeast K9 Search and Rescue demonstration; a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Critical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards presentation; and a site visit with Green Mountain
Railroad, among several others. WRC staff and the LEPC-6 chair together attended the New Hampshire Hazmat Conference.

- In conjunction with partners from the University of Massachusetts, WRC developed a Municipal Guidance for Flood Emergencies document specific for Vermont towns. This document details important steps and considerations to be made before a flooding event, during response, and in recovery. It will soon be made available electronically and in hard copy.

- The WRC serves as the local liaison to communicate damage to and needs of towns to the State during disasters. WRC staff, in conjunction with the regional ANR River Management Engineers and VTrans Districts 1 and 2, created a damage reporting/situational awareness protocol that will expedite the gathering of accurate information from towns with the goal of minimizing duplicate requests for information.

- WRC developed revised model floodplain bylaws which incorporate the new state river corridor requirements for our towns with or without zoning.

- WRC developed an Evacuation Plan template for use by our towns. DEMHS will be adding this as a new appendix in the 2017 LEOP.

- Two WRC staff participated in the Vigilant Guard state-wide exercise. They assumed roles within the State Emergency Operations Center.

- Participated in and presented at a National Disaster Recovery Framework Economic Resilience Workshop organized by FEMA and the U.S. Economic Development Administration held at the Kostas Research Institute at Northeastern University.

- Executive Director, Chris Campany was elected to serve as the vice chair of the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- WRC GIS staff provided support to the Transportation Planning Initiative for all culvert inventories, sign inventories, parking inventories, traffic counts, park and ride counts, and bike/ped counts.

- Town plan maps were updated for Athens, Dover, Dummerston, Londonderry, Townshend, Wilmington, and Winhall. Zoning map updates were done for Marlboro, Stratton, and Wilmington.

- Assisted the Village Center renewal process for three towns by assisting with new or updated village center maps: Newfane (3 villages), Vernon (1 village), and Westminster
(4 villages). In addition, a proposed downtown district revision map for Wilmington was created.

- Participated in two 12-hour shifts at the State Emergency Operations Center for the Vigilant Guard emergency exercise hosted by the Vermont Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

- Worked on a state-wide project for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to map all state register historic districts and complexes (18 in the Windham Region).

- WRC continues to further efforts to improve the status of digital parcel data in the region. We provided advice to 3 towns on their parcel data, and gathered updated data from 3 towns, which were processed to match state guidelines, provided to VCGI for public distribution, and posted KML files on WRCs web site for access to those with no GIS capabilities. We also hosted a Statewide Parcel Mapping Program meeting, which representatives from 18 of the region’s 27 towns attended.

- WRC continues to support towns in their efforts to update their flood regulations and incorporate river corridor protection. We provided maps and analysis of the impacts of such protection to Guilford, Jamaica, Marlboro, Whittingham, and Wilmington.

- WRC continues to provide mapping assistance to numerous commissions, agencies, and organizations in the region, including the Guilford and Rockingham Conservation Commissions, a regional gathering of conservation commissions (presentation), the West Brattleboro Association, Windham Solid Waste Management District, Jacksonville EZ Riders Snowmobile Club, and the Windham County State’s Attorney’s office.

- GIS staff continue to provide support for transportation-related inventory and mapping work. We updated culvert inventories and/or maps for Halifax, Rockingham, Stratton, Weston, and Wilmington, sign inventories for Brookline, Guilford, Readsboro, Vernon, and Wilmington, and road erosion inventories for Halifax, Grafton, Stratton, Westminster, and Weston.

- WRC began efforts to provide support for our communities regarding trails and recreation paths. At the request of the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation, we began an effort to input local trails into the TrailFinder web site. We have met with Vernon and Readsboro regarding trails, updated trail maps for three towns and one local trail organization, and attended the Vermont Community Development Association’s annual meeting on trails and economic development.

- Updated road centerline data and road maps for Halifax, Londonderry, Rockingham, Westminster, and Weston.

- Created maps for Brookline, Dover, Readsboro and Wilmington for their transportation grant applications.

- In an effort to ensure all medium-sized bridges and culverts in the state are inventoried, verified data for eight towns in the region.
• Provided support for regional and town Energy Planning, including reviewing statewide data sets for compliance with Vermont Public Service Department energy planning standards.
• Updated the Regional Profile to include data on race and ethnicity.
• Provide E911 support to Marlboro, Somerset, Townshend, and Weston.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

• The WRC has continued work with the Windham Wood Heat Initiative by taking over project management and grant administration. The program is helping 6 institutions (4 schools and 2 public serving institutions) switch to modern wood heating systems with technical and financial assistance. The program is also working with modern wood heating systems which are in need of upgrades or fixes. Several more projects are voicing interest in or are getting underway with the conversion. The program continues to be advised by strong local partner organizations. The funding for this $1.6 million project is through the Clean Energy Development Fund (CEDF) which was made possible through the state’s settlement agreement with Entergy Vermont Yankee.
• WRC was granted $400,000 through the CEDF to create the Windham County Renewable Energy Program, through which the WRC has awarded 5 grants. The projects awarded went to 3 solar installations, a combined heat and power generator, and a feasibility study assessing the viability of a large-scale anaerobic digester. We anticipate we will be able to offer a second round of grants with approximately $300,000 available for renewable energy projects.
• The WRC participated along with the other RPCs in the process of comprehensive regional energy planning as outlined in Act 174. The WRC hosted several public meetings, trainings, and stakeholder events as part of its development of a Regional Energy Plan draft that’s been submitted to the Public Service Department for comment.
• The WRC worked with 3 towns (Londonderry, Westminster and Vernon) on the development of their Act 174-compliant town plan energy elements. This was a pilot program to develop materials and best practices for aiding the remaining municipalities as they move forward with energy planning. This involved the development of an energy element template, preparation and explanation of detailed energy use and
target conservation and generation data, as well as resource maps for each of the towns.

- WRC continued to serve as a communication conduit to the legislature and Governor’s administration for its 12 towns that contain TransCanada power generation facilities, lakes, lands, recreational facilities and flowage rights. These holdings, which total more than 20,000 acres within the region, were the subject of a sale between TransCanada and Great River Hydro.

**WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Coordinated with the Commission’s Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) to develop a method for prioritizing projects outlined in the region’s Tactical Basin Plan for Basins 11-13. In coordination with the region’s DEC Watershed Coordinator and the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (WCNRCD), the CWAC identified a short list of high-priority projects in the West, Williams, Saxtons River, and Connecticut River direct watersheds.

- Led a collaborative partnership that supported the launch of the Green River Watershed Alliance (GRWA), which is composed of municipal representatives from towns within the watershed, landowners, conservation commissions, local arts organizations, and conservation groups. The GRWA had applied for and been awarded funding from the High Meadows Fund Watershed Resilience grant.

- Coordinated with other RPC’s to develop a prioritization method to score water quality projects in DEC Tactical Basin plans.

- Successfully assisted with enrollment of 18 towns in the Grants in Aid Pilot Program to proactively reimburse towns for road drainage improvements that bring hydrologically-connected road segments up to fully-meeting the Municipal Roads General Permit standards.

- Participated in various collaborative efforts, including continued work within and support of the Saxtons River Watershed Collaborative, helping to create grant materials for the Connecticut River Conservancy’s application to pursue extended landowner outreach within the Deerfield River watershed, working with the Vermont Rivers Conservancy on pursuing river conservation easements on the Green River and Whetstone Brooks, and working with the DEC Watershed Coordinator to begin a database inventory of water quality projects in the region.
• Developed a position for, and created plans to host an ECO AmeriCorps Service Member in the role of “Water Quality Planning Associate.” In collaboration with the Connecticut River Conservancy, the DEC Watershed Coordinator, and the WCNRCD, this position will take part within the other partnering organizations to develop a comprehensive view of water quality planning in Vermont.

• Continued to work on previous Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP)-supported efforts, including the Adams Brook stream bed restoration project in Newfane and the berm removal on the Gorman property on the Green River in Guilford. Submitted two ERP applications; for an advanced geomorphic compatibility study of road structures in Grafton, and for implementation of the Adams Brook streambed restoration.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

• Continued collaboration with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, and our counterparts in NH and MA, to address the economic impacts of the closure of Vermont Yankee. This year’s projects included a summary of the economic development strategies of the three regions and areas where they converge and diverge, and a white paper titled “When People and Money Leave (and the Plant Stays) – Lessons Learned from the Closure of the Vermont Yankee Power Station: A Tri-Region Experience.” This convening was supported by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (U.S. EDA) and the National Association of Development Organizations. This group also made successful application to the U.S. EDA through a grant initiated by the BDCC to support its business incubator and accelerator projects to explore common ground in our respective economic development strategies, opportunities for collaboration, and lessons learned for other nuclear host regions.

• WRC continues to make the case at the Federal level for the substantive inclusion of host communities in the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s policymaking process that is creating nuclear power plant decommissioning policy, as well as the U.S. Department of Energy’s consideration of a consent-based spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste siting initiative.

• Actively engaged as a member of the Vermont Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel, which was created by the legislature to advise state agencies, the Governor, the Legislature and others about matters related to the decommissioning of Vermont Yankee.
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

Virtually all of the WRC’s revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines and/or performance measures. This means that the WRC has limited control over how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through town assessments is the exception, which makes this funding stream particularly important because it gives us the greatest latitude to respond to WRC-identified needs in the region. Town assessments, and the funding received through the WRC’s performance contract with the state, are also necessary to provide matching funds required by grantors. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires matching funds, and typically non-federal matching funds. Required match ranges from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant).

The WRC has a single audit on an annual basis. For FY 2016, as in past years, there were no findings.

The WRC has adopted a Municipal Services Policy that is intended to provide guidance for the Commission in the delivery of professional services to member municipalities. It describes technical assistance available to member towns as part of the commission's core activities, and the opportunities for expanded service when funded as a special project.