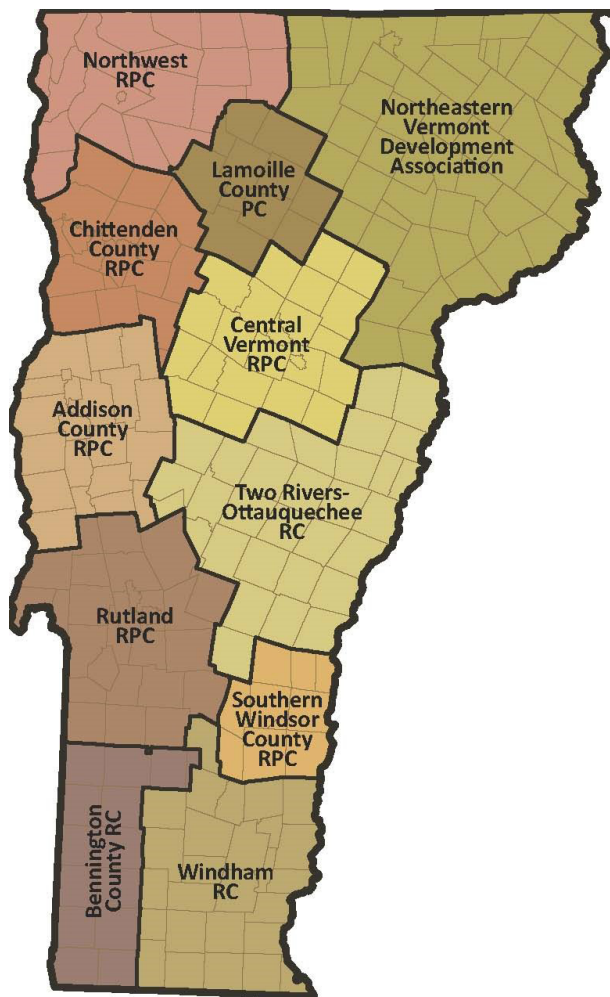




FISCAL YEAR 2020

Annual Report



52 Portland Street, 2nd Floor, PO Box 1637, Morrisville, VT 05661

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Addison County Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) serves 21 municipalities within Addison County. ACRPC 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 population of the municipality, to represent the municipality’s interest on ACRPC’s Board. Additionally, ACRPC’s Board accommodates 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, which review various aspects of the Commission’s business. Commissioners serve on these committees and make recommendations for action to the full Commission. All of 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 work program.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as cost-effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Of the 21 towns served by ACRPC, only Middlebury employs a full-time planner. All other communities rely on volunteer planning commissions aided and supplemented by ACRPC’s staff or outside consultants. ACRPC’s work in recent years has focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), modernizing bylaws, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development, flood resiliency planning and forest block and habitat connector mapping and policy. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential to ensure a smooth state and local permitting process. 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 worked with the Towns of Bristol, to re-write their municipal plans.
- ACRPC helped the Towns of Bristol, Shoreham and Waltham amend their regulations to include DRBs and subdivision regulations. It also helped Cornwall draft new zoning regulations to implement their plan.
- ACRPC provided technical support to all Zoning Administrators within the Region and held Zoning Administrator Roundtables.
- ACRPC conducted municipal consultations in Leicester, Salisbury, Monkton and Weybridge.
- ACRPC helped the Towns of Orwell and Shoreham to apply and receive Village Center Designations.
- ACRPC worked with the Towns of Shoreham and Ferrisburgh to secure 2020 municipal planning grants (MPGs). Both of these MPG projects stem from their communities’ desire for increased housing options within and adjacent to existing village centers. The goal of the Shoreham project is to envision and design a development that could support affordable housing, small commercial and recreational uses on the Farnham property, a 300-acre parcel immediately adjacent to the village center. In Ferrisburgh, the project aims to illustrate growth scenarios

within existing centers, to help visualize what increased density could look like. This exercise will serve as a tool to inform work on the current zoning update.

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.

This year ACRPC spent significant amounts of time working to revise the Population and Housing and Economic Development Sections of its Regional Plan. In the Housing Section, ACRPC implements its Plan's goals by assisting communities with access to resources and funding opportunities to address their housing needs. ACRPC assisted the local volunteer planning commissions in Orwell and Shoreham to apply for and receive Village Center Designation. These communities view this accomplishment as a first step towards revitalizing their village centers, increasing opportunities for housing and promoting economic development. A significant portion of the Housing plans goals focus on downtowns and village centers.

In Middlebury, ACRPC continued to serve as the Municipal Project Manager on several community infrastructure projects creating sidewalks or shared use paths to tie neighborhoods and industrial areas to downtown Middlebury. ACRPC also completed a Lake Champlain Basin Program Grant to create a plan to improve wastewater and stormwater infrastructure in the Town of Bristol. ACRPC participated in the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods project this year and is incorporating the resulting guide, Enabling Better Places into its work. Please see Economic and Community Development and Special Projects for more details.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. RPCs have performed environmental site assessments on brownfield locations throughout the state. Environmental site assessments allow properties, and formerly degraded properties, to be sold, remediated (if needed), 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 can work with its member municipalities and ANR to address brownfield issues on an ad hoc basis.

ECONOMIC & 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 to achieve long term economic gain.

- ACRPC continued to work with the Town of Bristol to support increased development within its Village Planning Area by supporting implementation of the Stoney Hill Master Plan. 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 economic growth of this area.

- ACRPC completed work with VTrans and the City of Vergennes to study and find solutions for the issues created by heavy truck traffic within the City Center. The study proposed some interim traffic calming measures on Main Street which began implementation in 2020 and will be completed in the beginning of FY 2021.
- ACRPC works with the Addison County Climate Economy Action Center to coordinate and advertise events.
- ACRPC is working jointly with the Addison County Economic Development Corporation to create a Regional Economic Development plan that will serve as a portion of the Regional Plan and also serve as the Plan for the Economic Development Corporation. ACRPC also worked with ACEDC to support several grant applications for local businesses.
- ACRPC is working with the Town of Shoreham to plan for the redevelopment of the Farnham Parcel, a 300-acre town owned property bordering its village to the north.

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 (TAC). 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. RPCs help fulfill five transportation planning objectives. The Objectives and ACRPC's work under each are listed below.

Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

a. Toward this end, ACRPC held 10 TAC meetings, which included participation from 29 different people representing 15 of the Region's communities.

b. ACRPC also assisted with project meetings on 14 separate projects or planning topics. These included:

- A pedestrian access study in Bristol
- Walk Bike Council and 2020 Walk Bike Summit, Triangle Bike Loop
- Recommendations for intersection signage in Salisbury
- Road Foremen Meetings
- Middlebury Tunnel replacement, Middlebury Better Connections
- Tri-Valley Transit, E&D Committee

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

ACRPC hosts the current regional transportation plan, adopted in July 2018. It uses this plan to inform its participation in both Act 250 and Title 30, Section 248. Last year ACRPC filed transportation-specific comments in Tractor Supply's Act 250 hearing. ACRPC also participated extensively in Tri Valley Transits planning committees and activities. ACRPC staff served on the Executive, Finance, Development, Nominating, Area Operating and E&D Committees. ACRPC assisted VTrans and Tri Valley Transit in

surveying TVT's elderly and disabled users. Lastly, ACRPC's TAC worked to Prioritize VTrans projects within the Region.

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

ACRPC spent approximately seventy-eight percent (87%) of its transportation budget helping its member municipalities. Activities included road foremen meetings for 13 of its member towns, assisting municipalities with eleven transportation related grants, conducting municipal transportation inventories in six communities, conducting six municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies; helping six communities write or implement the transportation sections of their town plans and conducting 10 road erosion inventories in support of the Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP). This program supports water quality with improved road infrastructure.

Objective #4: Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

ACRPC conducted 49 separate data collection activities for VTrans. Work included collecting "Complete Streets" data, traffic counts, two Park and Ride Counts and MIRE work.

Objective #5: Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

ACRPC participated in outreach to communities following extreme weather events. This work included assistance to Weybridge, Starksboro, New Haven and Bridport in responding to road closures and reporting for FEMA Halloween storm disaster.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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 assist with updating floodplain bylaws, creating FEMA-qualified hazard mitigation plans, coordinating updates to municipal emergency plans and providing as needed assistance in special circumstances and declared disasters.

- Fifteen of the twenty-one municipalities in the Region (71%) currently have a hazard mitigation plan (LHMP) either adopted or under review.
- Twenty of twenty-one of municipalities in the Region (95%) currently have an annually updated local emergency management plan (LEMP).
- ACRPC worked with Bristol and Cornwall to update and incorporate river corridor and flood hazard maps into their town plans.
- Staff attended the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference to learn and bring local perspective to the discussions.
- ACRPC hosted trainings for local officials in hazardous materials reporting, local emergency management, and incident command systems. Each workshop improved local communities and agencies ability to respond to disasters.
- Staff assisted in the coordination of the Addison County Emergency Planning Committee. At monthly meetings, ACRPC helped coordinate a regional response to disasters and identification of hazardous materials stored throughout the county.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis services in support of their projects.

- ACRPC's mapping program supports nearly every planning function it performs. Every municipal plan, enhanced energy plan or zoning bylaw created contains maps produced by ACRPC.
- ACRPC continued to use its award winning FREDI app it created to support the data gathering efforts its transportation program 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 of municipal facilities, transportation networks, and natural resources.

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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 worked with five new municipalities within its region to help them revise their local energy plans (Whiting, Bristol, Vergennes, New Haven and Shoreham) 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 continues to support previous town energy plans (Leicester, Salisbury, Ripton, Weybridge, Monkton and Panton) and work with them through the local designation process towards adoption.
- ACRPC supported many solar arrays in the Region that met the criteria it created for siting solar facilities.
- ACRPC organized four roundtables for municipal energy coordinators and energy committees, and provided support for Button-Up Vermont activities and materials distribution.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the required watershed basin plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning efforts and regulations, which result in water quality improvements, riverine habitat 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 "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.
- ACRPC worked with ANR's Basin Planner to help update the Otter Creek Tactical Basin Plan to incorporate the municipal data and projects undertaken since the previous plan.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

RPCs Work on a number of unique projects each year. Examples at ACRPC include:

- ACRPC began work to organize the Addison County Communications Union district to bring broadband services to underserved populations throughout the county. It wrote and secured a Broadband Innovation Grant to conduct a feasibility Study for broadband in the region and to create a business plan to operate the ACCUD. It also began recruiting members communities to join the ACCUD.
- ACRPC served as the municipal project manager on three sidewalk/shared use path improvement projects within the Towns of Middlebury, Weybridge and Lincoln. These projects enhance popular walking route that connects downtowns with other portions of town. The Exchange Street Sidewalk project is in the process of procuring rights of way. Construction was completed on the Pulp Mill Bridge/Seymour Street sidewalk in August 2019. The Lincoln sidewalk planning study looks at connections between the village and school.
- ACRPC served as the host for monthly meetings of Conservation Commission representatives pursuing reclassification of all or part of the Otter Creek wetland complex as a Class I wetland. ACRPC provided maps and mailing information for communicating with area landowners.

-

ADMINISTRATION & 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 2020 fiscal year, ACRPC's total revenue of approximately \$699,000 dollars was derived from 91 percent state and federal grants supporting regional projects, 3 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 ACRPC received 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 streams particularly important. Such funding provides 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 ACRPC receives enables the commission to work with represented towns on improvements in sectors 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 2019, its most recent audit, there were no significant findings, which is the same result found in audits conducted in past years. ACRPC's audit for FY 2020 will be completed by December 2020.

'AT WORK' MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the ACRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

ACRPC at Work: FY 2020



Projects

- Bridge and Culvert Inventory
- Clean Water Activities
- Enhanced Energy Planning
- Emergency Planning
- Grant Writing
- Economic Development
- Mapping
- Planning and Zoning Assistance
- Road Erosion Inventory
- Transportation Planning Assistance/Traffic Count

Designation

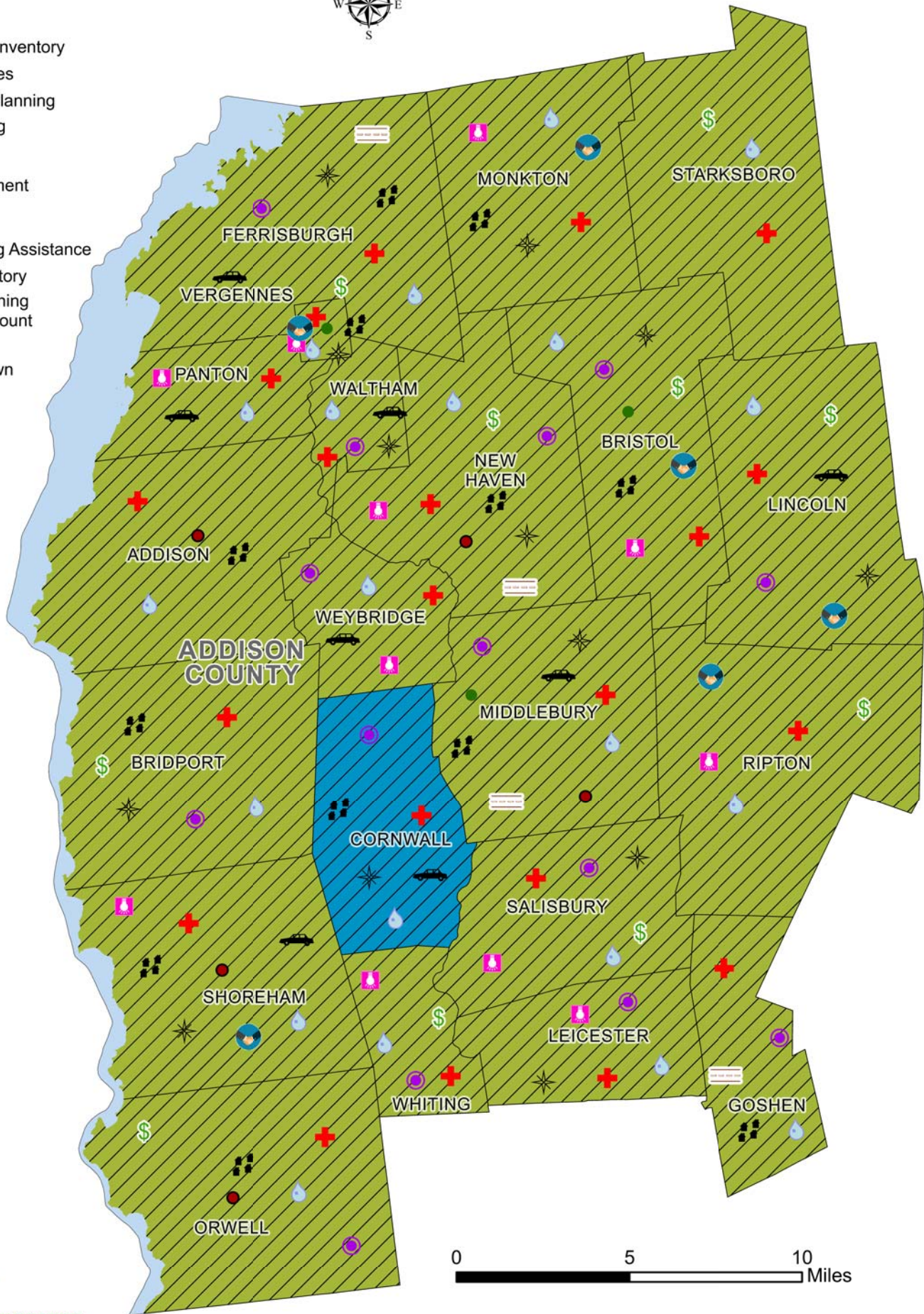
- Designated Downtown
- Designated Village

Town Bylaw Status

- Adopted

Town Plan Status

- Current
- Expired



0 5 10 Miles



Addison County
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Bennington County Regional Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) was created by the seventeen towns and villages it serves, and works with an 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 eight full-time and one part-time staff and supervises a full-time Americorps VISTA. 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, and solid waste planning and management.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & 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 worked with the Village of North Bennington and the towns of Pownal, Stamford, and Shaftsbury to develop updates to their municipal plans. The plans for Stamford, Manchester, Arlington, Pownal, and Glastenbury were amended to be consistent with "Act 174" energy planning standards. All plans are reviewed for conformance with statutory requirements, and implementation projects are clearly delineated.
- BCRC staff worked closely with Arlington, Stamford, and Pownal on comprehensive revisions to their land use regulations, including provisions to encourage mixed uses and higher density housing in designated areas and to promote economic development. The BCRC also has worked with the Town of Bennington to revise its land use regulations for districts within its designated growth center to rely more heavily on form-based standards and to encourage development patterns more in keeping with Town Plan goals. The Bennington project also provided all of the information needed for a Neighborhood Development Area designation.

- The BCRC continued to support downtown, village center, and neighborhood development area designations. Those designations have been particularly helpful in supporting alignment of planning goals and local regulations and in securing critical historic preservation and downtown/village center tax credits and grants in Bennington (Putnam Block redevelopment), Manchester Village (restoration of former public library to be repurposed as a restaurant), and Rupert (preservation and reuse of the historic Sheldon Store).
- The BCRC is actively participating in the community-led “Arlington Area Renewal Project,” involving the towns of Arlington, Sandgate, and Sunderland. The BCRC has participated in a housing forum, planning for redevelopment of the East Arlington Village area, reuse of the former Catholic Church land and buildings, and discussions about village wastewater options.
- 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 plans for redevelopment. Construction of the first phase of that project, involving site work and renovations of historic buildings, is nearing completion with commercial and residential occupancy expected over the next few months. The BCRC is supporting the next two phases of this project, consisting of new commercial and residential buildings along Main Street and Washington Street.
- The BCRC is reviewing all town and village land use regulations to identify potential ways to support more housing and mixed-use development in village centers and surrounding neighborhoods. The recommendations are being informed by the recently published ACCD/CNU Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods.
- 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 topics including: procedures for land use administrators, boards, and commissions; planning for housing and introduction to housing programs and organizations; climate change considerations for local communities; local food and agriculture in the Bennington region; regional economic development initiatives; biomass heating systems; village center pedestrian planning; use of local plans in the Section 248 process; visualization tools for land use planning; local implementation of tactical basic plans; the Transportation and Climate Initiative; and energy efficiency incentives. Representatives from each municipality attended at least one of the training sessions.
- BCRC has updated its website format and content to better serve its municipalities. An interactive events calendar, up-to-date meeting agendas and minutes, and centralized source for municipal and regional documents has helped keep commissioners engaged in the BCRC’s work. In addition, the BCRC added a new COVID-19 Response resource section to the website with background data and information as well as links related to: municipal resources, food security, economic and business support programs and grants, school and childcare issues, community and individual needs, and volunteer opportunities.

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 2017, 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 two 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 the Southern Vermont Economic Development Strategy), emergency management (grant funding obtained to support specific municipal hazard mitigation planning work), energy planning (a comprehensive regional energy plan with policies and targeted actions for conservation and efficiency as well as renewable energy resource 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 several 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. The BCRC and its partner organizations across southern Vermont have initiated several projects directed specifically toward providing technical and grant support for businesses and local governments impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 2018 through 2021 fiscal years. The Commission has identified sites that would benefit from assessments, provided information on brownfield redevelopment, and monitored redevelopment of sites that have been assessed in the past. BCRC staff advises owners of several potential brownfield sites in anticipation of future Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments. The BCRC coordinates a Brownfields committee that prioritizes sites for assessment and clean-up planning.

Brownfield sites participating in Phase I or II assessments, corrective action plans, or other follow-up work during the past year include:

- Tuttle and adjacent Bennington Brush properties in Downtown Bennington: completed Phase I and II – properties sold; Corrective Action Plan developed and approved. Redevelopment potential for retail, residential uses.
- Putnam Block (Bennington Downtown) – Corrective Action Plan being implemented to pursue mixed use redevelopment of historic downtown block. A project-specific \$500,000 Brownfield redevelopment grant was awarded for Phase II of this project.
- Pownal Transfer Station/Landfill: Phase I E.S.A. was performed on behalf of a potential solar developer. The BCRC also paid for the development of the proposal to perform a Phase II E.S.A., and assisted the town in applying for a grant to pay for the Phase II E.S.A.
- Arlington Church Property: Phase I and II E.S.A. to facilitate acquisition of this property, located near the center of Arlington Village, by a local nonprofit organization. Future reuse is expected to include cultural and recreational facilities for the community.
- The BCRC provided funding and project management, in cooperation with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, for a petroleum assessment at the former St. Joseph's College in Rutland, where the community is investigating options for reuse of certain buildings and land.
- Energizer Factory Complex – This facility is in the process of ceasing manufacturing operations and will become available for redevelopment. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has secured a Brownfields area-wide planning grant that the Town and the BCRC will combine with other grant funds to complete a study and assessment of reuse potential.
- Ideal Fuels, the Benmont Mill lot, Bradford Commons, and the Johnson Controls lot - all in Bennington's Growth Center - have been identified as potential future assessment sites.

ECONOMIC & 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 to implement 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 facilitates a Regional Economic Development (RED) group that integrates regional needs and opportunities into the Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), recently completed in cooperation with the Windham Region.

The BCRC has helped identify regional priority projects based on the CEDS and continues to support implementation of the SoVermont Sustainable Marketing and Recruitment program.

- The BCRC has continued to work with the Bennington Redevelopment Group, the Town of Bennington, and BCIC to undertake a major development project involving historic buildings and vacant land in the center of Bennington's downtown. An innovative funding strategy has leveraged private investment, tax credits, a Community Development Block Grant, and a Tax Increment Financing District to underpin the project. Construction of Phase I (restoration and redevelopment of the historic buildings) began in the past year as planning continued for new mixed use and residential structures (Phases II and III). As noted above, the BCRC recently initiated a similar effort involving planning for redevelopment of an industrial complex, and has facilitated discussions about reuse of the recently closed Southern Vermont College campus.
- The BCRC is continuing its efforts to support workforce development through regular consultation with businesses and educational institutions, conducting outreach and educational programs in cooperation the regional Workforce & Education Committee.
- The strong emphasis on state designation programs described above has been used to support economic development planning and initiatives in several communities, including Arlington where a key focus has been the need for additional housing for the community's growing workforce. The need for new/improved infrastructure, especially wastewater, has been the focus of attention in Arlington and several other village centers. Recent BCRC-supported designations have enabled acquisition of over \$300,000 in grant and tax credit funding for redevelopment projects in Bennington, Rupert, and Manchester Village.
- Additional economic development grant support resulted in substantial funding to local communities for development of affordable housing and downtown redevelopment projects.
- 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.
- The BCRC has supported the formation and work of the Southern Vermont Communication Union District, providing fiscal management and staff support for efforts to expand access to broadband in rural areas throughout the region.
- COVID-19 response work has included outreach and support for more than 400 businesses; to date, over \$5.4 million in state economic recovery grants have been received by area businesses and nonprofits.

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 past year's accomplishments as they relate to the BCRC's TPI work program include:

Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

- The BCRC's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met regularly during the past year. The TAC consists of 12 members and 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. A new Bike-Ped TAC focuses specifically on bicycle and pedestrian issues and to oversee projects. BCRC staff and the TAC reviewed and participated in the development of the new VTrans project prioritization system.
- Provided direct outreach to each town and village regarding codes and standards, hazard mitigation planning, erosion control and stormwater management, and related funding and financial considerations.
- Organized and participated in road foreman/commissioner meetings, focusing on the municipal roads general permit and culvert sizing/installation, and related water quality and system resilience issues.
- Participated in development of projects involving bicycle and pedestrian system connectivity and streetscape improvements in Bennington, Arlington, Manchester, and Dorset. Led an effort to identify impediments to timely development of bike-ped projects and to identify solutions.
- BCRC staff has participated in planning for intersection safety improvements, with a special focus on the VT 67A corridor in the area of Silk Road and Bennington College Road and VT 7A in Manchester Village.
- The BCRC conducted outreach to encourage participation in the annual Way to Go commuter challenge.
- The BCRC is participating in implementation of the Transportation Resilience Planning Tool by applying those techniques to the Batten Kill watershed.

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- The BCRC continued to work with VTrans, local officials, regional economic development organizations, and local businesses to support the new "Shires Connector" bus link to the Amtrak station in Rensselaer from Manchester and Bennington, and has initiated conversations with Green Mountain Community Network and several Northshire towns regarding service needs and opportunities in rural communities.
- The BCRC participated in the review of two major Act 250 projects. Transportation issues included intersection safety and pedestrian access in Manchester Village and driveway access and truck traffic in Manchester.
- The BCRC has worked to integrate energy plans with TPI program objectives and is coordinating a statewide effort to support implementation of local and regional energy plans. In addition, the BCRC has organized events focusing on electric vehicles (cars and bikes) and automated vehicle technology.
- The BCRC has participated in discussions of the Transportation Climate Initiative and helped schedule outreach meetings in our region and in coordination with state agencies and other regional planning commissions.

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- Provided support for Municipal Road stormwater management and flood resilience planning and implementation in 15 municipalities.
- North Bennington: Project management for a new village center sidewalk and repairs to the historic rail depot building (construction completed and projects closed out this year).

- Bennington: Ongoing planning and project management for the Willowbrook-Applegate Path in Bennington, the “Ninja Trail” design-build project, and the Benmont Streetscape improvements project in Bennington. The Kocher Drive-US 7 crossing and multi-use pathway project was advanced to construction and has recently been completed.
- Manchester: Participation as a steering team member and technical resource for the Manchester bikepath project.
- Manchester Village: Assessment of the VT 7A/West Road/Seminary Avenue intersection, while also outlining a process to complete a walkable village center plan.
- Dorset: BCRC staff has helped integrate elements of a planning study into a Route 30 paving project and a new town-funded walkway extending south from Dorset Village. The BCRC also is working with the Town to extend the Manchester bikepath to the Dorset School and to identify appropriate improvements to extend the link further along Route 30 to Dorset Village.
- Arlington: Managing the construction phase of a safe walking route to link the Arlington Recreation Park to the Village Center and the Arlington Public Schools.
- BCRC staff completed a draft report on a potential a multi-use path along a historic trolley line from Bennington to Williamstown, MA. Commission staff worked cooperatively with the towns and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Historic alignments, ownership, and environmental issues have been documented.

| Performance Indicator | Objective 1 | BCRC |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| | Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities | |
| A | # of TAC meetings held | 7 |
| B | # of non-municipal TAC members actively engaged in transportation planning | 18 |
| C | # of municipalities actively engaged in transportation planning | 16 |
| D | # of RPC coordination activities with municipalities and VTrans | 4 |
| | Objective 2 | |
| | Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning | |
| E | # of regional transportation plans that are current (within 8 years) | 1 |
| F | # of Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation | 1 |
| G | # of Section 248 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation | 0 |
| H | # of coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers | 3 |
| I | # of VTrans committees that involves RPC staff participation | 0 |
| J | # of regions participating in Project Prioritization | 1 |
| | Objective 3 | |
| | Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities | |
| K | # of municipalities participating in road foreman meetings annually | 14 |
| L | # of municipalities assisted with transportation related grants | 5 |
| M | % of budget spent on municipal technical assistance | 65% |
| N | # of municipal transportation inventories conducted | 1 |
| O | # of municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken | 3 |
| P | # of municipalities assisted with transportation element of municipal/town plan | 4 |
| Q | # of road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and using other fun | 5 |
| | Objective 4 | |
| | Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long Range Transportation Plans | |
| R | # of data collection activities conducted specifically for VTrans | 4 |
| | Objective 5 | |
| | Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education | |
| | See Performance Indicator/Objective descriptions | BCRC conducted outreach to promote the Transportation Climate Initiative, including public meetings and newspaper articles and op-eds. |

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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 Management Plans (LEMPs). BCRC staff worked one-on-one with municipalities that requested extra assistance and held two LEMP training sessions.
- The BCRC provides support for development and updates to municipal hazard mitigation plans. The BCRC assisted with preliminary reviews or updates to eleven municipal hazard mitigation plans. Flood resiliency and stormwater actions, assessments of threats from forest insect pests, and economic development planning relevant to hazard mitigation are considered as part of the planning process.
- The BCRC provided assistance with revisions and updates to flood hazard area planning documents and regulations through plan and bylaw updates; municipalities supported included Shaftsbury, North Bennington, Pownal, Woodford, Stamford, Arlington, and Sunderland.
- Ongoing support for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is provided by BCRC staff; focus areas during the past year included: coordinating regular meetings, facilitating presentations on emergency planning and response, scheduling emergency management trainings, collecting damage reports following hazardous weather events, and hosting ICS trainings. Meeting topics included: local emergency management plan preparation, fire department and hazard materials training, continuation of operations planning, and emergency shelters – modifications during the COVID-19 period.
- BCRC staff is on the local MRC Committee and participated in their medication distribution exercise.
- The BCRC was activated to serve its local liaison function several times during the year and helped towns with severe damage with the process of applying for FEMA funding. Ongoing liaison function has been provided during the COVID-19 state of emergency.
- The BCRC worked on a vulnerability study and GIS layer of critical facilities. Information from local emergency plans was consolidated into a single document that will be available to use in all future town plans and emergency management documents.
- Provided coordination for regional COVID-19 response. Developed and publicized a COVID-19 section to the BCRC website, provided assistance to municipalities, nonprofits, and other critical service providers in the areas of state pandemic guidelines, training opportunities, and grant funding.

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:

- Renewable energy resource maps showing locations with high potential for renewable energy development as well as areas with significant constraints to development for the towns of Dorset, Stamford, Pownal, Manchester, Arlington, and Shaftsbury.
- River corridor mapping to support resiliency planning including depiction of new flood hazard areas, and maps to support watershed planning and development of river corridor regulations.
- New maps to support municipal plan updates in North Bennington, Pownal, Manchester Village, Dorset, and Arlington. Mapping of proposed adjustments to zoning bylaw revisions were completed for Arlington, Pownal, Stamford, and Bennington.
- Various maps and geographic analyses were completed in support of the Bennington downtown redevelopment project, and to support assessment of community use and reuse of the Southern Vermont College campus.
- Maps to support recreation park improvements in Bennington, development and improvement of bike-ped facilities/systems in Bennington, Dorset, Arlington, and Manchester, and maps of regional outdoor recreation facilities including the BATS trail network.
- Mapping of municipal bridges, culverts, and road segments related to stormwater management and municipal road general permits.
- Village center, downtown, and growth center maps to support designations and renewals.
- Assessments of demographic and business trends to support Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone programs.

ENERGY CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunities 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 the past year, the BCRC has worked with several towns to develop new enhanced municipal energy plans that are consistent with Act 174 standards. This work has involved providing energy use and future energy demand projections to towns, identifying local strategies to reduce total energy use and improve energy efficiency, and mapping possible sites for renewable energy development in each municipality. Adopted and approved plans will be used to represent municipalities' positions on applications for new generation projects before the Public Utility Commission. Plans for Bennington, Dorset, Sunderland, Stamford, Arlington, Pownal, Manchester, Manchester village, and Glastenbury have been completed, with three others in the local hearing/approval process or being drafted. The BCRC issues affirmative Determinations of Energy Compliance to a municipality when it is determined that the plan is consistent with Act 174 planning standards.
- The BCRC presented on the progress of Act 174 regional and municipal energy planning at various meetings and conferences throughout the state and region.
- The BCRC worked with Efficiency Vermont and the other RPCs to develop a program to support implementation of energy plans at the local and regional level. The BCRC actively participated

in the development of regional work plans and reporting systems, held workshops, webinars, and developed information sheets on energy efficiency topics while coordinating work with each of the state's eleven regional planning commissions.

- The BCRC worked with the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN) and other organizations to support the region's seven local energy committees. Those committees have cooperated with workshops, press releases, and in preparing for annual events like Button-Up Vermont and a Window Dressers initiative.
- The BCRC organized and hosted a well-attended forum focusing on climate change and the importance of local action. The BCRC organized workshops/events on: electric vehicles, net zero-energy modular homes, Public Utility Commission procedures, residential wood heating, town energy data, the Transportation and Climate Initiative, energy-efficient building technologies, heat pumps, GMP and EVT incentive programs, and e-bikes.
- The BCRC reviews and comments on proposals for new renewable energy development in the region and participates in most Section 248 proceedings. The regional energy committee reviewed three solar projects with a combined capacity of approximately 3 MW. The BCRC's energy and development review committees meet with developers and invites local officials to participate in discussions of possible new projects.

WATERSHED PLANNING & 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.

- Assisted VT ANR with outreach on the Basin 1 Tactical Plan and integrated recommendations into local hazard mitigation plans, projects, and land use plans and regulations.
- Identified actions related to river protection outlined in adopted Hazard Mitigation Plans and integrated that information into ANR's projects database for future funding allocation.
- Prepared tables characterizing flood and fluvial erosion hazard mitigation projects and drafted language for use of the tables in resiliency elements of municipal plans.
- Created and updated town river corridor maps for the Batten Kill, Walloomsac, Hoosic, and Mettawee watersheds; assisted with the development and adoption of municipal river corridor regulations.
- BCRC staff attended monthly meetings of the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance and the Bennington County Conservation District and assisted with their education and water quality improvement projects. Supported work on a project to assess and remediate obstacles to passages for aquatic organisms in the Green River watershed.
- The BCRC worked with the Batten Kill Watershed Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association (CISMA) to identify and treat invasive species in selected areas of the watershed and to identify areas in need of revegetation. Plantings of native trees were completed along key river segments, with additional sites identified and approved for future plantings.
- The BCRC worked directly with most towns and villages in the region to identify, implement, and verify completion of "Grants-in-Aid" water quality improvements to hydrologically connected segments of local highways.
- The BCRC coordinated stormwater master planning projects and completed several municipal road erosion inventories.

- Supported implementation of the Lye Brook berm removal project in Manchester and coordinated planning for remediating a landslide adjacent to the Green River in Sandgate.

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 coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a change in priorities and practices in many BCRC programs, and a number of special activities have been implemented specifically to address individual, municipal, and business impacts related to the crisis.

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:

- Two household hazardous waste collection events in the Alliance service area.
- Education and outreach to schools, municipalities, solid waste service providers, and the general public to increase recycling and organics management/composting and reduce levels of trash sent to landfills. BCRC organized residential composting workshops and sold almost four hundred compost bins and receptacles.
- Outreach to forty businesses, housing management companies, and schools to assess current solid waste management and provide recommendations for improving recycling and organics management.
- 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.
- Production and distribution of a regular newsletter on solid waste issues and maintenance of a web page and Facebook page dedicated to solid waste information.

COVID-19 Response activities have included:

- Creation and continual updates of a comprehensive COVID-19 information section of the BCRC website.
- Facilitation of regional meetings to ensure that information on current state guidelines and opportunities are available to local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and residents.
- Distribution of information to municipal officials on changes to the open meeting law and other topics that affect the operation of local government.
- Outreach and technical support related to public assistance and grant opportunities. The BCRC's community and economic development division consulted with over 400 businesses since the start of the state of emergency.

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

- Provided VISTA/staff support to the regional nonprofit housing agency in the development of a new affordable housing development adjacent to North Bennington Village. Worked on a variety of tenant assistance and support programs.

- Cooperated with a local developer and the Town of Bennington to procure grant funds to rehabilitate a large multifamily housing building in a distressed neighborhood and continued to support the regional medical center's Healthy Homes initiative, where vacant/abandoned homes are renovated and returned to support the community's need for in-town affordable single family homes.
- Worked to improve regional food systems. Specific activities have included work with Bennington College's food security initiative, support for establishing a regional regenerative food network, and participation in an effort to create a regional food hub and distribution center supported by renewable energy.
- Worked with municipal and nonprofit leaders to implement projects envisioned through a Promise Community grant. Specific projects included planning and development of a new downtown park, improvements to a neighborhood park, and assistance with development of new community center facilities at the town recreation center (now under construction).

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

Each program manager at the BCRC is responsible for work plan and budget development. The executive director/planning coordinator, financial director, 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 \$1.533 million in FY 2020 and total expenditures of approximately \$1.515 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.

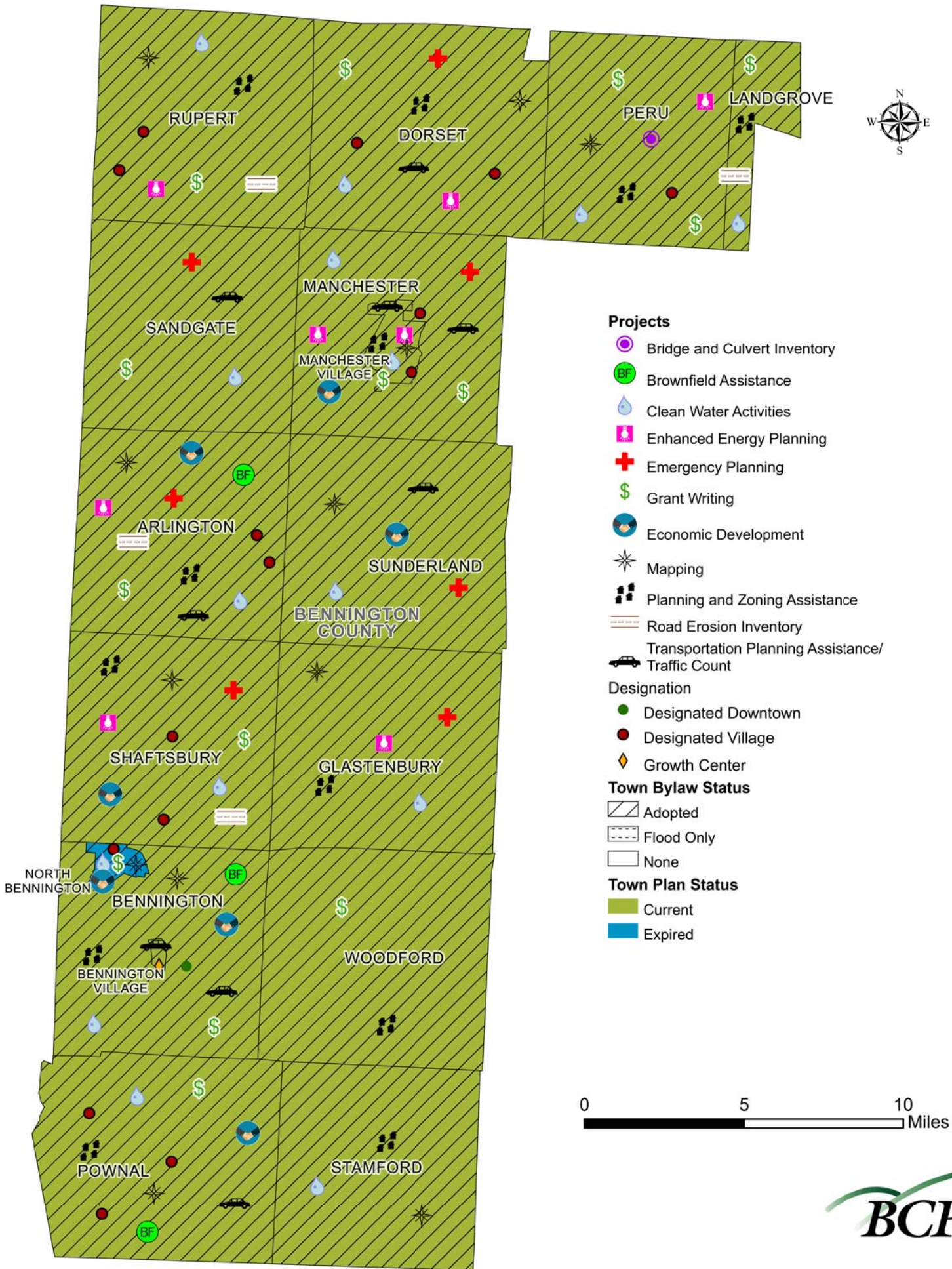
An annual financial audit is completed during August of each year. The FY 2020 audit has confirmed the accuracy of the BCRC's financial records and reports no significant findings.

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 a consortium of local energy committees. Several board members attend special trainings each year (e.g., financial management, regional economic development, housing, land use practices, energy planning, natural resource planning and environmental protection) 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. Of course, most regular meetings, workshops, and conferences have moved to online platforms since the onset of the coronavirus state of emergency.

'AT WORK' MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the BCRC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

BCRC at Work: FY 2020



Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

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

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

The CCRPC appreciates the continued opportunity to work with its municipal members to plan appropriately for the region's future to protect and improve the special quality of life that is shared throughout Chittenden County. In FY20, the CCRPC invested just under \$4.5 million in regional land use, transportation, emergency management, energy, natural resources, public engagement, training, and technical assistance. The program leverages more than \$4.1 million in Federal and State investment with \$245,000 in municipal dues and another \$146,000 in local match for specific projects—an 11:1 return on local investment.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & 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:** Provided direct assistance to Huntington on finalizing their Town Plan, to Underhill on their draft Town Plan, and to Westford for data updates for a few chapters of their draft Town Plan. CCRPC also worked with staff from the Vermont Department of Health to prepare a community health chapter for inclusion in the updated Jericho Town Plan. See below for a list of energy related Town Plan assistance projects. Created Town Plan maps for Jericho, Westford and revised maps for Shelburne.

- **Town Plan Approvals:** Approved the Comprehensive Plans and confirmed the planning process for Essex Junction, Huntington and Charlotte.
- **Zoning:** Continued with assistance to South Burlington on zoning-related assistance including: drafting zoning amendments for natural resource protection and developed a related map viewer to illustrate the natural resources in the proposed amendments. CCRPC staff also continued work with the South Burlington Affordable Housing Committee and Planning Commission on Inclusionary Zoning which has since been adopted by the City Council. Assisted Bolton with natural resource bylaw amendments for the Forest and Conservation Districts. This included GIS analysis to help the Planning Commission understand the proposed zoning changes. CCRPC used current imagery and raster data to help identify parcels in Burlington that are not in conformance with setback regulations for certain zoning districts. CCRPC worked with Williston on revising the transportation impact fee chapter of its Unified Development Bylaw. CCRPC reviewed and provided feedback and recommendations on Richmond's proposed zoning bylaw for a density bonus/optional inclusionary zoning.
- **In-house Planning Services:** CCRPC provided zoning administration assistance in Charlotte and helped train the town's new Zoning Administrator. Beginning in February of 2020, CCRPC staff has provided planning and zoning assistance to Milton. This included: Planning Director duties, assisting other Planning and Zoning staff while there was a Planning Director vacancy, assisting with hiring and training the new Planning Director. CCRPC staff also evaluated the zoning regulations, and provided the Selectboard and Planning Commission with a presentation on that evaluation. This work is continuing in FY21 to assist the Town with zoning amendments to address the issues identified in the evaluation.
- **Training:** The CCRPC held the Chittenden County Community Justice Center Summit (34 participants from 9 municipalities) to discuss potential options for an alternative structure in Chittenden County. CCRPC also held a Homes For All training in Jericho for their new Affordable Housing Committee (6 attendees from 1 municipality). CCRPC also continued to host the 12-month webinar series from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycling Professionals for municipalities and regional partners.

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.

- **ECOS Plan Implementation:** CCRPC continues to implement its [2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan](#) which combines the regional plan, comprehensive economic development strategy, and metropolitan transportation plan, as reflected here in this report. 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 legislation, and planned transportation investments in those places resulting in 85% of residential growth in these areas (2018 5-year average). CCRPC used the ECOS Plan to evaluate applications and participate in Act 250 and Section 248 hearings.

- **ECOS Plan Annual Report and Indicators:** The [2019 Annual Report](http://www.ecosproject.com/2019-ecos-annual-report) is a summary that highlights a number of regional accomplishments, trends, and high priority actions. (<http://www.ecosproject.com/2019-ecos-annual-report>) 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>)
- **Legislative Forum:** CCRPC hosted our annual Legislative Breakfast in December to discuss priority issues of Smart Growth, housing, Act 250, water quality funding, transportation investments, transportation climate initiative, population health, workforce, mental health and substance use disorders, and regional and municipal planning investments (<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/policies-positions/>).

ECONOMIC & 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 several ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long-term economic gain.

- **Lake Champlain Byway:** Chittenden County includes eight of the Byway's 22 communities: Milton, Colchester, Winooski, Essex Junction, Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, and Charlotte. CCRPC staff maintained the Byway website (<https://lakechamplainbyway.com/>) including a helpful Interactive Map (<http://map.ccrpcvt.org/lcbyway/>).
- 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.
- **Opportunity Zones:** CCRPC assisted in creating a prospectus for Burlington's Opportunity Zones.
- **Community Development Block Grant:** CCRPC continued assisting with grant administration on behalf of the Town of Bolton on the CDBG grant for hotel and water/wastewater improvements at Bolton Valley.
- **Economic Development Administration Grant:** CCRPC led a partnership with multiple partners including other RPCs, RDCs and ACCD, and began developing a grant application for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for four regions.
- CCRPC worked with the Westford on a RFQ and grant application for community wastewater in the Westford Village. CCRPC also participated as a resource team member as part of Vermont Council on Rural Development's Community Visit to Westford. CCRPC also assisted Hinesburg and Shelburne in investigating potential EDA grant opportunities.

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 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in FY16; and a \$300,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant in FY18. Since the fall of 2016, using these two grants the program has provided \$586,488 to assess perceived or real contamination issues in various municipalities.

- Bolton: 4302 Bolton Valley Access Road (Bolton Valley Resort)
- Burlington: 316 Flynn Avenue (Redstone Apartments); 400 Pine Street/20 Howard Street (Unsworth Properties); 339 Pine Street (Railyard Enterprise Project); 56 and 58 North Avenue (Sarah Holbrook Center); Lake Street (Waterfront Park); 314 North Winooski (Champlain Transmission); 75 Briggs Street (Petra Cliffs); 207 Flynn Avenue (City Market); 453 Pine Street (near Barge Canal); 405 Pine Street (Burlington City Arts); 44 Lakeside Avenue (Blodgett Ovens / HULA); 241 N. Winooski Avenue (McClure Center).
- Colchester: 2031 Roosevelt Highway (Champlain Chiropractic); 110 Heineberg Road (New York Cleaners).
- Essex Junction: 3 Maple Street (Chittenden Crossing) and 1 Main Street (Road Res-Q).
- Milton: 7 River Street (Milton Grange) and 204-210 & 214-218 U.S. Route 7 (Town-VAOT “Hourglass” Road reconfiguration project).
- Shelburne: 5531 Spear Street (Kwiniaska/Fairway at Spear).
- South Burlington: 600 Spear Street (south of UVM Farm Barn)
- Westford: 1705 VT Route 128 (parcel adjacent to Town Office)
- Williston at the Jacob parcel (Stirrup Circle) and the Catamount Outdoor Family Center.
- Winooski: 4 & 12 Winooski Falls Way (Winooski Hotel); City Lot 7D on Winooski Falls Way (behind CCV); 42 Pine Street (Myers Pool); City Lot 8 on Winooski Falls Way (in front of Waterworks Restaurant), and 355 Main Street (Andy’s Used Cars)

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 region’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 is 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: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

TAC Activity: The TAC met 10 times in FY20. Attendance varied from 10 to 20 members, from 32% to 65% of total membership. Ten (10) non-municipal TAC members were actively engaged in transportation planning in the county.

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

- Way to Go! Challenge
- VTrans Corridor Management Planning
- Burlington International Airport Draft Noise Compatibility Program
- Transportation and Climate Initiative
- VTrans On-Line Data Management System
- VT Culverts
- VTrans Public Transit Policy Plan
- Road Erosion Inventory data
- Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP)
- Williston Park and Ride
- High Impact Economic Development Project List for potential funding from Northern Border Regional Commission
- Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study
- VTrans State Public Transit Projects
- The FY21 Transportation Improvement Program
- The FY21 Unified Planning Work Program
- VTrans Project Selection & Prioritization Process
- Winooski's East Allen Street Scoping Study
- Safety Performance Targets for the Metropolitan Planning Area
- US7 Signal Upgrades in Shelburne-South Burlington
- SFY2021 VTrans Transportation Capital Program
- SFY2022 Project Prioritization and Town Highway Bridge Pre-Candidate Prioritization
- Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA) Strategic Business Plan
- COVID-19 Impacts for this construction season
- Regional and State Funding Opportunities
- VTrans Automated Vehicle Policy Review
- ADA Transition Plans

Transportation Coordination Activities with Municipalities and VTrans Provided by CCRPC:

- Partnering with VTrans, municipalities and other stakeholders on the ongoing Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study.
- Collaborated with VTrans, provided funding, and promoted participation in the 2019/2020 Way to Go! School Challenge; and conducted TDM outreach to municipalities, businesses, and partners countywide through CATMA.
- VTrans Prioritization Methodology (VPSP2) effort: participation in the Core Group and TPI presentations and discussions.
- Assisted VTrans and Burlington with the Amtrak Storage and Servicing Evaluation.
- Continue to monitor the real time travel data from Bluetooth sensors in five major corridors in the county; investigating ways to integrate the data into the State's Tristate ATMS.
- Ongoing coordination with VTrans, FHWA and FTA on highway and transit performance measures and targets.
- Bike & Ped Program – worked with the Cities of Burlington, South Burlington and Winooski as well as UVM and CATMA to plan for Greenride Bikeshare fleet expansion and conversion to E-Bikes; participated in the State's Strategic Bike/Ped Plan; promoted TDM strategies to

municipalities and businesses; compiled Complete Streets data for Chittenden County municipalities; and, conducted bike/ped counts on paths, bike lanes and roadways.

- Facilitated municipal participation in numerous MRGP meetings and updates.
- Provided Annual Traffic Alert communications outreach program.

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): The 2018 MTP was adopted by the CCRPC Board June of 2018 (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/ecos-metropolitan-transportation-plan/>).

Municipal Transportation Plans: 18 municipalities have current municipal plans that include an updated transportation component. In FY20, the CCRPC assisted 5 municipalities with the transportation element of their municipal plan.

Act-250 and Section 248 Reviews: 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 FY20, the CCRPC provided transportation related comments for three (3) Act-250 applications. The CCRPC also commented on Section 248 applications but none had transportation issues that required staff review.

Coordination with Public Transit Providers: Staff participated in regional 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
- Rural Transit Roundtable
- GMT Link Ridership Pilot Project
- Route 116 Bus Ridership Outreach Program
- Tilley Drive Transit
- Richmond Shuttle Coordination
- Charlotte Transit Coordination

RPC participation in VTrans committees: A list of committees that the CCRPC staff participated in is provided below:

- Public Transit Advisory Council
- Rail Advisory Council
- VTrans Project Prioritization (VPSP2) Core Group and workshop participation
- Freight Working Group
- Vermont Highway Safety Alliance
- Way to Go! Challenge
- Performance Management
- Freight working Group

Project Prioritization: The CCRPC prioritizes Capital Projects on the state's Transportation Program once a year. In addition, the CCRPC has a representative on the Core Team for the VPSP2 prioritization effort.

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

During FY20, the CCRPC hosted regional transportation meetings; initiated, managed and was involved in major regional and local transportation plans, studies and initiatives; provided technical assistance and support to municipalities and partners on transportation issues. Please see below for more information on these activities.

Road Foreman Meetings: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the CCRPC did not host their usual Spring Road Foreman Meeting. CCRPC staff shared events and funding opportunities throughout the year as appropriate.

Assistance with Transportation Grants: Staff assisted municipalities and provided letters of support for 12 grant applications including Better Roads, and Transportation Alternatives grants.

Budget Spent on Municipal Assistance: The CCRPC invests approximately 57% of MPO funding for municipal assistance.

CCRPC Data Collection in FY 20:

- Three (3) Pavement Inventories and one (1) Culvert/Bridge Inventory.
- 77 Data Collection Activities, including: ATR, Turning Movement, Bike/Ped, Park & Ride counts, HPMS and MIRE data, and complete streets inventory.

Participation in Transportation Planning and Project Development Activities: Below is the list of Planning Assistance, Project Definition (Scoping), water quality/transportation planning and Municipal Construction Projects (Local Project Management: LPM) that the CCRPC managed in FY 20:

- Railyard Enterprise Supplemental Scoping Project (Burlington)
- Essex Jct Village Center Parking Plan
- South Burlington City Center Parking & Movement Plan
- Williston Shared Use & Multi-Modal Parking Study
- South Burlington Transportation Impact Fee
- Williston Transportation Impact Fee
- Winooski Transportation Impact Fee
- Paving Analysis for Raceway Road and Packard Road in Jericho
- South Burlington Multi-site Recreation Path Scoping
- South Burlington Multi-site Pedestrian Crossing & Bike Access
- Burlington Lake Street Stormwater and Sidewalk Feasibility Study
- Bikeway Connectivity, Pedestrian Safety, and Stormwater Management in the Old North End (Burlington)
- Underhill River Road/Pleasant Valley Road Bicyclist Accommodation and Pavement Analysis
- Winooski East Allen Street Scoping
- Huntington Lower Village Supplemental Scoping
- Multiuse Path Connecting Williston to South Burlington Scoping
- Colchester Avenue Scoping in Burlington
- Essex Tanglewood Drive Shared-Use Path and Stormwater Scoping
- Richmond Road Intersection Scoping in Hinesburg
- Right-of-Way Condition Inventory in Burlington
- Essex Stormwater CCTV Inspection
- Essex Jct Stormwater CCTV Inspection
- Town of Williston Phosphorus Control Plan
- City of Winooski Phosphorus Control Plan

- Winooski Inspection and Inventory of Existing Stormwater System
- Jericho Bolger Hill Drainage Improvements
- Jericho Road Conceptual Plans in Richmond
- Exit 17 Park and Ride Supplemental Evaluation
- LPM services for Underhill sidewalk construction on VT 15
- LPM services for Hinesburg Village South VT 116 sidewalk design and construction
- LPM services for Shelburne for the Irish Hill Road sidewalk and pedestrian bridge project.

The CCRPC initiated and managed the following multimodal Corridor and Area-wide Studies:

- Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study
- Kimball Ave/Kennedy Dr/Old Farm Rd/Tilley Drive/VT 116 Transportation Needs Analysis (South Burlington)
- Winooski Avenue Corridor Study (Burlington)

The CCRPC was also involved in the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives and studies:

- Annual Way to Go! Challenge to encourage non-single occupant vehicle travel and demonstrate the environmental and financial benefits, with a focus on schools (www.WayToGoVT.org).
- Provided funding to CATMA, CarShare Vermont, and Local Motion for TDM projects and technical assistance.
- 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.

Road Erosion Inventories in Support of Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP): Completed road erosion inventories (REI) for all 19 municipalities in Chittenden County. Staff is now updating REI data based on information from municipalities and site visits.

Objective #4: Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

CCRPC Data Collection Activities Conducted Specifically for VTrans: CCRPC staff conducted the following activities in support of VTrans' Plans:

- 16 Park & Ride inventories at facilities in Richmond, Colchester, Huntington, Essex Landfill Rd., Essex Green, Westford Green, and Hinesburg
- 39 Traffic (ATR) counts
- 16 Turning Movement counts
- One (1) Culvert/Bridge inventory
- Two (2) Bike/Ped counts
- HPMS and MIRE data
- Requested complete streets info from all Chittenden County towns and received information from 12.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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 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.

- **COVID:** During the unprecedented time of global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CCRPC staff worked extensively with municipalities, state health officials, and the public to relay important updates, resources, and general information about the pandemic. A COVID-19 Municipal Response webpage was developed and maintained (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/covid-19/>), and staff developed community guides for seven municipalities that were mailed to residents.
- **FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation:** CCRPC collected information from each municipality on annual implementation of hazard mitigation activities recommended in the County and Municipal All-Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- **Local Emergency Management Plans:** 19 out of 19 (100%) municipalities in the CCRPC region currently have an updated local emergency management plan.
- **Local Emergency Planning Committee:** CCRPC, in collaboration with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC 1, <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/local-emergency-planning-committee/>), hosted and participated in a variety of emergency management-related workshops and exercises to enhance resilience to disasters in our region.
- **Local Liaison:** CCRPC served as a key coordinator between municipalities and the state to collect damage assessment information after significant storm events.
- **Hazardous Materials:** Helped with emergency preparedness for hazardous materials incidents by working on listing and mapping "Tier II" hazardous materials information to make this information more easily accessible and usable by first responders.

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.

- **Town-Specific Web Maps:** Updated/created interactive town-specific web maps for Bolton, Buel's Gore, Charlotte, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, Milton, Richmond, Shelburne, South Burlington, Underhill, Westford, and Winooski.
- **Town Plan Maps:** Created for Jericho, and Westford. Revised maps for Shelburne.
- **GIS Data:** Developed or updated numerous GIS datasets (zoning, bridges, culverts, housing points, cemeteries, neighborhoods, scenic resources, state designations, groundwater source protection areas, trails, conserved land, utilities, etc.) for Bolton, Burlington, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex, Hinesburg, Jericho, Milton, Shelburne, South Burlington, Underhill, Westford, and Winooski.
- **Colchester Map Service:** Continued to provide updates to their map service which links to the Town's VueWorks Asset Management system.
- **Winooski Map Service:** Providing an interactive digital map service for Winooski's NexGen Asset Management system.

- **Regional Conservation Area Project:** Developed a map viewer for the Champlain Valley Partnership (CVP) to inventory conserved areas in Hinesburg, Shelburne, South Burlington, St. George, and Williston.
- **Data available via Vermont Open Data Portal:** Uploaded housing points, regional future land use, municipal zoning and overlay data to the portal to allow public access to the GIS data.
- **VOBCIT:** CCRPC continues to work with partners to improve, enhance and support the VOBCIT website (<https://vtculverts.org>).

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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 *2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan* was granted an Affirmative Determination of Energy Compliance by the Department of Public Service on August 9, 2018. CCRPC has increased participation in PUC proceedings (applications for Certificates of Public Good and various investigations) to ensure that local and regional policies are recognized. CCRPC participated in 8 PUC proceedings in FY20.
- **Municipal Energy Plans:** CCRPC continued to provide specific technical assistance on data/mapping, plan narrative and policy language to Bolton, Charlotte, Hinesburg, Jericho, Williston, and Underhill to help them develop and/or finalize their local energy plans. The CCRPC board granted affirmative determinations of energy compliance to enhanced energy plans in Essex Junction, Huntington, Charlotte and Jericho. Nine municipalities have adopted enhanced energy plans and five municipalities have plans in development.
- **Energy Planning Implementation:** The CCRPC also participated in Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) stakeholder meetings, organized a regional [Button Up Vermont](#) event with 400 participants, participated in Drive Electric Vermont meetings, worked with VEIC on a resource guide to support EV charging at multi-unit properties (<https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CCRPC-MUD-EV-Charging-Survey-Report-Final-20200807.pdf>), reviewed Public Utility Commission proceedings, and provided municipal assistance to move forward with the energy planning recommendations established in Act 174. CCRPC staff also drafted a letter to send to Charlotte property owners to inform them about financial incentives for solar net metering and solar projects developed on preferred sites.

WATERSHED PLANNING & 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.

- **Clean Water:** Water quality projects have become an integral part of our regional planning efforts. The CCRPC's water quality initiatives help to safeguard our clean drinking water, support our recreation and tourism industry, and make our municipalities more resilient to flood events.

The CCRPC has continued to assist our member municipalities to achieve these goals. The CCRPC continues to host the Clean Water Advisory Committee and the MS-4 Sub-Committee (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/clean-water-advisory-committee/>) and provide guidance for the Vermont Clean Water Fund. CCRPC staff also joined the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program Advisory Committee, participated in Vermont Clean Water Network meetings, supported education programs such as the Rethink Runoff (<http://www.rethinkrunoff.org>), assisted with watershed resiliency mapping, participated in water quality-focused policy discussions, and submitted an application to become the Clean Water Service Provider for the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages Basin (Basin 5).

- **Block Grants:** Through funding provided by the DEC and administered by the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, the CCRPC managed Clean Water Block Grants to implement the following stormwater projects: in Underhill, construction of a large rain garden at the Town office; in Williston, design of road drainage improvements on Beebe Lane in the Lake Iroquois Recreation District; and, in Winooski, upgrades to a stormwater pond in the Pine Grove Terrace neighborhood. The CCRPC also secured a Design Implementation Block Grant for Winooski and Jericho.
- **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 completed assistance on development of an update to the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages Tactical Basin Plan.
- **Stormwater Master Plans:** Completed the Stormwater Master Plan for Milton.
- **Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Compliance and Water Quality Planning Assistance:** The CCRPC continues to work with a team of consultants to develop Road Erosion Inventory (REI) concept plans and REI datasets for member municipalities in order to address road erosion issues on municipal roads to meet MRGP requirements. For an interactive dashboard of the REI progress in our communities visit <https://map.ccrpcvt.org/reidashboard/>. CCRPC staff assisted municipalities with FY21 **Better Roads** grants to secure funding for erosion control and maintenance techniques that protect and enhance water quality around our region (for Bolton, Charlotte, Jericho (2), Richmond, Shelburne, and Underhill; and support letters for Essex, Huntington and Milton). The CCRPC also provided funding to municipalities through the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for inspection and inventory of their stormwater system, development of Phosphorus Control Plans (PCPs) for MS4 communities and conceptual plans for transportation-related water quality projects on local roads.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Racial Equity & Public Engagement:** Addressing inequity in our region is one of the eight key strategies in the Chittenden County ECOS Plan. CCRPC staff have started to plan for the update of the **2014 Public Participation Plan** (PPP: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/public-participation-plan/>) with a renewed focus on analyzing inequities in all sectors of

our work to ensure that we actively eliminate barriers and foster an inclusive and meaningful public engagement for all planning and policy work we do – this meaningful engagement is the foundation that leads to actions that meet the needs of our diverse community. This past year, the CCRPC continued to participate in Refugee and Immigrant Service Provider Network meetings, completed the 2019 Title VI Report for VTrans/FHWA, and worked towards the completion of the FTA Title VI Program. The CCRPC has made a public commitment to address issues related to racial and economic disparities through the following actions:

- Facilitating, providing, and/or taking advantage of educational opportunities for our staff, partner municipalities, and other local and regional partners that address inequities and advance anti-racism efforts.
 - Examining our organization's policies, practices, culture, and services through the lens of anti-racism and white privilege to ensure they reflect our commitment to racial justice.
 - Furthering our understanding of the significant historical role land use policies and transportation investments have had in systemic racism and inequity, while making sure that future zoning and transportation investments in Chittenden County encourage equity and provide increased opportunities for Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and low income residents. More specifically, we will update our Equity Impact Worksheet that is part of our Public Participation Plan based on best practices around the country and will have this reviewed locally by a diverse audience.
 - Encouraging municipal appointments on our Board and Committees that reflect the diversity of our community.
 - Strengthening existing relationships and partnerships and forging new ones with Vermont organizations working to advance anti-racism efforts.
 - Committing to advance Strategy 8 of the Chittenden County ECOS Plan (page 48), which includes specific tasks related to tracking and analyzing inequities in all sectors of our work, prioritizing positive programs and investments to low opportunity places, and more.
- **Building Homes Together:** Following the first three years of the Building Homes Together campaign, more progress on housing production in Chittenden County was achieved in 2018 – please note that 2019 data is not available at this time. The campaign was initiated by the CCRPC, Champlain Housing Trust, and Housing Vermont in 2016. There were 620 homes developed and ready for occupancy in 2018. Over the first three years of the campaign, an average of 758 homes were built each year ahead of the pace needed to meet the campaign's goal of 3,500 homes over five years. With over 2,200 homes built in the county in the last three years, only 280, or 13%, became permanently affordable. That's shy of the campaign's goal of 20%. (<http://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together>).
 - **Public Health:** The CCRPC served on the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance (CCOA, <http://www.ccoavt.org>) together with other dedicated stakeholders including local non-profit agencies, state and local government, United Way of Northwest Vermont, UVM Medical Center, Vermont Department of Health, business leaders, and community members in Chittenden County. In FY20, we helped the CCOA transition to the Chittenden County Public Health Alliance to broaden the focus on social determinants of health, with racial justice and mental health the current focus areas. The CCRPC also served as the lead agency for the Chittenden Prevention Network's Regional Prevention Partnership grant (<http://www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drug-abuse/programs-services/prevention-programs>). Accomplishments include a sharps disposal kiosk at the Williston Fire Department, expansion of Rx drug take-back locations,

promoting Rx drug takeback events, fake ID enforcement to discourage underage drinking, and community education about substance use prevention for youth.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

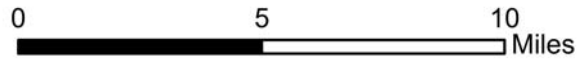
The CCRPC receives most of its funding through performance-based grants and contracts with the state. Town assessments constitute a small but very important percentage of our funding. Individual municipalities also contribute match dollars for some federally funded transportation planning projects within their own borders. For the 2020 fiscal year, the CCRPC's total revenue of nearly \$4.5 million dollars was derived from about 72% federally funded grants, 19% state funding, and 9% from municipalities. Just under \$2.2 million, or nearly 49% 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 was conducted in September 2020, with the full report to be completed by December 2020.

'AT WORK' MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the CCRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.



Projects

- Bridge and Culvert Inventory
- Brownfield Assistance
- Clean Water Activities
- Enhanced Energy Planning
- Emergency Planning
- Grant Writing
- Economic Development
- Mapping
- Planning and Zoning Assistance
- Road Erosion Inventory
- Transportation Planning Assistance/Traffic Count

Designation

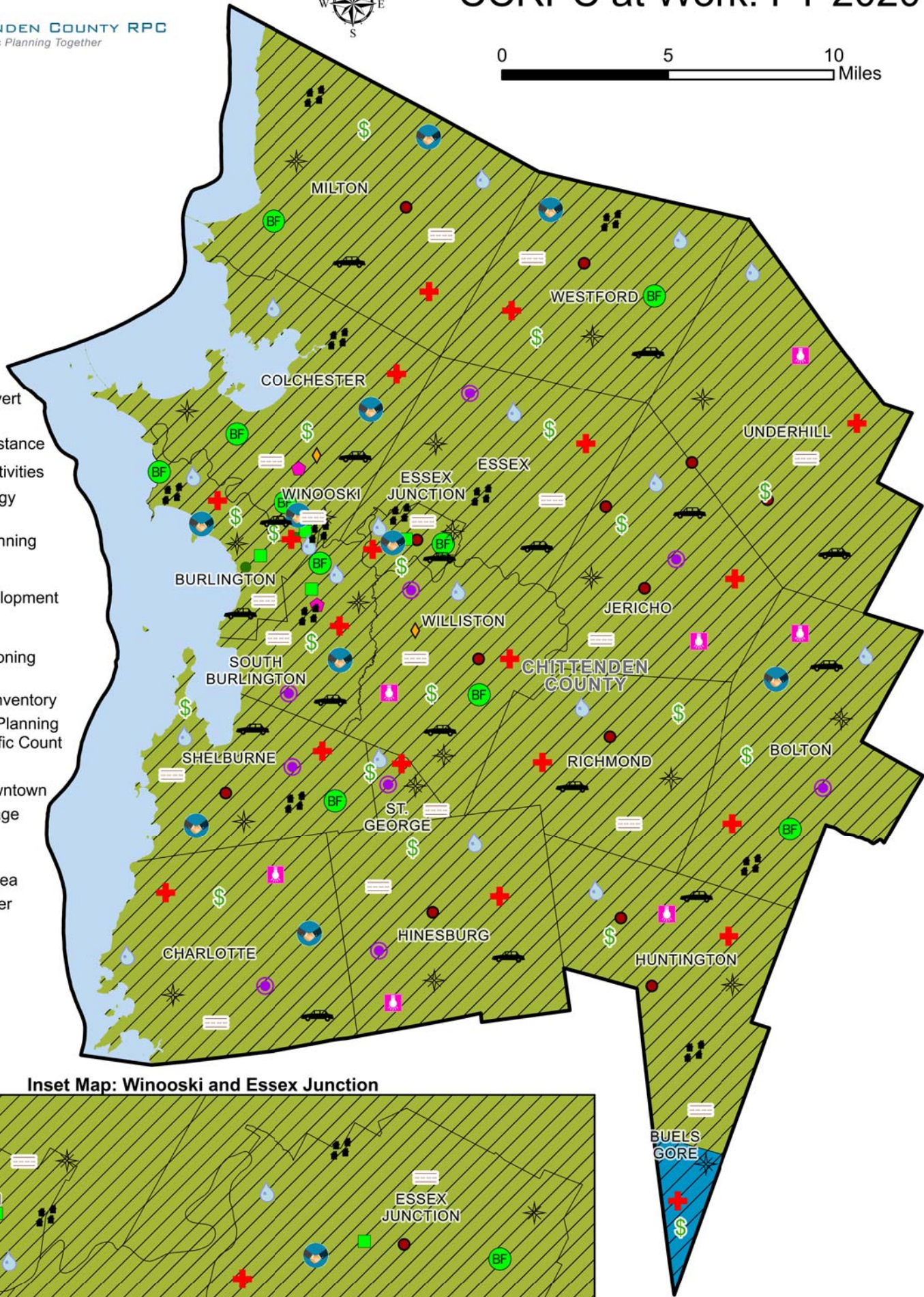
- Designated Downtown
- Designated Village
- Growth Center
- Neighborhood Development Area
- New Town Center

Town Bylaw Status

- Adopted

Town Plan Status

- Current
- Expired



Inset Map: Winooski and Essex Junction



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

Founded in 1967, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) leverages the power of people working together to assist its 23 member municipalities in providing effective local government and to work cooperatively to address regional issues. CVRPC is governed by representatives from the 20 municipalities of Washington County and Orange, Washington, and Williamstown in Orange County. Each legislative body selects a 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, 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:

- Assisted East Montpelier and Middlesex to secure Village Center Designations, providing property owners with access to resources and incentives for building investments.
- Hosted 3 municipal trainings on community engagement during COVID-19, Zoning Administrator Best Practices, COVID Conundrums, Statute Updates, and State Permit Review.
- Supported Town Plan updates for Plainfield, Barre Town, Barre City, Northfield, Fayston, and Washington through feedback on draft documents, information on flood resiliency, energy planning, forest integrity, and/or mapping to support forest integrity.
- Provided substantial grant writing assistance to Middlesex and Woodbury and coached Berlin, Montpelier, and Worcester on grant applications. The applications supported local actions ranging from municipal plan development, to New Town Center planning and regional collaboration on trail development and maintenance.
- Evaluated constraints and opportunities for developing a non-motorized trail network linking Cabot's State-designated village center to regional trail networks and recreation amenities.
- Assisted Waterbury to develop National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System trainings and updated its river corridor map.
- Coordinated a committee of forestry and natural resource professionals to guide the creation of a Forest Economy Survey. The results are being used to develop a municipal guide outlining strategies for supporting the wood products industry.

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.

In FY20, CVRPC initiated a Regional Plan update, focusing on the Plan's Safe and Affordable Housing element. CVRPC presented data it gathered for the Plan to a Regional Housing Summit Planning Committee, which CVRPC facilitated at the request of the Montpelier Housing Task Force. CVRPC also conducted a survey of Regional Housing Partners to update the Central Vermont Housing Resource Guide. Planning for the Summit has paused due to COVID-19.

CVRPC also focused on plan implementation. A sampling of activities includes:

- Fostering regional activities, such as identifying collaborate overlap for childcare advancement with Let's Grow Kids and the Mayor of Montpelier.
- Engaging the development community in discussions of in-development projects prior to Act 250 application submission. These exchanges offer the development community early insights into CVRPC's project review comments and areas of support.
- Conducting a collaborative transportation planning project with municipalities in the Stevens Branch Watershed. This project collected past transportation infrastructure damage data and used VTrans' GIS-based Transportation Resilience Planning Tool to identify flood vulnerabilities and risks. Municipalities use resulting information to plan upgrades that make roads and structures more resilient.
- Supporting the Friends of Winooski to secure funding to continue *Water Wise Woodlands*. This effort among Cabot, Marshfield, and Plainfield was initiated by CVRPC in 2017. It links forest integrity, private forest stewardship, and watershed resilience. Building flood resilience through a forested upper watershed requires incentives, supportive programs, and fostering informal, neighbor-to-neighbor learning among woodland owners and technical experts.

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.

In FY20, CVRPC did not have an active brownfields assessment grant. However, it continued to invest staff resources to work with owners and prospective developers:

- **Granite Works, Montpelier:** Hosted a meeting for parties to discuss Corrective Action planning and remediation.
- **East Calais General Store, Calais:** Consulted with a newly established, volunteer non-profit organization - East Calais Community Trust - on the brownfields assessment process in preparation for property acquisition to ensure continued operation.
- **Union Elementary School, Montpelier:** Attended the playground ribbon cutting, celebrating a successful brownfield redevelopment effort that fosters healthy play for children.
- **Granite Shed, Barre:** Consulted with Barre Area Development Corporation (BADC) regarding assistance to a business that experienced a devastating fire. BADC requested CVRPC organize a resource provider meeting to strengthen the business owner's understanding of post-fire requirements and prospective support available for business recovery.

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.

- Facilitated Route 12 wastewater extension prospective funders meeting to identify and coordinate resources among State agencies, the Town of Berlin and City of Montpelier, Green Mountain Transit, Weston Mobile Home Park, and private properties.
- Provided grant writing coaching and application comments for Duxbury's broadband innovation grant application.
- Successfully coordinated with RPCs and RDCs in three other regions to win a US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to create Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the West-Central Vermont region. CEDS development unlocks federal EDA investments for infrastructure development, job creation, and revolving loan funds.
- Assisted the nascent East Calais Community Trust to navigate the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant application process successfully. The Trust will purchase the East Calais Community Store to ensure its continued operation.
- Completed a mobile cellular service inventory by service carrier for all drivable roads in Central Vermont. Detailed coverage maps will aid municipalities in making informed planning decisions, particularly regarding communications-dependent projects or initiatives.

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.

Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

- Held 10 Transportation Advisory Committee meetings.
- Actively engaged 5 non-municipal TAC members in transportation planning.
- Actively engaged 23 municipalities in transportation planning.
- Coordinated 6 activities with municipalities and VTrans.

Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Maintained a current regional transportation plans (within 8 years).
- Reviewed Act 250 applications; no comments required relating to transportation.
- Reviewed Section 248 applications; no comments required relating to transportation.
- Coordinated 9 activities in support of regional public transit providers.
- Participated in 3 VTrans committees.
- Participated in State Project Prioritization.

Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- Assisted 10 municipalities with transportation related grants.
- Invested 32% of transportation budget on municipal technical assistance.
- Conducted 10 municipal transportation inventories.
- Completed 1 municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition study.
- Assisted 1 municipality with the transportation element of its municipal plan.
- Completed 11 road erosion inventories in support of the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Partnered with the Cabot Trail Committee to develop a Trails Master Plan and Implementation Program.

Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long Range Transportation Plans

- Conducted 43 data collection activities specifically for VTrans (traffic counts, park and ride surveys, pedestrian counts, etc.).

Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

- Facilitated the Local Action for Transportation Transformation roundtable for local energy committees with VECAN and VCRD to capitalize on interest in transforming Vermont's transportation energy profile. Fostered actions community volunteers could take to change transportation energy use. Created a brochure entitled *Green(er) Transportation: Energy-Lowering Opportunities and Incentives in Central Vermont*.
- Facilitated the Regional Elderly and Disabled Persons Advisory Committee meetings to project transportation use and needs and discuss service and rider engagement strategies; addressed COVID response and planning and surveyed older adults and people with disabilities about transit ridership satisfaction.

Highlights

- Supported COVID-19 safety for individuals experiencing homelessness by identifying transportation resources that could be used to transition homeless shelter residents to hotel facilities and transportation resources the shelter could use during the pandemic. Coordination with Green Mountain Transit was critical to success.
- Supported expansion of The Hitching Post, a volunteer rideshare effort, throughout Central Vermont. Coached its creator about working with municipalities and identified grant sources to develop a "User's Guide to the Hitching Post" and for system expansion activities.
- Supported 20 municipalities with implementation of Best Management Practices for the Municipal Grant in Aid program.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, Department of Public Safety, VTrans, the Agency of Natural Resources, and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the LEPCs and coordination among responders, municipal officials, and planners throughout the State's four Public Safety Districts. RPCs also help update floodplain bylaws, river corridor regulations, and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans. RPCs coordinate

updates to municipal emergency plans and assist as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other federally and non-federally declared disasters. The RPCs are a source of technical support and information and provide coordination and collaboration for trainings, workshops and seminars, often in conjunction with partners.

- Hosted an Emergency Management Director (EMD) roundtable to foster understanding of resource coordination and promote collaboration and coordination.
- Assisted 23 municipalities with development of Local Emergency Management Plans.
- Assisted 6 towns with Local Hazard Mitigation Plan development or approval, providing substantial assistance to 5 towns. 20 of the region's 23 municipalities (87%) have a FEMA-approved plan.
- Provided administrative assistance and fiscal agent services to LEPC 5.
- Assisted EPA in advertising and hosting a Tier II EPCRA workshop, resulting in 89 registrants.
- Developed a Local Emergency Management Plan sharing agreement to facilitate information sharing among municipalities.
- Represented RPCs on the VT Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application review committee.
- Provided State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) support by contacting towns to ascertain damages and by acting as supplemental staff to the SEOC Situational Awareness Unit.
- Participated in the Twin Cities (Barre-Montpelier) public safety communication funding crosswalk meetings to advise the team on grants and creating a competitive application.
- Supported municipal COVID-19 situational awareness by creating regular digests of local, state, and federal information and resources and a CVRPC COVID-19 webpage.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

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

- Produced custom maps for Berlin, East Montpelier, Fayston, Montpelier, and Orange.
- Updated municipal plan maps in Barre Town, Duxbury, Plainfield, Washington, and Worcester and zoning maps in East Montpelier and Montpelier.
- Updated web maps for Middlesex and Orange to facilitate information access by the public.
- Assisted 2 nonprofit partners with custom maps or GIS services (creating a region-wide conservation map and creating an online web map).
- Trained Cabot in QGIS to help it manage GIS parcel data.
- Provided childcare maps for school district utilization.

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. RPCs also 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.

- Supported local energy committees implementing events related to Efficiency Vermont's Button-Up campaign, including a regional presentation.

- Finalized draft Enhanced Energy Plans for Middlesex, Moretown, Plainfield, Waitsfield, and Woodbury. Once adopted, the municipalities can obtain substantial deference in the Certificate of Public Good process and define preferred sites.
- Facilitated quarterly Energy Committee Roundtables to provide networking and professional development opportunities.
- Commented on municipal enhanced energy planning drafts for Barre City, Barre Town, and Plainfield to strengthen compliance with the State's energy planning standards.
- Convened local public transit champions, transit agencies, and other stakeholders to plan a weeklong campaign promoting public transit in the region (postponed due to COVID-19).

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 design and implement stormwater mitigation projects and implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Advanced Vermont's effort to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Champlain via the Winooski River Basin by:
 - Completing stormwater mitigation final designs for three sites in Berlin and one in Plainfield.
 - Initiating final stormwater designs for four sites in Woodbury and two in Calais.
 - Completing stormwater mitigation construction projects in Barre City and Northfield. Both projects substantially decreased sediment and phosphorus loading.
 - Engaging municipalities in public-private partnership work for complying with the new 3-acre stormwater regulation.
- Facilitated monthly Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) meetings to provide an educational forum and a working group for basin planning and other water quality initiatives.
- Developed an online web map to depict stream monitoring locations and water quality results for Friends of the Winooski River. The tool is enhancing public knowledge of water quality in the Winooski watershed.
- Engaged municipalities in the development of the Stevens-Wells-Waits-Ompompanoosuc (Basin 14) Tactical Basin Plan.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Food Access Map: The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Food Access Map was awarded a 2020 Special Achievement in GIS (SAG). The SAG award is given annually to a limited number of ESRI's GIS clients around the world to recognize outstanding work with Geography Systems Technology (GIS) technology in a field of over 100,000 organizations. The map helped the Hunger Council of Washington County visualize food access in relation to various factors like bus routes, locations of jobs, and types of food available in various stores. The interactive map tool allows the Council to layer these variables in different groupings to help it strategize solutions for increasing access to healthy foods. The map is available at <http://map.ccrpcvt.org/foodretailaccess/>.

Workforce Development System Change: CVRPC facilitated a multi-sector initiative among social service organizations, economic development entities, education representatives, and businesses. The team is developing an action plan that transitions Central Vermont’s workforce development system into a nimble system that works seamlessly to achieve economic stability and improved quality of life for single moms for the mutual benefit of businesses, communities, and future generations. The team’s goal is to have 15% fewer single moms living below the federal poverty level by 2030.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The FY20 CVRPC budget was approximately \$1.5 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 municipal 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, 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). Municipal assessments and regional planning funds passed through to CVRPC under a performance grant with the Department of Housing and Community Development provide matching funds.

CVRPC maintained its line of credit in 2020 due to a prevalence of product-based and construction contracts. It maintains a Board-designated reserve fund, and a four-year plan for equipment and software upgrades and replacement.

CVRPC’s annual audit will be completed in fall 2020. CVRPC has had no audit findings in recent years. It is considered a ‘low risk’ grantee by federal agencies. Staffing in 2020 included 8 employees: Executive Director, Program Manager, Senior Planners (2), Planners (2), Assistant Planner, and an Office Manager. CVRPC supported workforce development through use of a Planning Technician for transportation and planning services. It hosted an AmeriCorps VISTA member focused on poverty alleviation activities. CVRPC contracts for accounting services.



In 2020, CVRPC adopted Rules of Procedure for its Executive Committee, substantially updated its Bylaws, and updated its Internal Controls and Administrative and Financial Procedures.

‘AT WORK’ MAP




The map depicting the range of services provided by the CVRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

CVRPC at Work: FY 2020



Projects

-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/
Traffic Count

Designation

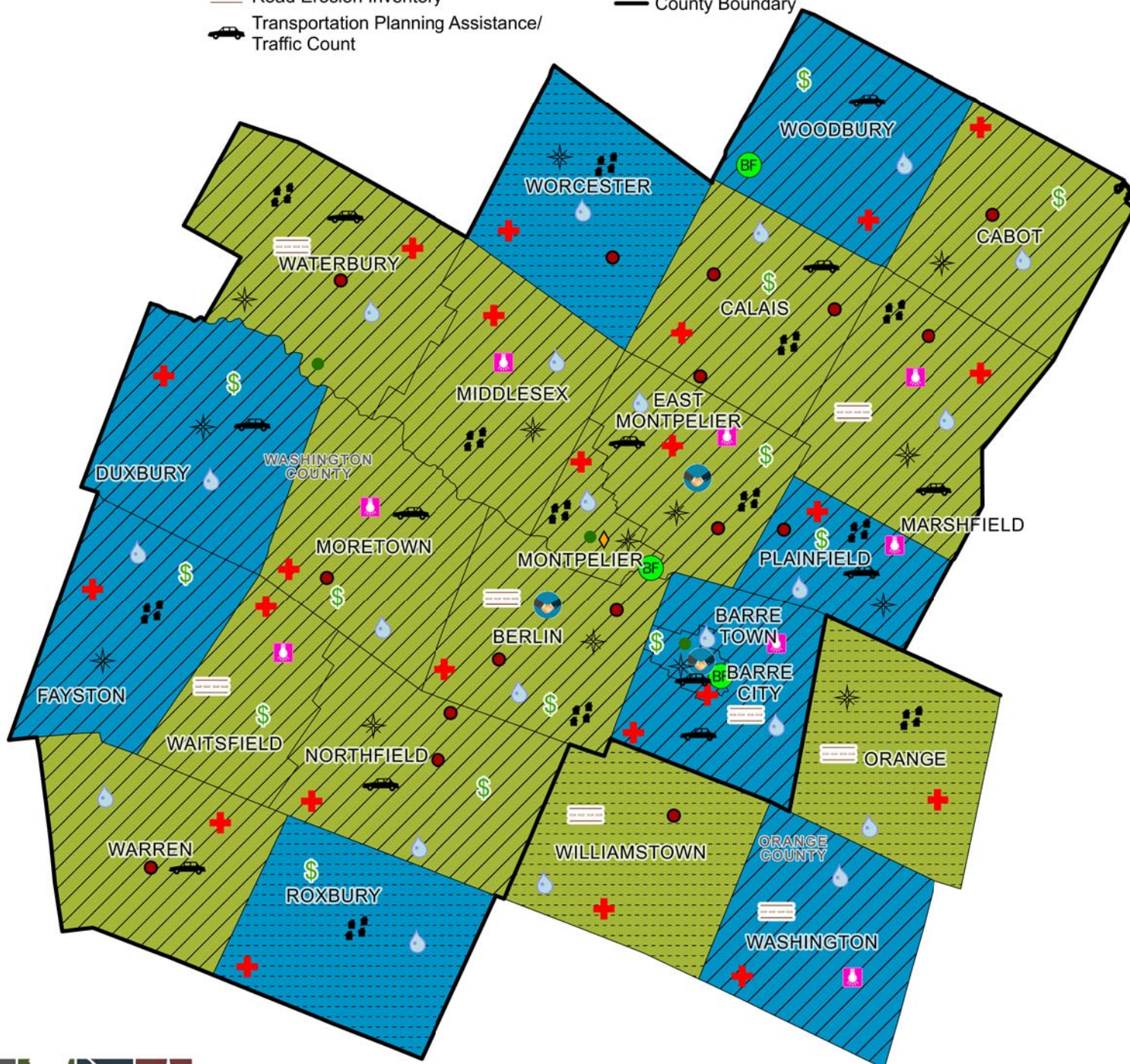
-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village
-  Growth Center

Town Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only

Town Plan Status

-  Current
-  Expired
-  County Boundary



Lamoille County Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

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 – ten 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 providing support to the Board and its committees and executing the Commission’s multifaceted work program.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & 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 for 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 on the final page of the report. Highlights include:

- Over the last six years, LCPC has assisted Cambridge in implementing major aspects of the “Jeffersonville Flood Mitigation Master Plan” developed with support from State and Federal grants. The mitigation measures are funded through a mix of Federal (HMGP, CDBG) and State (ERP) funds. Hydraulic modeling completed as part of the Town’s and Village’s flood mitigation planning effort predicted that the measures would reduce flood levels in the Village core by up to 1.5 feet. The flood mitigation projects experienced their first major test during the November 1, 2019 floods. Despite record flood levels in the Lamoille River, the measures preformed as modeled, preventing evacuation of the Village’s senior housing and other areas of the Village.
- LCPC is also working with the Village to develop a long-term Management Plan for the former Bell Gates Lumber Mill, which was purchased as part of the Village’s flood mitigation efforts. The Management Plan envisions the space as a vibrant, multipurpose gateway park for the Village that also provides floodwater storage and stormwater management.
- In response to concerns raised for the past few years at Waterville’s Town Meeting, the LCPC worked with the Town of Waterville to secure an FY20 Municipal Planning Grant to explore further options for pedestrian safety in the Village Center near the Town Hall. To support building a case for recommended safety improvements, the LCPC began collecting pedestrian

and traffic count data in the spring of 2020. These counts will be used to inform future decisions about improving safety for pedestrians accessing the Town Hall.

- The 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 Better Roads and Grant in Aid projects.
- 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.
- LCPC provided help identifying appropriate funding sources, defining project scope, and writing applications for numerous municipalities which, among other grants, resulted in municipal planning grants for a consortium of Hyde Park, Eden and Waterville.
- LCPC assisted the Village of Jeffersonville in securing a \$250,000 grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission. The grant will fund critically needed upgrades to the Village Water system that will enable economic development and workforce housing in the Village core.
- The Commission provided application development and mapping services to assist Elmore and North Wolcott in establishing Village Center Designation.

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 Lamoille County Regional Plan was adopted in 2015. LCPC has updated 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. In 2019, LCPC reviewed one major Act 250 application and five Section 248 applications.

ECONOMIC & 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.

Broadband

In FY20, LCPC provided broadband planning assistance to nine Lamoille County towns. Recently, this collaborative effort resulted in a decision by seven towns to join the Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District (LFCUD). A Communication Union District (CUD) is a unique kind of Vermont municipality comprised of two or more towns and established for the purpose of building communication infrastructure together.

Prior to forming the CUD, with the LCPC's guidance, town broadband committees and interested residents worked together for over six months to study options for high speed internet deployment in Lamoille County. Following this learning period, the group recommended to town Selectboards a CUD, as the most fitting governing structure to pursue the goal of providing universal access to high speed, reliable, and affordable internet service to all residents and businesses.

Lack of critical infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and broadband, impedes 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. In early 2019, LCPC began assisting Wolcott in a DEC sponsored program funded by the Northern Borders Regional Commission to explore and evaluate small scale wastewater solutions for Wolcott Village. LCPC is also providing planning and grant writing assistance to the Village of Jeffersonville in its efforts to secure an additional water source for the Village Water System.

LCPC reached an agreement with the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation so that the Executive Directors of each organization serve *ex officio* on the other's board. This level of coordination allows for improved communication, development, and community outreach.

In 2020, 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.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through a contract with Vermont Agency of Transportation, each RPC coordinates 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 29.7%. Some outcomes of this year's TAC activities include:

1. Discussion concerning testing autonomous vehicles on town roads.
2. Public transportation planning, including GMT Comprehensive study update.
3. Review of the Tree Warden statute updates.
4. TAC continued to provide VTrans with the annual State Project Prioritization Process.

The Lamoille County Road Foremen Network has met four times during this reporting period (July 25, September 13, October 24, and February 19). 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 four road foremen network meetings, over 30 meetings and coordination activities with public transit providers (Green Mountain Transit and Rural Community Transportation), six public coordination and information meetings, over forty planning and coordination meetings with various State agencies and other partners, and over forty meetings and discussions with municipalities to provide coordination and technical assistance on specific transportation issues.

Data collection activities by the LCPC for Vermont Agency of Transportation included at least 40 activities in all towns across the region, including but not limited to bridge/culvert inventories, traffic counts, bike/ped counts, and park-n-ride counts.

LCPC continued to participate in the Vermont Better Roads Program, which works to promote use of Best Management Practices for erosion control and maintenance techniques along municipal roads that save money while protecting and enhancing Vermont's lakes and streams. This year the towns of Johnson, Cambridge, and Wolcott received road erosion inventories funded by this program.

The Grant in Aid program provided funds to 7 Lamoille County towns to aid them in complying with the Municipal Road General Permit. The funds for these grants this year totaled about \$100,000, plus the 20% local match provided by each participating municipality.

The Halloween Storm caused significant damage to roads in the county. FEMA formally declared the county eligible for disaster funding. LCPC worked closely with state and municipal officials to repair or mitigate damage and to get further funding for permanent repairs.

LCPC Transportation Planner facilitated the Green Mountain Byway Committee in partnership with Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC). This grassroots committee recently completed an update to the current Byway Plan and added seven new municipalities (three towns with 4 villages) to the Byway; the expanded Byway is now a 71-mile loop from Waterbury to Stowe, Morristown, Hyde Park, Johnson, and Cambridge, including the Smugglers' Notch Scenic Highway which takes you back to Stowe.

LCPC staff continues to work with the Smugglers' Notch Partnership. The Boardwalk at Barnes Camp continues to be a major attraction for locals and visitors to the Notch. LCPC successfully obtained a Northern Borders Regional Commission grant for parking and stormwater improvements for VT108 within Smugglers' Notch State Park. Work on these projects was scheduled to begin in the spring of 2020, but due to the pandemic there have been delays in implementation. However, it is expected to be back on schedule before the end of the year. A rock fall in the Notch, in an area scheduled to be closed to parking, made the project very timely.

LCPC's Transportation Planner facilitated three elderly & disabled public transit meetings in partnership with Northeast Vermont Development Association, and regularly participates as a voting member to Rural Community Transportation and Green Mountain Transit Boards and sub-committees.

The TPI workplan provides several task categories which support municipal planning and technical assistance, and approximately 54% of LCPC's total TPI budget supports municipal technical assistance. Example projects that fall under municipal technical assistance are:

- Water Quality: provided coordination with ANR and facilitated group and individual discussions with municipal staff, boards, and other partners in all 10 towns.
- Road Erosion Inventories (REI): continued providing this service for towns to comply with the Municipal Roads General Permit: continued coordination and software development input with other RPC staff and ANR; combined other funds with TPI budget to optimize resources and outcomes.
- Planning Studies: participated in coordination and planning between the Town of Eden, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and VT Agency of Natural Resources regarding the use of court settlement funds from the local asbestos mine for projects with both transportation infrastructure and environmental benefits; facilitated and funded a stream-wetland-floodplain restoration project via the Clean Water Block Grant program for a VT Fish & Wildlife Department property located in Wolcott; prepared for implementation of parking and stormwater improvements for Smugglers' Notch State Park area in partnership with Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and Vermont Agency of Transportation; participated in the Green Mountain Transit Comprehensive Planning Study (a.k.a. "Next-Gen" study) and facilitated public input about proposed service changes; participated in two Technical Advisory Committees with Vermont Agency of Transportation, University of Vermont, and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources: one about the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Floodplain Access; the other about the cost efficacy of BMPs related to the Municipal Road General Permit in achieving TMDL milestones.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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, Vermont Agency of Transportation, 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, and assist as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.

- Staff worked with Wolcott, Stowe, and Hyde Park to review flood hazard bylaws.
- Prepared two DEC Block Grant Applications for preliminary design for floodplain/wetland restoration projects in Wolcott to alleviate flood and ice jam damage, while enhancing the community's natural/scenic resources.
- Staff worked with Cambridge, Hyde Park, Jeffersonville, and Wolcott to update their Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Ten of 10 (100%) of municipalities in the region currently have an updated local emergency management plan (LEMP).
- The LCPC continued to provide administrative and technical assistance to LEPC #11 (Local Emergency Planning Committee) to host trainings and emergency preparedness discussions. In FY20, LEPC held presentations on Police services in Lamoille County as well as First Aid training.

Additionally, LCPC assisted with administrative work on Tier II reports, and worked on the Regional Hazardous Materials Response Plan.

- The Bog Road culvert replacement project was completed, overseen by LCPC Staff.
- Staff coordinated with Vermont Forest and Parks and FEMA to implement the plan derived from the Smugglers' Notch Drainage Study to identify alternatives to mitigate flood and erosion damage to Route 108.
- Staff participated in state-wide COVID-19 update calls hosted by VEM.
- Staff distributed resource information and COVID 19 funding sources to municipalities.
- LCPC assisted with a home buyout in Cambridge Village and a home elevation in Jeffersonville.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing LCPC's work, our GIS specialists provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Completed field work for Road Erosion Inventories (REI) for the towns of Cambridge and Johnson including report mapping for Cambridge.
- Updated boundary map for the Town of Belvidere.
- Developed maps for the following:
 - Local Hazard Mitigation Plan map updates for Cambridge, Jeffersonville, Wolcott, and Hyde Park
 - Flood hazard maps for Stowe, Hyde Park, and Wolcott
 - Village Center Designation maps for Hyde Park, Wolcott, and Elmore
 - Belvidere and Elmore culvert inventory map updates
 - VFW Business Park mapping for Hyde Park
 - Zoning/subdivision map updates for the Town of Hyde Park
 - Cambridge Trails map updates

ENERGY CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable, and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunities and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation, and natural resource planning, 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 FY20, LCPC received an Energy Implementation Grant from Efficiency Vermont to support energy committees and municipalities in promoting energy efficiency and driving action. In the fall, we organized a regional Button Up weatherization workshop and supported Hyde Park and Stowe energy committees in coordinating their local weatherization workshops. In the winter and spring, we worked with Efficiency Vermont and seven electric distribution utilities in the region to offer two regional workshops promoting incentives available to Vermonters interested in improving energy efficiency in their homes and transitioning to using products powered by renewable energy sources. In Elmore, in cooperation with the local planning commission, we developed a list of priority actions to implement Elmore's energy plan. As a result of these actions, our local energy partners formed the Lamoille Area Energy Discussion Group that meets quarterly at regional energy roundtables to exchange experiences and plan future events.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The Lamoille County Planning Commission works with the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to assist with completion of the EPA required Tactical Basin Plans. The LCPC works closely with ANR and municipalities to assess and implement water quality projects. The LCPC also works 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, LCPC conducted outreach on updates to water quality standards, river corridor planning, storm water management, and flood resiliency. The LCPC has engaged with ANR regarding changes to River Corridor policies and related statewide incentive programs. The LCPC assisted with municipal outreach regarding the new 3 Acre Rule and General Stormwater Permit. The LCPC also began working with partner RPCs (NRPC, CVRPC, CCRPC) to outreach to water quality partners regarding the proposed establishment of Clean Water Service Providers in the Lamoille and Winooski Basin.
- Assisted the Town of Cambridge in securing an Ecosystem Restoration Grant to develop a Stormwater Master Plan for Jeffersonville and Cambridge Village. The study will focus on preliminary design planning for stormwater runoff hot spots identified by the community.
- Expanded LCPC's hydrological model to further evaluate flood mitigation options in Wolcott and Johnson.
- Engaged partners (US Army Corps of Engineers, VEM, ANR) and the Town/ Village of Johnson in completing a 2020 Flood Evaluation study to identify restoration projects that will reduce flooding and ice jams in Johnson Village.
- Provided project development and land owner outreach for floodplain restoration projects in the Towns of Cambridge, Wolcott, Johnson, and in Jeffersonville Village.
- Secured funds from the Clean Water Block Grant program for project development and land owner outreach for a floodplain restoration project in Wolcott. This project is in partnership with Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy to provide improved water quality, reduced flooding and ice jam damages, and safe passage for wildlife under a state highway bridge.
- Secured Clean Water Block Grant funds for two other floodplain restoration projects - one in Jeffersonville near the confluence of the Brewster and Lamoille Rivers, and one in Wolcott along the Lamoille River.
- The LCPC Staff worked with Wolcott, Stowe, and Hyde Park to review flood hazard bylaws.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Lamoille County Planning Commission specializes in taking the planning process from concept through to implementation and construction. In Cambridge and Jeffersonville, ongoing severe flooding was addressed through analysis and then construction of a new bridge in Jeffersonville and a new culvert under Route 15 in the village of Jeffersonville. Modeling the Lamoille River was a key element from planning to implementation.

Creation of a Model of the Entire Main Stem of the Lamoille River Through Lamoille County

Between 2015 and 2017, 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.

The model continues to be used to test possible alternatives to reduce flooding throughout Lamoille County. The Town of Cambridge used the model to evaluate how high Pumpkin Harbor Road could be elevated without displacing floodwaters downstream into Cambridge Village. The US Army Corps of Engineers will utilize the model as part of the ice jam analysis they will be completing in the Village of Johnson. Through its Brownfields Program, LCPC will also be further refining the model to be used as a tool for critical redevelopment sites in Johnson Village. The model is also being expanded by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife to evaluate floodplain restoration options on Department owned land in the Town of Wolcott. The model is a public document available to any community. Every time the model is used for a community project, additional data is added, making it more accurate and valuable for the Region.

Jeffersonville Route 15 Flood Bypass Culvert

LCPC worked with the Village of Jeffersonville and Vermont Agency of Transportation to install a large flood bypass culvert under Route 15. Prior to the installation of the culvert, the Route 15 embankment prevented floodwaters from the Brewster from flowing out of the Village. The culvert was installed over a single weekend in November 2018. A year later, the Village experienced major flooding during the November 1, 2019 flood. The culvert functioned as planned, preventing evacuations and road closures in the Village. As with other mitigation projects in Jeffersonville, LCPC served as project manager for the culvert replacement.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

The Commission continually updates internal financial processes and procedures to ensure compliance with all federal, state and grant requirements. The LCPC recently 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 2019, conducted a fraud risk assessment, 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 2020 fiscal year, the LCPC's total projected revenue of approximately \$800,000 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.

'AT WORK' MAP



The map depicting the range of services provided by the LCPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

LCPC at Work: FY 2020

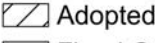
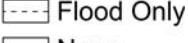
Projects

-  Bridge and Culvert Inventory
-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/Traffic Count

Designation

-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village

Town Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only
-  None

Town Plan Status

-  Current
-  Expired



Northwest Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

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 & 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 on-site training, bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing 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 most municipalities. Topics included: Essentials of Land Use Planning, Community Engagement, Zoning Administrator Roundtable and Open Meeting Law.
- Assisted North Hero with updates to their municipal plan.
- Assisted the Town of Berkshire with updates to their municipal plan.
- Assisted Enosburgh Town and Enosburg Falls with updates to their unified municipal plan.
- Assisted the Town of Fairfield with updates to their municipal plan with Municipal Planning Grant funding.
- Helped the Town of Sheldon apply for and receive village designation for its two village centers.
- Initiated Connecting Sheldon, a strategic planning effort to identify opportunities for bike/ped connections between village and recreation amenities, funded by a Municipal Planning Grant.
- Initiated a Village Master Plan for the Town of North Hero. The project is funded by the Municipal Planning Grant Program.

- Answered general planning and zoning technical assistance questions for Alburgh, Berkshire, Enosburgh, Enosburg Falls, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Franklin, Georgia, Highgate, Montgomery, North Hero, Richford, Sheldon, St. Albans City, St. Albans Town, South Hero, and Swanton.

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 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 an online indicator report with [regularly updated online 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 Project Review Committee reviewed six Section 248 applications and one Act 250 major applications (thirteen Act 250 minor applications) for conformance with the regional plan. The committee made final determinations on all 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 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 2 active EPA Brownfields grants, including one Revolving Loan Fund and one assessment grant which is split between hazardous materials and petroleum assessment. During FY19, the following projects were either finished, ongoing or started.

Assessment Projects:

- *Young Landfill, Highgate.* A prospective purchaser is working with the Town of Highgate on assessing the former Young Landfill for potential solar development to serve an adjacent industrial area. NRPC has funded a data gap analysis and phase 2 workplan, a property survey and step 1 of the phase 2 assessment.
- *24 Maple St. (Colony Square Apartments), St. Albans City.* A prospective purchaser worked with the current property owner to enter NRPC’s Brownfields Program to complete a Phase 1 Assessment and Phase 2 Workplan. This property is located on the former St. Albans Gas and Light facility, a coal gasification plant. There are known releases and response actions from EPA. The work completed by the NRPC provided the prospective purchaser with critical information, which caused him to reconsider the purchase of this property.

- *Fonda, St. Albans City.* St. Albans City is implementing a new development plan at the Fonda brownfields property, which includes 3 development lots and an access road along the western property boundary. Lot 3 at the rear of the property will be developed as the new home of the American Rail Dispatching Center, retaining 63 jobs within St. Albans City's downtown center. A developer is constructing a \$10,000 square foot building to lease to the American Rail Dispatching Center (ARDC).
- *200 Bridge Street, Sheldon.* The Town of Sheldon in cooperation with the Sheldon Historical Society has entered the Brownfields Program and NRPC has funded a phase 1 assessment, ground penetrating radar assessment, QAPP and a phase 2 assessment. The historical society plans to restore the building for use as a museum and office space.
- *113 Main Street, Richford.* NRPC was hired by the Town of Richford in coordination with the Richford Economic Advancement Corporation to provide project management and coordination of vision and master plan development for 113 Main Street, funded by a Municipal Planning Grant. In coordination with this project the Vermont Brownfields Program funded a Corrective Action Plan. Implementation is dependent on the construction of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Extension that is planned to bisect the property.

Cleanup Projects:

- *Maiden Lane Housing Development, St. Albans City.* New 30-unit subsidized affordable rental building and a 33-unit subsidized workforce rate building with common parking underground. Redevelopment is part of a larger "Congress and Main Redevelopment", which includes a new home for the Community College of Vermont, a Nurse Training Program, office and retail space. NRPC's RLF is funding \$398,000 in cleanup costs (\$100,000 of which is a sub-grant), which largely consists of soil disposal costs.
- *Montpelier Granite Works, Montpelier.* 15,000 +/- square foot commercial/ mixed use building on 1.6-acre site, the reuse of which is anticipated to generate 60 new jobs. NRPC's RLF contributed \$200,000 in loan funds to the cleanup required at this former granite foundry.
- *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, phase 2 assessment and corrective action plan. The property is currently undergoing redevelopment and remediation and the brownfields program is funding oversight and completion reporting for the corrective action plan. The property owner is renovating the space into a ballet studio and apartments.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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

NRPC coordinates the [Northern Vermont Economic Development District \(NVEDD\)](#) in partnership with the three RDCs and RPCs in the six northern counties. An advisory board helped to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that was approved by EDA and is updated [annually](#). NRPC serves as the administrative coordinator for NVEDD. NRPC provides grant administrative support for Northern Borders Regional Commission grantees.

- Key partner and organizer of *In Good Taste*, an annual local food event.
- Assisted the City of St. Albans to administer a VCDP Planning Grant on behalf of the City of St. Albans for pre-development and planning for the expansion of a childcare facility and wrote a successful implementation grant for purchase and renovation of the building.
- Provided project management support to the Alburgh Family Clubhouse, a local 501c3 organization, for the construction of a new childcare center to be located on the Alburgh School campus. Assisted the Town of Alburgh administer a Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) Planning Grant for pre-development and planning work related to the construction of the new childcare facility. NRPC also assisted Alburgh School District administer a Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) grant to construct the new childcare facility.
- Assisted the Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH) on two successful Northern Border Regional Commission grants for purchase and eventual non-profit transition of a local grocery store. This effort has saved the Town of Richford from losing its only grocery store. The grant will fund a social grocery coordinator position to integrate programs addressing food insecurity, access and nutrition.
- Assisted with a successful USDA Rural Development grant application to fund an Economic Development Coordinator for the Town of Richford.
- Received a disaster resiliency grant to complete agricultural resiliency projects including supporting local food distribution, developing an agricultural apprenticeship program in partnership with Community College of VT and area technical centers, expanding the gleaning program, and education for municipal officials on local actions to support agriculture.

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 NRPC

Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

| | |
|---|----|
| # of TAC meetings held | 7 |
| # of non-municipal TAC members actively engaged in transportation planning via the TAC meetings | 3 |
| # of municipalities actively engaged in transportation planning | 23 |
| # of RPC coordination activities with municipalities and VTrans | 7 |

Objective 2

Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

| | |
|--|---|
| # of regional transportation plans that are current (within 8 years) | 1 |
| # of Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation | 3 |
| # of Section 248 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| # of coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers | 5 |
| # of VTrans committees that involves RPC staff participation | 1 |
| # of regions participating in Project Prioritization | 1 |

Objective 3

Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

| | |
|--|----|
| # of municipalities participating in road foreman meetings annually | 0 |
| Total # of programs that RPCs municipalities assisted with transportation related grants | 9 |
| % of budget spent on municipal technical assistance | 45 |
| # of municipal transportation inventories conducted | 2 |
| # of municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken | 1 |
| # of municipalities assisted with transportation element of municipal/town plan | 4 |
| # of road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and using other funding sources | 3 |

Objective 4

Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

| | |
|---|---|
| # of data collection activities conducted specifically for VTrans | 8 |
|---|---|

Transportation Planning Highlights

- NRPC hosted a local legislator roundtable as part of our December TAC meeting. Discussion items included: Making our roadways safer; Managing our roadways and public facilities to keep our waters clean; Ensuring our towns have the tools they need to maintain a safe and cost effect transportation network; and Closing the public transit funding gap.
- Completed a wayfinding and marketing plan for the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail with a Northern Borders Regional Commission grant. In FY21 New signs will be installed and new marketing materials produced.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Vermont 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 Emergency Management Directors, Emergency Management Coordinators, first responders and planners throughout the State. 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 current Covid-19 Global Pandemic, the 2020 Halloween Storm, Tropical Storm and Lake Champlain Flood in 2011, and other state declared and local disasters. Twenty-one municipalities (95%) in the region currently have an updated local emergency management plan. Eighteen municipalities (90%) 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 Management Plans (LEMPs).
- Served as the Local Liaison to municipalities for the Planning Section of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) following severe weather events such as the Halloween Storm. Duties include establishing direct contact with municipal EMDs /EMCs to assess damages, compiling damage assessments in coordination with Vermont Agency of Transportation and Department of Environmental Conservation 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.
- Staff supported FEMA, VEM and the Small Business Association during damage assessment field visits to assess public and private damages from the Halloween Storm throughout Franklin County.
- 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 Individual and Family Assistance Task Force which coordinates immediate and long-term recovery efforts to meet the basic housing and subsistence needs of affected individuals and families following a disaster.
- Provided data and information to municipalities for hazard mitigation grant program applications for transportation infrastructure improvements, emergency generators, home buyouts in hazardous areas and landslide risk analysis study.

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 municipalities updating their plans and bylaws. Any new or updated zoning shapefiles are added to the Vermont Open Geodata Portal website yearly (<https://geodata.vermont.gov/>).
- Prepared and updated Village Designation Maps for communities seeking village designation and renewal.
- Completed [E911 Community Maps](#) for all municipalities for use by town officials, emergency responders and others.

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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.

- Drafted enhanced energy plans for Fletcher and Berkshire. The enhanced energy plans will allow the municipalities to meet the standards in Act 174 and receive a *determination of energy compliance* from NRPC.
- Coordinated statewide RPC efforts to provide custom technical assistance to municipalities seeking to meet the standards in Act 174 and updated the “Municipal Enhanced Energy Planning in Vermont – Best Practices and Resources” guide.
- Developed guidelines to determine if a proposed net-metering solar facility site is a “preferred site,” as defined by the state net-metering rules.
- Actively participated in the review of 6 large solar net-metering facilities (500 kW) seeking a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Utility Commission.
- Coordinated energy efficiency workshops and supported the development of local energy committees in coordination with Efficiency Vermont.

WATERSHED PLANNING & 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 and Lake Carmi TMDLs. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Continued to work with towns developing water quality related language in town plans and bylaws related to shoreline, stream buffers, floodplain and river corridor regulations.
- Assisted the state’s Watershed Coordinators with Plan development and implementation for the Northern Lake Champlain Basin.
- Reviewed the Northern Lake Champlain Basin Plan for conformance with the NRPC Regional Plan.
- Continued management of 3 municipal stormwater projects with the DEC CWIP Year 1 Clean Water Block Grant program for the following municipalities: City of St. Albans, Town of St. Albans, Town of Franklin.
- Initiated management of 4 stormwater projects with the DEC CWIP Year 2 Design Implementation Block Grant program for the following entities: City of St. Albans, Town of Richford, Highgate Elementary.
- Completing a project to identify priority transportation related stormwater projects for further design in the Missisquoi Basin. Funded through a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to NRPC.
- Continuing project development for water quality improvement projects in partnership with multiple organizations (Regional Planning Commissions, Conservation Districts, local watershed organizations). Funded by a VT Department of Environmental Conservation Partnership Block Grant to NRPC.
- Initiated an effort to identify and construct solutions to erosion issues on private and park roads in the Lake Carmi watershed. Funded by a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to NRPC.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Healthy Roots

In FY 20 the Healthy Roots Collaborative (HRC) including three staff members moved under the umbrella of NRPC. HRC promotes the local food economy with programs supporting farm and food businesses, local food access and gleaning. Three staff members oversee the programs with input from an advisory committee of farmers, producers and buyers.

Grants in Aid Program

NRPC coordinates a statewide program sponsored by the VT Department of Environmental Conservation. The Municipal Grants in Aid Program provides funding for municipalities to bring segments of roadway into compliance with the Municipal Roads General Permit, which sets standards for road improvements to help decrease runoff. For FY20, over 200 municipalities signed up to participate in the program. Construction totals are not yet available because the construction deadline was extended due to construction delays related to COVID-19. In the NRPC region in FY 19, 16 municipalities completed local road construction projects that will decrease runoff and lessen stormwater impacts to our waterways.

Planning for Prevention

NRPC partnered with Franklin County Caring Communities to complete a new guide for municipalities addressing prevention. The [guide](#) contains concrete actions municipalities can take to support overall community health, including substance abuse prevention, access to healthy foods, and promoting exercise.

Regional Stormwater Education Program

The Town and City of St Albans have partnered with NRPC to manage and implement the 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 & FUNDING

NRPC owns its building at 75 Fairfield Street in St. Albans, purchased in 2013. This provides budget certainty and enables NRPC to hold and manage an asset rather than pay rent. Planned renovation costs over the next three years are included in the budget and budget reserves, and the Board has adopted an accelerated mortgage repayment plan. Annual building expenses are projected to decline within ten years of purchase. In the last quarter of FY 20 NRPC staff began working virtually due to the COVID-19 state of emergency. The office was regularly vacant and some operating expenses decreased, while others increased due to purchases necessary for all staff to work remotely.

The Board utilizes a reserve fund policy 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 20 the NRPC budget was \$6.96 million. The Municipal Grants in Aid program accounted for \$5.3 million of the budget, leaving an operating budget for NRPC of \$1.66 million. Revenue sources included state and federal performance contracts, grants and local assessments. Virtually all 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 municipal 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). Municipal 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.

NRPC is still determining the budget impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. An audit is currently underway and will be completed in the fall of 2020. NRPC has had no audit findings in over ten years and as such is considered a 'low risk' grantee by federal agencies. Staffing in FY 20 included 12 employees: Executive Director, Assistant Director, Senior Planners (3), Regional Planner (2), GIS Technician, Office Administrator and Healthy Roots Coordinator (3). Six of the eight employees have been with NRPC for fifteen years or more. Two AmeriCorps VISTA employees also joined NRPC in FY 20.

'AT WORK' MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the NRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

NRPC at Work: FY 2020



- Projects**
- Brownfield Assistance
 - Clean Water Activities
 - Enhanced Energy Planning
 - Emergency Planning
 - Grant Writing
 - Economic Development
 - Mapping
 - Planning and Zoning Assistance
 - Road Erosion Inventory
 - Transportation Planning Assistance/Traffic Count

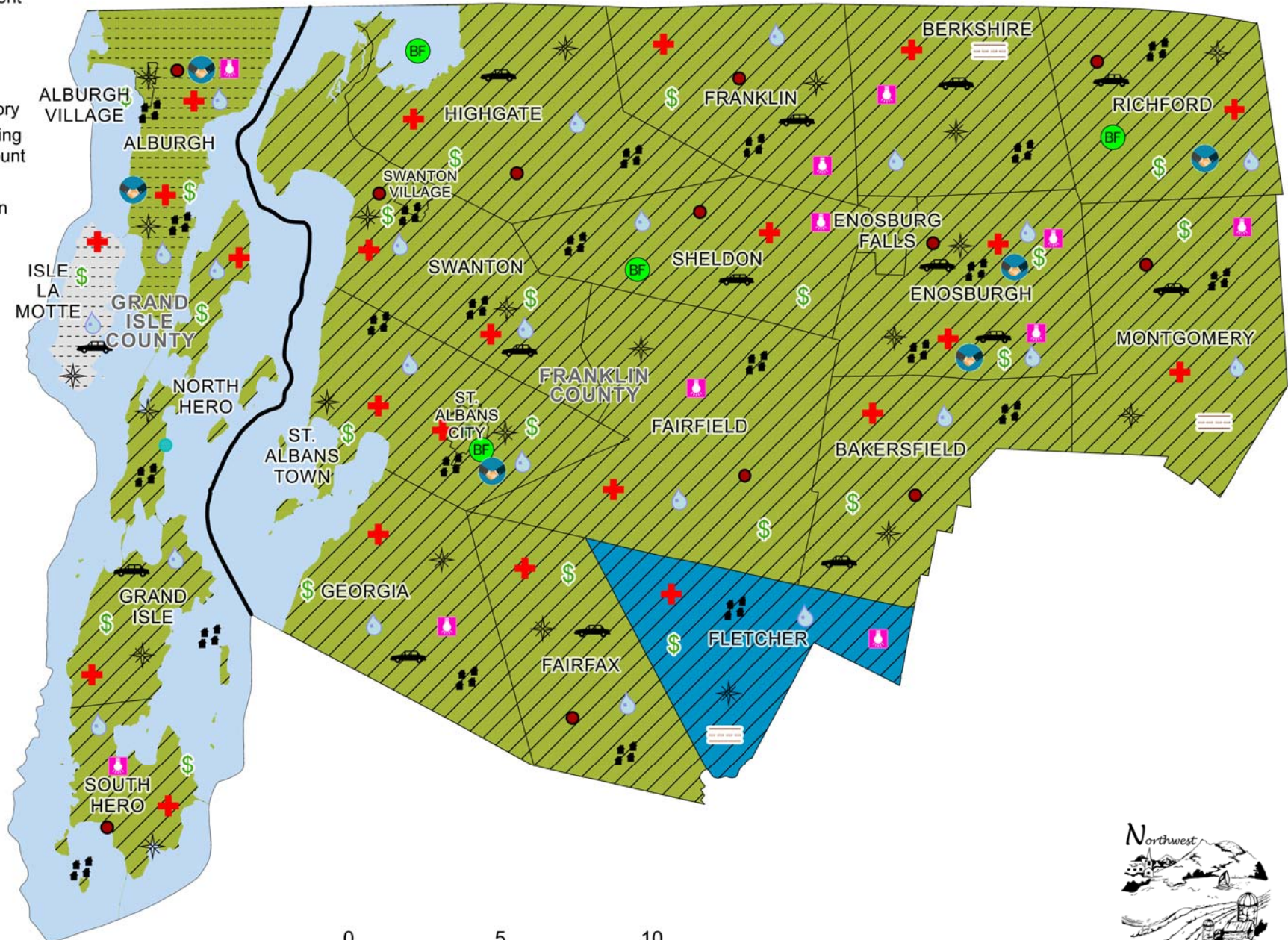
- Designation**
- Designated Downtown
 - Designated Village

Town Bylaw Status

- Adopted
- Flood Only

Town Plan Status

- Current
- Expired
- No Town Plan
- County Boundary



0 5 10 Miles



Northeastern Vermont Development Association

FY 2020 Annual Report

The Northeast Kingdom, a uniquely rural region with some of the lowest population densities in the state, is also VAPDA's largest service area. We encompass 50 municipalities, two designated downtowns, and 36 village centers. Our staff of ten do "double-duty", serving as the NEK's regional planning commission and economic development corporation. This year, despite some unprecedented challenges, we delivered thousands of hours of technical assistance in service of our mission: "to improve the quality of life in the Northeast Kingdom through planning, promoting economic development, and preserving the region's natural environment."

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

Our communities have a time-honored commitment to planning. As of September 1, we have 41 municipalities with current municipal plans – a record high. Despite our rural status, we also have 34 municipalities with zoning. Two towns are currently working on plan or bylaw amendments, and two communities with expired plans are scheduled to adopt new plans this year.

Very few of our municipalities have the resources to support dedicated planning staff, so the needs of our region are varied and extensive. While our traditional service delivery has been face-to-face, our planning staff were able to quickly pivot to virtual, socially distanced support to minimize disruption from COVID 19. Here is a sampling of our planning activities in FY2020:

- NVDA staff helped the following communities obtain Village Center Designation: Waterford, Ryegate, Peacham, Irasburg, and Groton. These designations will help to further community development efforts that currently include upgrades to cultural facilities, assessment of affordable housing, and establishment of a daycare center.
- Municipal Planning Grants are a vital element of our service delivery, and our municipalities rely heavily on this grant program to create and implement plans to establish vibrant and resilient communities. In FY2020, we helped Newport City obtain a grant to develop a new visionary city plan that incorporates recent initiatives such as the Waterfront Master Plan. We also obtained a grant for the Town of Westfield to pursue a housing study that focuses on potential reuses for a now-closed assisted living facility. Also, staff wrote a grant on behalf of a multi-town consortium to fund a feasibility study for regional fire-protection services. Finally, NVDA administered a grant to establish the NEK Gravel Rides Program (www.nekgravel.org), which launched in February. The program promotes the region's gravel road cycling routes to visitors and year-round residents alike, educates riders on safety issues, and strengthens connections between communities.
- NVDA provides ongoing technical assistance to the Town of St. Johnsbury in implementing its riverfront master plan and its various housing initiatives. An NVDA staff member serves on the advisory committee for the St. Johnsbury Rental Advisory Grant Program, which recently awarded \$6,313 to rental property owners to help fund improvements to accessibility and safety.

- Our staff assisted with the update and adoption of municipal plans for the towns of Norton, Troy, and Brunswick, and the Unified Towns and Gores.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. NVDA's plan, which was last amended in 2018 to meet the enhanced energy planning requirements of Act 174, helps guide local planning efforts by offering extensive data and perspective. (www.nvda.net/regional-plan.php)

- NVDA is the first regional planning commission to adopt a Regional Food System Plan (www.nvda.net/agriculture.php). After participating on advisory team that developed a training module for food access planning through the Farm to Plate Network, we collaborated with Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Hunger Free Vermont, and Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital to develop an online workshop for food access planning. This is a timely endeavor, as hunger rates have increased exponentially during the pandemic. Our initial training, held early this summer, attracted more than 70 attendees statewide. We did a second online training to the Well Nourished Collaborative Action Network of NEK Prosper, a group that strives to improve health in our region.
- Our work with the Northeast Kingdom Food Cycle Coalition continues as well. We are currently supporting the efforts of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District as they explore the feasibility of a delivery and distribution system for rescued food. Their work is funded by a USDA Rural Development Business Development Grant.
- In FY2020, NVDA staff updated the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the six-county Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD). The CEDS serves all 115 municipalities of Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans Counties. The CEDS, which is required for entities in the region to be eligible to receive grant funding from the Economic Development Administration, provides an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the region's economy. (<http://www.nvda.net/CEDS.php>)
- NVDA has also embarked on an extensive update to our regional Transportation Plan. The update is especially relevant in the face of the global pandemic, which has contributed to a dramatic reduction in total vehicle miles travelled (VMTs). While the state's Comprehensive Energy Strategy calls for a dramatic reduction in carbon emissions, COVID has shown us that improved telecommuting capacity can reduce VMTs. What will we need to complete the region's "last mile" to support more businesses and workers? The transportation planning and Essex County economic recovery teams have been focused on filling the gaps in our broadband infrastructure. The transportation planning team is also exploring the expanded use of rail.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This year our technical assistance was largely focused on aligning local businesses with CARES Act relief. NVDA and the statewide network of regional development corporation partners has worked closely

with the Agency of Commerce to implement Vermont's Economy Recovery Program. Beginning with the federal SBA programs and following with VT CARES Act funding for programs from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Department of Taxes, and other departments, NVDA staff have worked to ensure that eligible businesses access the necessary funds for their survival. We significantly broadened our outreach through our newsletters, website, social media, and participation in state and regional conversations focused on economic recovery.

We also continued to pursue investments in our region's economic sectors that are poised to accelerate economic recovery:

- The work on the Hardwick Yellow Barn Business Accelerator continued. In FY2020, NVDA was instrumental in obtaining more than \$4 million in grants to fund construction of this project. Grants included the Economic Development Administration, the Vermont Community Development Program, and the Northeast Heritage Economic Partnership. We also helped to secure more than \$2 million in financing for this \$12 million+ construction project, which, when completed, could result in total impacts of 105 new jobs in five years, as well as an increase of annual income in the Hardwick area by \$8.1 million and a population increase of 110 over the same period. (http://nvda.net/yellow_barn/)
- In October 2019, NVDA was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission to advance the outdoor recreation economy in the Northeast Kingdom. Most funds were to be sub-awarded to local recreation-based projects throughout the 3-county region. Working in partnership with the Northern Forest Center and the NEK Collaborative, NVDA was able to award funding to 4 projects in May 2020. Funds will go to the Northwoods Stewardship Center (roof replacement at their recreation & education center); Craftsbury Community Care Center (handicap accessible trail); Greensboro Land Trust (trail connector and signage & safety improvements); and, Town of Granby (Cow Mountain Pond trail maintenance & signage). A second round of grants will be available in 2021, and other NBRC funding will be used to advance regional marketing of the Northeast Kingdom.
- NVDA is managing Northern Border Regional Commission grant funds on behalf of the St. Johnsbury Three Rivers Path. The project is expected to transform the Bay Street area, extend the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail into the heart of St. Johnsbury's downtown, and expand economic opportunities in the recreation and tourism sector.
- Three municipalities in NVDA's region were among those with designated Opportunity Zones: St. Johnsbury, Lyndon, and Newport City. NVDA staff assisted with the development and dissemination of prospectuses for the Opportunity Zones in those communities.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Regional Planning Commissions 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. The regional planning commissions

serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state, and federal transportation network advancement. This year, we have had to pivot to appropriate format for TAC meetings, as well as Road Foreman meetings, which provide important training on best practices, regulatory compliance and funding opportunities.

NVDA facilitates a regional Rivers and Roads Working group made up of DEC Staff, County Conservation District Managers, VTrans Maintenance District Staff, and other regional partners. We continue to assist municipalities with various aspects of stormwater mitigation related to town highways and private landowner access issues related to stormwater.

NVDA also works closely with the non-profit service provider, Rural Community Transportation (RCT), which uses multiple modes of transportation to serve the region: buses, wheelchair accessible vans, taxis, and volunteer drivers. NVDA serves on the RCT Board of Directors, where we leverage our many partnerships and collaborations throughout our region to benefit public transit and improve the transportation opportunities for the least fortunate and most in need citizens. RCT is also making efforts to bring awareness of transportation services to the general population.

NVDA staff is also able to provide technical assistance for special projects, such as the installation of advisory shoulders on the Peacham Road in Danville. The experimental shoulder markings, which required approval from the Federal Highway Administration, are among the first efforts to implement the Danville Route 2/Lamoille Valley Rail Trail corridor master plan. The markings create usable shoulders for walkers and cyclists along a well-travelled roadway with inadequate shoulders. Drivers can only encroach on the shoulders when no walkers or cyclists are present.

Here are our accomplishments, as they relate to Transportation Planning Initiative Work Program:

Objective 1: Enhance cooperation and coordination between VTrans, RPC regions, and municipalities.

- 5 TAC meetings held
- 2 non-municipal TAC members actively engaged in transportation planning
- 45 municipalities actively engaged in transportation planning
- 13 RPC coordination activities with municipalities and VTrans

Objective 2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Regional transportation plan that is current (within 8 years) – note our plan, last updated in 2018, is current, but being updated now
- 2 Act 25 applications with regional planning commission comments relating to transportation
- 0 Section 248 applications with regional planning commission comments relating to transportation
- 4 coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers
- 0 VTrans committees that involve regional planning commission staff participation
- Participation in project prioritization

Objective 3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- 43 municipalities participating in road foreman meetings annually
- 6 municipalities assisted with transportation related grants
- 45% of budget spent on municipal technical assistance
- 3 municipal transportation inventories conducted
- 2 municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken
- 15 municipalities assisted with transportation element of municipal/town plan
- 8 road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and using other funding sources

Objective 4: Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

- 70 data collection activities conducted specifically for VTrans

Objective 5: Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

- See above: Rivers and Roads, etc.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER RESILIENCE

The regional planning commissions play a key role in emergency management through its work with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, Vermont Agency of Transportation, and the Agency of Natural Resources. Our focus is primarily on mitigation and preparedness, and we work with each community to identify vulnerabilities and prioritize actions to eliminate or lessen the risk. Additionally, NVDA staff work with member communities to write and update flood hazard regulations, prepare FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans, and coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans. We also assist during response and recovery in larger-scale events, such as federally declared disasters.

- Throughout the COVID response, NVDA staff has participated in numerous conference calls and Zoom meetings. We have also monitored the Governor's press conferences to keep our communities informed.
- Every community is required to have an updated Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). NVDA staff assisted every municipality in our region with the update and adoption process. We currently have 43 communities with adopted LEMPs for FY2020, and three more are pending adoption.
- Local Hazard Mitigation Plans identify predominant risks to a community and identify ways to lessen their impacts. They are required for any community seeking FEMA hazard mitigation funds. In recent years, the requirements for the plan have become fairly extensive. This year, NVDA helped the following municipalities with preparation of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans: Derby, Burke, Sutton, Sheffield, Wheelock, Groton, Westfield, Troy, and Norton.
- NVDA staff continue to participate in special planning exercises, such as the Great Bay Hydro Corp. Dam Emergency Action Seminar. NVDA hosted an 8-hour EMD course in March. Since this spring, the pandemic has forced training exercises to shift to an on-line environment. NVDA

staff participated in the Training, Exercise and Planning workshop (virtually) hosted by Vermont Emergency Management.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) SERVICES

GIS mapping is embedded in all NVDA's technical support programs in planning and economic development. Our mapping supports planners and community development initiatives by providing geographical and spatial analysis.

- Our mapping is essential for proposed and existing designated village centers. Because we use a format acceptable to the Village Center Designation board, our municipalities can easily apply to this popular program. (*See Municipal Planning and Implementation*)
- We continue to provide maps for town plans to depict land use and well as development patterns and constraints to development. We also provided zoning bylaw district maps. Our zoning formats include wall-sized and ledger-sized (for easy download and remote printing.)
- In FY2020 NVDA GIS staff mapped our regional broadband assets in support of the Communications Union District (CUD) for the Northeast Kingdom region. (*See Special Projects*)

ENERGY CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Reducing our region's carbon footprint in pursuit of statewide energy goals takes a comprehensive effort, so NVDA integrates energy planning with land use, transportation, natural resources, and economic development. We also participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- "Enhanced" energy plans, authorized under Act 174, give municipalities heightened consideration in Section 248 review of proposed renewable energy projects, a form of development that is exempt from zoning. This year, we worked with the towns of Barnet, Sutton, St. Johnsbury, and Troy to create local enhanced energy plans.
- In FY2020, we continued our outreach and support to local energy committees. Our programming quickly moved to an online environment after the start of the pandemic. In partnership with the Energy Action Network, Vermont Natural Resources Council, and HEAT Squad, we offered two well attended webinars. We will continue our online programming through the end of the calendar year. Additionally, our e-news Energy Update was widely distributed to help get the word out about unprecedented incentives for weatherization and fuel switching.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Nonpoint source pollution, such as phosphorous loading, is a key concern statewide. NVDA continues to engage in partnerships with state agencies, municipalities, and various public and private organizations to achieve holistic solutions. The sheer size of our region, which covers one-fifth of the state's land mass, creates unique challenges for NVDA's planning staff. Seven basins cross our region. Additionally, two basin planning areas -- the Passumpsic and Memphremagog -- are completely

contained in our region, so we do not share planning responsibilities with other regional planning commissions.

- NVDA's Water Quality Advisory Committee is responsible for reviewing Tactical Basin Plans for conformance with NVDA's Regional Plan. These plans are important because they identify impaired areas, as well as corrective measures to restore water quality. The plans are useful to local planning commissions as they provide insight into water quality issues in their respective communities. Our advisory committee had a busy year. Under NVDA staff direction, the four-member panel reviewed plans for the Passumpsic and the Stevens-Wells-Waits-Ompompanoosuc watersheds. They are currently reviewing the Upper Connecticut plan.
- Road Erosion Inventories of hydrologically-connected road segments allow municipalities to meet the requirements of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Municipal Roads General Permit. This year, our staff completed eight inventories, bringing the number of municipalities served to 50.
- Regional planning commissions continued to partner with the DEC to implement best management projects to improve road segments through the DEC's Grants in Aid program. As the regional partner, NVDA manages each grant, performs an initial assessment of the road segment, and reassesses the road segment after the work is completed. Forty of our towns have participated in this program.
- Managing development in areas prone to flooding also is an important part of our water quality outreach. In FY2020, NVDA staff provided technical assistance to the towns of Jay and Westmore to address flood hazard regulation.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- NVDA is on track to complete its EPA Coalition grant a year early. Assessment funds helped several brownfields redevelopment projects to go forward, including the gut rehabilitation of the landmark Depot Square Apartments in St. Johnsbury, the transformation of the former St. Jay Hardware building into the St. Johnsbury Distillery; the cleanup and subdivision of the former Portland Pipeline Pumping Station site in Sutton; the renovation and reuse planning for a general store in Albany; and numerous other projects in the region that support recreational facilities and economic development.
- NEK Community Broadband – Communications Union District: During the year, NVDA applied for and received grant funding to assist NEK (and Lamoille County) communities to advance local planning efforts around broadband. In the NEK, NVDA used funding from a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to plan for and assess the feasibility of establishing a regional Communications Union District (CUD). In March, 28 towns voted to form a CUD. NVDA applied for and received additional funding from the State of VT's Broadband Innovation Grant to conduct additional planning work on network design and business planning.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

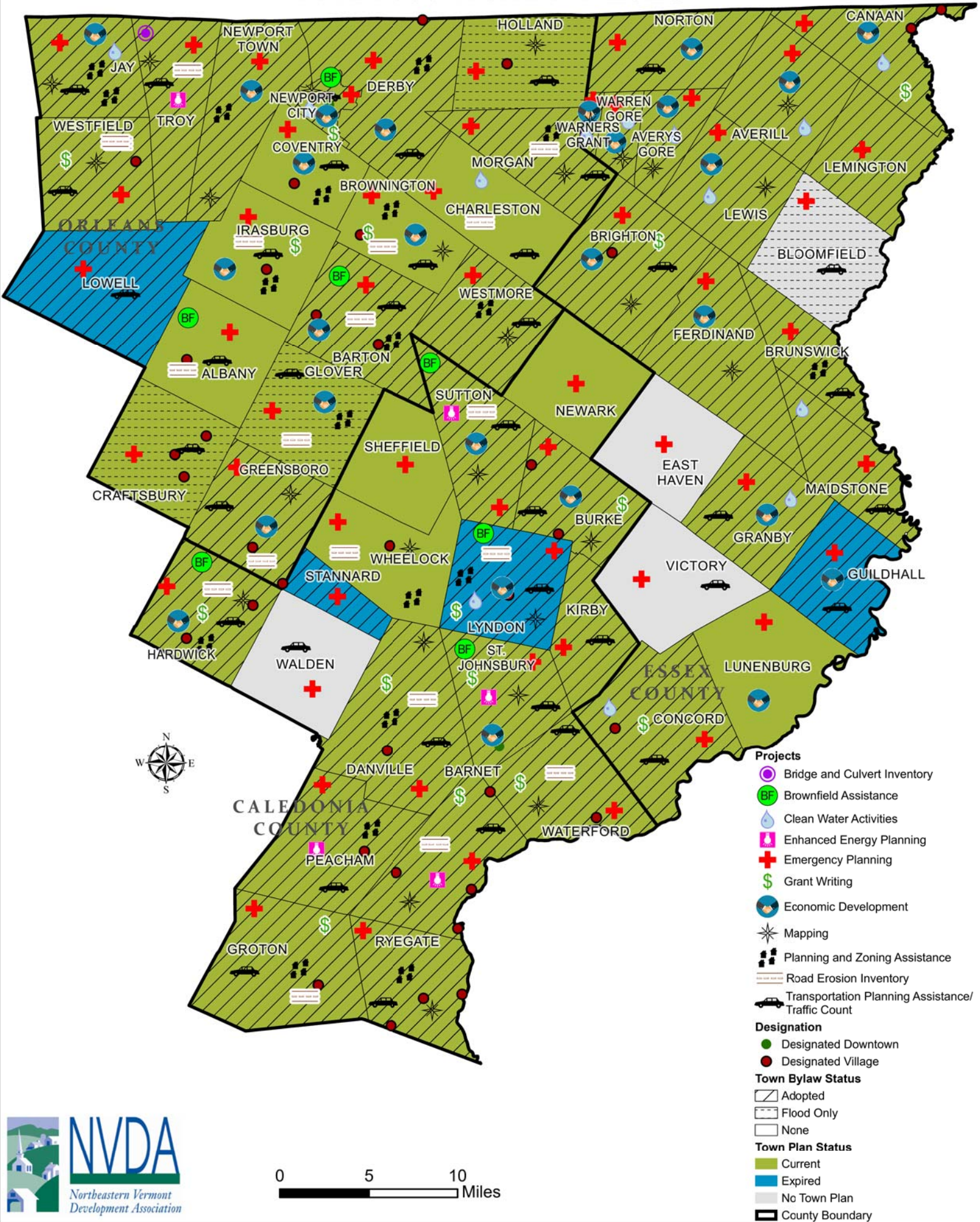
NVDA's revenues came from numerous sources, including a share of the state's property transfer funds; private, state, and federal grants; and annual appropriations from each of our 50+ member communities. We also received rental income from our multi-tenant buildings in St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville, 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 is an approved Non-Profit Community Development Organization, which allows us to operate a revolving loan fund recapitalized by loan repayments from previous economic development projects. In FY2020, the NVDA Revolving Loan Fund Committee modified the terms of a business borrower impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The committee also provided a time extension for loan repayment for a community store project experiencing delays due to additional brownfield assessment activities.
- As with previous years, our most recent audit (FY2019) produced no significant findings. Our FY2020 will be made available at the end of the calendar year.
- NVDA continued the publication and distribution of its regular e-newsletters with a circulation of about 1,300. The e-newsletter went to a twice a month distribution schedule to keep readers informed of COVID-19 and economic recovery opportunity updates.
- NVDA's website is a reliable source of detailed information on each of its member municipalities. We make every effort to keep it up to date so that users can access and download current plans, bylaws, maps, and Census data.

'AT WORK' MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the NVDA to member municipalities is included on the next page.

NVDA at Work: FY 2020



Rutland Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

The Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) represents the 27 municipalities of the Rutland Region in Southwest Vermont. Created in 1967, the RRPC leverages the power of people working together to assist its municipalities in providing effective local government and to work cooperatively to address regional issues. The RRPC 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. RRPC staff provide technical services to local, state and federal levels of government and to the Region's non-profits and industries, which are driven by GE, OMYA, Casella, Castleton University, Killington/Pico Ski Resorts and development of solar energy generation infrastructure.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPCs 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.

The RRPC is a resource for towns, a platform for ideas and inspires a vision for the future. It balances local desires, best practices and regional growth for communities that are vibrant today and strong for years to come.

- Rutland Region towns count on the RRPC to provide the tools and information they need to make smart decisions about land use, economic development, energy, transportation, emergency management, and more.
- The RRPC creates opportunities and provide space for people to learn, share and come together around topics that matter and impact our lives.
- A cornerstone of the RRPC is the Rutland Regional Plan. The Plan articulates a vision for the Rutland region: economic, social, and environmental resilience; incremental and long-term growth; urban design for humans; and walkable, connected communities.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & 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, bylaw modernization, grant administration, and implementing newer 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:

- The RRPC worked with Planning Commissions in the towns of Ira, Castleton, Mount Holly, Chittenden, Hubbardton, Brandon, Proctor, Mendon, Danby, and Poultney to develop language for municipal plans and land use bylaws.
- Assisted municipalities with Covid-related planning and grant assistance.
- Worked with ACCD and CNU to create the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods publication.

- Provided guidance and technical assistance to Administrative Officers regarding the Planning and Development Act, specifically Chapter 117.
- Provided Municipal Planning Grant Administration to the towns of Proctor, Danby and Wallingford.
- Provided training to municipalities regarding state land use goals and consistency with planning statutes.
- Provided VCDP Implementation Grant Administration for the Towns of Proctor and Poultney.
- Reviewed approximately 40 Act 250 and Section 248 applications.
- Conducted six Enhanced Consultations to municipalities.
- Worked with the towns of Castleton and Chittenden on Village Center Designations (both new and renewal). Began working with the Town of Ira and Tinmouth to initiate their Village Center Designation.
- Began work with the Rutland Regional Medical Center on the Health Needs Assessment update.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid land use planning. 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.

- Operated the Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board (WIB).
- RRPC began work on CUD creation and coordination, and a Broadband feasibility study for towns in the Rutland Region.
- Worked with municipalities to modernize town plans, bylaws and transportation networks to unlock the long-term growth potential associated with traditional development patterns.
- The RRPC assisted the Towns of Castleton and Chittenden with their village center designations. The Town of Tinmouth will work with the RRPC this year to explore the possibility of designation, and the Town of Ira will complete their application process this year.
- Through the RRPC/WIB partnership, the WIB is actively engaged in a regional service provider mapping project funded by the Vermont Community Foundation.
- Operated the Rutland Region Brownfields Program.
- Held a virtual job fair with the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce.
- Explored funding to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with four other RPCs.
- Economic Development Chapters were updated in the Danby, Proctor, Chittenden, and Mendon municipal plans.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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 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 Management Plans (LEMPs), including offering an LEMP training session. 100% of our municipalities have adopted LEMPs.
- Provided extensive assistance to several towns with preparing single jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans, through a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant. 22 of our 27 municipalities have FEMA approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Hosted bi-monthly in-person roundtables for local emergency management directors and coordinators October through February to disseminate pertinent information, to share best practices and to provide a platform for municipalities to connect around a common mission.
- Coordinated additional trainings in our region on shelter fundamentals and municipal incident action planning, as well as a virtual tabletop exercise for an active threat office shooter scenario.
- Updated the regional public works mutual aid agreement. 24 of our 27 municipalities have signed on to the agreement.
- Supported the planning efforts of the Chittenden Reservoir Emergency Planning Team.
- Participated in the State-wide Cat 4 exercise as well as annual exercises at the Rutland Regional Medical Center and Rutland Regional Airport to strengthen emergency preparedness.
- Three RRPC staff continued training to serve in the State Emergency Operations Center.
- Collected and communicated local damage information from municipalities after one significant storm event, in coordination with Vermont Division of Emergency Management, VTrans and Agency of Natural Resources. This was the November 2019 flood event, which became a Federally declared disaster.
- In response to the COVID-19 state of emergency, hosted weekly and then bi-weekly virtual EMD meetings to monitor local response to the pandemic. Collaborated with the United Way to procure PPE for town officials. Collaborated with the Vermont Farmers Food Center on projects to address food insecurity due to the pandemic.

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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. 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:

- Continued to assist all 27 towns with municipal enhanced energy planning by providing updated energy data analysis, suggested text, and renewable energy maps.
- Three more Rutland Region towns now have enhanced energy plans with Certificates of Energy Compliance from the Department of Public Service and RRPC – Proctor, Tinmouth, Brandon, and

Rutland Town now join Benson and Sudbury as compliant towns. Another four towns are in the process of adopting enhanced energy plans or new energy chapters in their municipal plans.

- RRPC is under contract with Efficiency Vermont to implement regional and local energy plans. Worked with the 12 Rutland Region communities with local energy groups to ensure they have the resources needed to implement renewable energy development and energy conservation goals. Also assisted municipal and local energy committee efforts to promote specific thermal and electrical energy efficiency objectives consistent with Efficiency Vermont's mission.
- The Regional Committee reviewed approximately 30 Section 248 applications in 15 towns for solar electric generation infrastructure and telecommunications facilities.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans and tactical basin 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 RRPC partnered with Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD) to write a successful RFP to VDEC to be the Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) for the South Lake Champlain Watershed. Subsequently, RRPC and PMNRCD were proposed for designation by VDEC as the South Lake Champlain Partnership. RRPC and PMNRCD will administer and oversee water quality projects and funding. RRPC will provide accounting services and manage the stakeholders' council; PMNRCD will provide technical oversight relative to all aspects of project delivery.
- RRPC will be working with Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) which was designated the CWSP for the Otter Creek Watershed. RRPC will assist ACRPC in administering and overseeing water quality projects.
- Assisted VT DEC Watershed Coordinator Angie Allen to finalize the updated Tactical Basin Plan for the Otter Creek Watershed. This tactical basin plan helps address the Vermont Clean Water Initiative and the TMDL for Lake Champlain. Organized regular meetings of the RRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee to assist DEC staff with the Tactical Basin Plan.
- Continued to train municipalities on the provisions of the Clean Water Initiative, including several upcoming mandatory permits and funding opportunities.
- As part of the Clean Water Initiative, RRPC staff worked with Proctor and Mendon on increased protection designations for area waterways. This work was done through the towns' Municipal Plans.
- Worked with Shrewsbury to include River Corridor protections and the latest state river corridor mapping data into its existing floodplain regulations.
- Assisted the Town of Brandon write and adopted new river corridor bylaws.
- Assisted 20 towns in the region in year three of the VTDEC Grants-in-Aid Program. Four of the towns also received Grants in Aid funding to help purchase road maintenance equipment.
- Updated a comprehensive Municipal Protectiveness list of policies and regulations to highlight the accomplishments of and opportunities for additional water quality efforts for the Otter Creek Watershed.
- Under an EPA/VT DEC 604b grant, staff assisted VT DEC with its data management of Clean Water Act projects in current and past Tactical Basin Plans.

- Partnered with the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD) to promote flood resiliency in the Flower Brook watershed which includes Pawlet, Danby and Tinmouth. This watershed was greatly impacted in Tropical Storm Irene. This is funded by the High Meadows Fund.
- Wrote and was awarded two Design Implementation Block Grants – one for Pittsford and the other for Rutland town. Both grants are for 100% designs of stormwater runoff mitigation.
- Continued to administer an Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grant for Chittenden’s Wildcat Road. The U.S. Forest Service was a partner for this in initial design work.
- Worked with Watershed Consulting on two possible Private Public Partnership pilot projects to address the new 3-Acre Permit. Pittsford and Brandon are both being considered for a pilot project.
- RRPC staff is working with PMNRCD to secure FEMA funding for a needed water quality and flood hazard mitigation project in Danby.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and been awarded over 12 million dollars from EPA for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments (ESA) 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 Program (BRP) has existed for 17 years and received approximately \$3 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:

- The BRP coordinated ESA work in four towns, including municipally owned sites such as the Proctor Town Office and Castleton Free Library.
- Phase II ESA work was conducted on the former College of St. Joseph campus in anticipation for a mixed-use complex including assisted residential, a regional health center and City of Rutland recreation facility.
- The BRP continued work 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 historic Downtown Rutland.
- Phase I and Phase II assessment work at the former Lynda Lee Fashions manufacturing facility in Rutland City, is setting the stage for a redevelopment of this historic building. Potential future residential, commercial and civic uses included in the development will further the revitalization of the City’s Northwest Neighborhood.

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.

Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

- Worked with 24 municipalities (89%) in the Rutland Region actively engaged in regional and municipal transportation planning.
- Held 8 Rutland Region Transportation Council (RRTC) meetings.
- Worked with 4 non-municipal representatives actively engaged in the RRTC.
- Coordinated 8 activities with municipalities and VTrans.

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Updates to the transportation chapters of the Rutland Regional Plan.
- Continued membership on Marble Valley Regional Transit District Board of Commissioners.
- Continued membership on the Rutland Airport Committee.
- Coordinated quarterly meetings of regional E&D Public Transit Advisory Committee.
- The RRTC worked with VTrans to prioritize regional transportation projects.
- Provided transportation-related comments on 1 Act 250 application.
- Assisted VTrans with the Public Transit Policy Plan update.
- Established two new regional committees- the Rutland Walk/Bike Council and the Rutland Airport Committee.
- Work on the Transportation Resiliency Planning Toolkit (TRPT) for the Otter Creek (Headwaters to Furnace Brook) Watershed which includes 14 Rutland Region Towns.

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- Held 3 Road Foreman Meetings that focused on Town Road and Bridge Standards, Municipal Roads General Permit, Infrastructure Planning, and more.
- 25% of the transportation budget was spent on municipal technical assistance.
- Completed 13 road erosion and culvert inventories, three traffic counts, two Park & Ride Counts, and quarterly bicycle and pedestrian counts on four locations across the Rutland Region.
- Assisted municipalities with applications and technical support for the Better Roads Program, Better Connections Program, Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Grant Program, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.
- Assisting 4 towns with updates to Transportation Chapters of municipal plans.

- Hosted a Road Erosion Inventory Training at the RRPC. Assisted the Towns of Mendon and Proctor with Transportation Section updates to the Town Plan.
- Assisted Towns of Proctor and Poultney with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Grants.

Objective #4: Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

- Conducted 45 data collection activities for VTrans.

Objective #5: Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

- Public Transit E&D: Conducted outreach for E&D Ridership Survey.
- Public Transit E&D: Assisted MVRTD with proposal and planning for Electric Transit Bus Pilot Program.
- Assisted the Town of Pittsford with VTrans Traffic Safety Meeting to address Route 3
- Resilience: Held 14 local input meetings with municipal officials to determine network criticality for TRPT Otter Creek Headwaters to Furnace Brook Watershed.
- Multi-Modal: Assisted Rutland City to address COVID-19 and transportation by planning the Center Street Pilot Study, a temporary redesign of a Downtown street.

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.

- **Town and Regional Planning** – Worked with the towns of Ira, Castleton, Chittenden, Hubbardton, Shrewsbury, Danby, Proctor, Pittsford, Fair Haven and Poultney to create and/or update municipal plan and zoning maps and to provide technical GIS support. Continued Village Center Designation mapping for Castleton, Chittenden, Ira and Tinmouth. Updated the Future Land Use Map for the Rutland Regional Plan and assisted local landowners with the Current Use program, trail mapping, GIS software assistance and online data and map resources.
- **Bridge and Culvert Inventories** – RRPC GIS staff worked with eleven town road departments to collect culvert data using the commission's GPS and then completed the inventory, mapping, and updates to www.VTCulverts.com for: Fair Haven, Mendon, Middletown Springs, Mount Tabor, Clarendon, Danby, Poultney, Shrewsbury and Wallingford. Began prep. work for next season: Mount Tabor, Tinmouth, Rutland City and Killington.
- **Transportation Mapping** – Provided mapping support for several transportation related town projects and grant applications. Added and updated bridge and culvert inventories, as well as performing road erosion inventory assessments for many towns in the region.
- **Emergency Management** – In support of ongoing emergency management planning and in an effort to inventory and categorize all hazards and potential hazards, RRPC created a regional map of vulnerable sites and areas requiring mitigation, which can be used by all 27 towns. RRPC participated in several training sessions at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- **Resiliency Support** – Worked with VTrans and local consultants on the Transportation Resiliency Planning Tool (TRPT), holding and attending meetings with State and local groups as well as create multiple GIS data sets for use in the online TRPT web application. Provided

several towns with maps of their special flood hazard areas and river corridors and maps for site specific flood hazards.

- **Energy Plans** – Continued to work on energy maps for several towns in the region. Provided detailed maps of potential renewable energy sites.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

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

- Continued to expand RRPC program areas to include broadband deployment, health and wellness planning, workforce planning and emergency management response.
- Updated the RRPC Employee Handbook, Bylaws and Policies.
- Successful completion of FY 2020 Financial and Final Reports, as well as semi-annual reports for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; that included the status of performance measures, budget expenses, and other information.
- Completed FY19 Audit which resulted in "No findings" and was distributed to requesting granting agencies.
- Continued to implement recommendations of the Strategic Plan, including financial and management structure.
- Leveraged ACCD funds to provide match for grants from VTrans, VEM and EPA, which enabled the RRPC to cover indirect costs incurred to expand work into diverse areas of planning.

'AT WORK' MAP



The map depicting the range of services provided by the RRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

RRPC at Work: FY 2020




Projects

-  Bridge and Culvert Inventory
-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/
Traffic Count



Designation

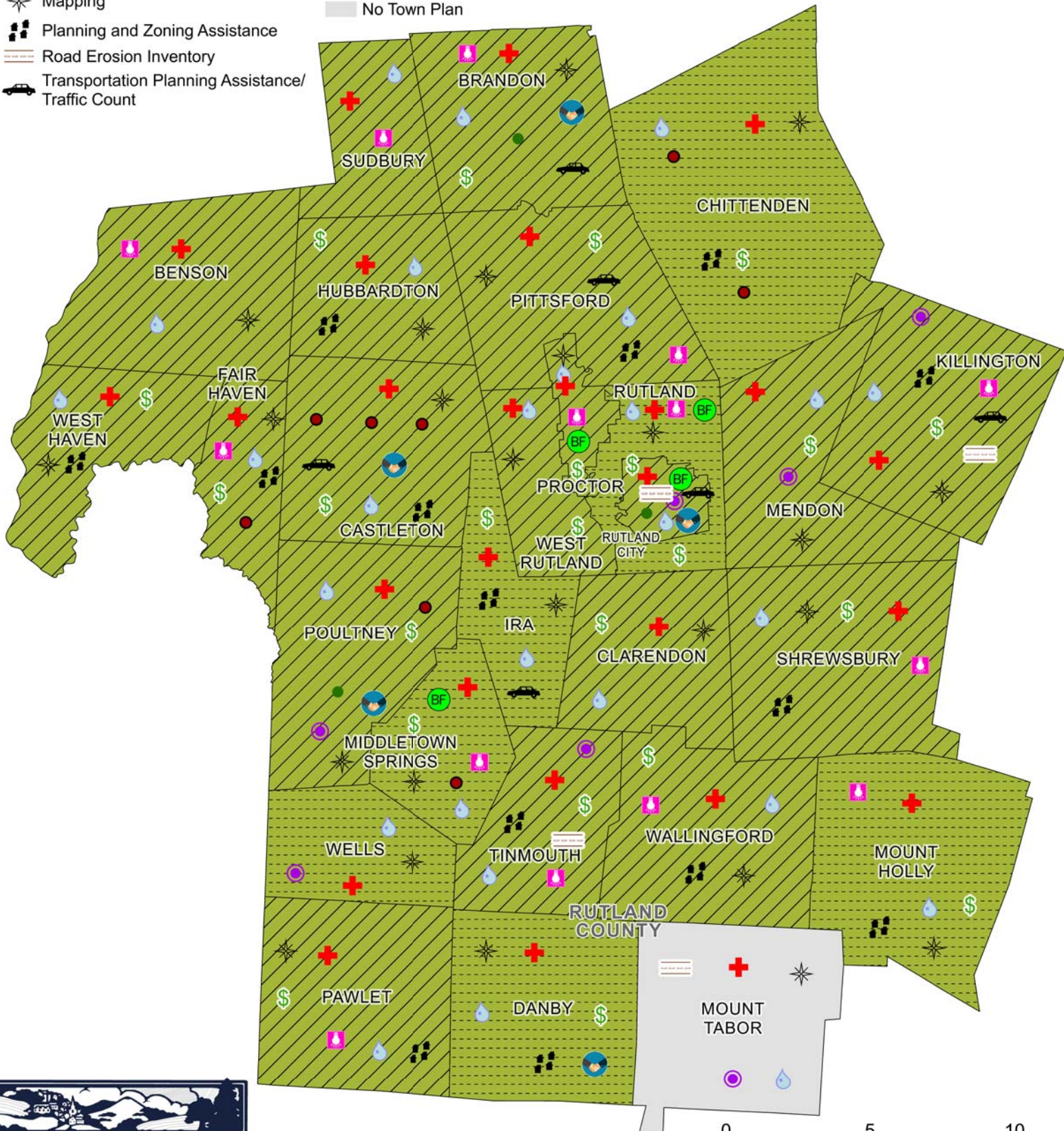
-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village

Town Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only
-  None

Town Plan Status

-  Current
-  No Town Plan



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

0 5 10 Miles

Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

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 & 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 Ludlow, Reading and West Windsor.
- Helped planning commissions to prepare zoning bylaw updates in Reading, Springfield and Windsor.
- Assisted with local efforts to implement municipal plans and supporting plans, including in Weathersfield and Springfield.

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 adopted on November 18, 2014 and amended on June 25, 2018. We are preparing and refining updates to land use, natural resources and other chapters with our Regional Plan Committee.
- 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.
 - Assisted in finalizing a multi-jurisdictional outdoor recreation plan for Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor, and to help to implement recommendations.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments and clean-up 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 10 properties in 4 towns:
 - Ludlow: Black River High School;
 - West Windsor: Burke Garage;
 - Weathersfield: Russel Autobody;
 - Springfield: 16-20 Park Street, Park Street School, and Woolson Block;
 - Windsor: Goodyear site, 11 River Street, 7 Maple Street, and Windsor Resource Center.
- The SWCRPC continues to work with Springfield Regional Development Corporation on the clean-up of various properties and with the Town of Springfield as Administrator for their Brownfields EPA Assessment Grant Program.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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

- Assisted the East Central Vermont Economic Development District (ECVEDD) with drafting and adopting a new 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This plan replaces the District's 2016-2021 CEDS, and features strategies and actions that promote regional resilience, business innovation, workforce development and retention, robust infrastructure, quality of life and place, and healthy communities. It also prioritizes economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19.
- Assisted in drafting, presenting and disseminating "Local Planning for Food Access" a toolkit that focuses on improving food access through municipal and regional plans.
- CDBG administration for the Woolson Block (Springfield) and Perkinsville School House (Weathersfield) projects.
- Supported Springfield's redevelopment efforts for the Park Street School and 100 River Street.
- Supported downtown revitalization efforts in Springfield and Windsor, and village revitalization initiatives in Chester, Ludlow, Reading, Weathersfield and West Windsor.

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 SWCRPC

Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

| | |
|--|----|
| # of TAC meetings held | 7 |
| # of non-municipal TAC members actively engaged in transportation planning | 4 |
| # of municipalities actively engaged in transportation planning | 10 |
| # of RPC coordination activities with municipalities and VTrans | 9 |

Objective 2

Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

| | |
|--|---|
| # of regional transportation plans that are current (within 8 years) | 1 |
| # of Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation | 2 |
| # of Section 248 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation | 3 |
| # of coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers | 5 |
| # of VTrans committees that involves RPC staff participation | 1 |
| # of regions participating in Project Prioritization | 1 |

Objective 3

Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

| | |
|--|-----|
| # of municipalities participating in road foreman meetings annually | 6 |
| # of municipalities assisted with transportation related grants | 8 |
| % of budget spent on municipal technical assistance | 45% |
| # of municipal transportation inventories conducted | 3 |
| # of municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken | 1 |
| # of municipalities assisted with transportation element of municipal/town plan | 2 |
| # of road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and using other funding sources | 2 |

Objective 4

Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long Range Transportation Plans

| | |
|---|----|
| # of data collection activities conducted specifically for VTrans | 83 |
|---|----|

Objective 5

Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

Coordinated with VTrans and Ludlow on pedestrian accommodations for an Act 250 application that is within 1/4 mile of the village. The DRB decision did not involve pedestrian accommodations. This was caught later during the Act 250 process. SWCRPC assisted the Municipal Manager hold a public meeting for input. SWCRPC coordinated with municipal officials, VTrans staff and the applicant regarding modifying project plans to include a walking path to connect to the existing sidewalk network.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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 adopted hazard mitigation plans. Nine municipalities in the region (90%) currently have an updated local emergency plan.
- Assisted 9 towns with updates to their Local Emergency Management Plans this year.
- Served as Local Liaison during storm events.
- Staffed the SEOC.
- Provided technical assistance with the buyout of flood-damaged properties in Weathersfield and Ludlow.
- Assisted Ludlow with the Commonwealth Avenue stormwater project.
- Continued to provide guidance to municipalities with flood hazard review, and river corridors, 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:
 - Prepared maps for municipal plans, zoning bylaws and other planning projects.
 - Assisted VTrans to update the Transportation Resilience Planning Tool with data for the Williams River watershed, and provided a series of maps for each community.
 - Assisted project partners to develop maps for the Keys to the Valley multi-region housing project.
 - Continued to integrate "Collector for ArcGIS" into regular fieldwork activities, including MRGP related erosion inventories.

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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.

- Assisting local energy committee and other municipal officials to implement energy plans.
- Facilitated local energy committee roundtable meetings.
- Held an informational meeting on weatherizing rental properties, and made a video of the presentation available on our website.

- Participated in the review process for 3 energy projects (Section 248).
- Provided guidance to local officials on Act 174 and enhanced local energy plans.
- Issued a Certificate of Energy Compliance for Andover
- Assisted the towns of Reading and West Windsor to refine their enhanced energy plans.

WATERSHED PLANNING & 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.

- Supported the efforts of 6 towns to complete projects under the Grants-in-Aid program bringing many priority road segments into Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) compliance.
- Assisted the Town of Springfield to secure funding and provide project management support for:
 - Completing construction of drainage improvements along Lincoln Street.
 - Engineering design in support of removal of the Valley Street Dam.
 - Engineering design in support of removal of the Springfield Reservoir Dam.
 - Engineering design in support of a slope failure remediation between Lincoln Street and Valley Street.
- Provided grant writing assistance and project management services to the Town of Windsor to support engineering design of stormwater improvements to mitigate erosion in Paradise Park.
- Provided grant writing assistance and project management services to the Town of Ludlow to complete a stormwater master plan and 12 conceptual design plans for high priority projects.
- Continued to assist municipalities to better understand flood resiliency and to consider adoption of model ANR river corridor bylaws, including the Town of Springfield.
- Administered the second round Clean Water Block Grant of \$1,500,000 from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to support clean water projects throughout the state.
- Provided early assistance to ANR in support of development of the Basin 11 Tactical Basin Plan.
- Provided grant writing assistance to West Windsor to support engineering design of two large gully restoration projects adjacent to the former Ascutney Mountain Resort.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Once the Mount Ascutney Outdoor Recreation Plan was completed, SWCRPC staff helped to establish an implementation committee and is actively assisting the implementation of recommendations in that Plan.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

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 2020 budget was approximately \$1,062,040. Core funding provided by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development of \$199,508 leveraged \$788,754 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 11.

'AT WORK' MAP



The map depicting the range of services provided by the SWCRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

SWCRPC at Work: FY 2020



Projects

-  Bridge and Culvert Inventory
-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/Traffic Count

Designation

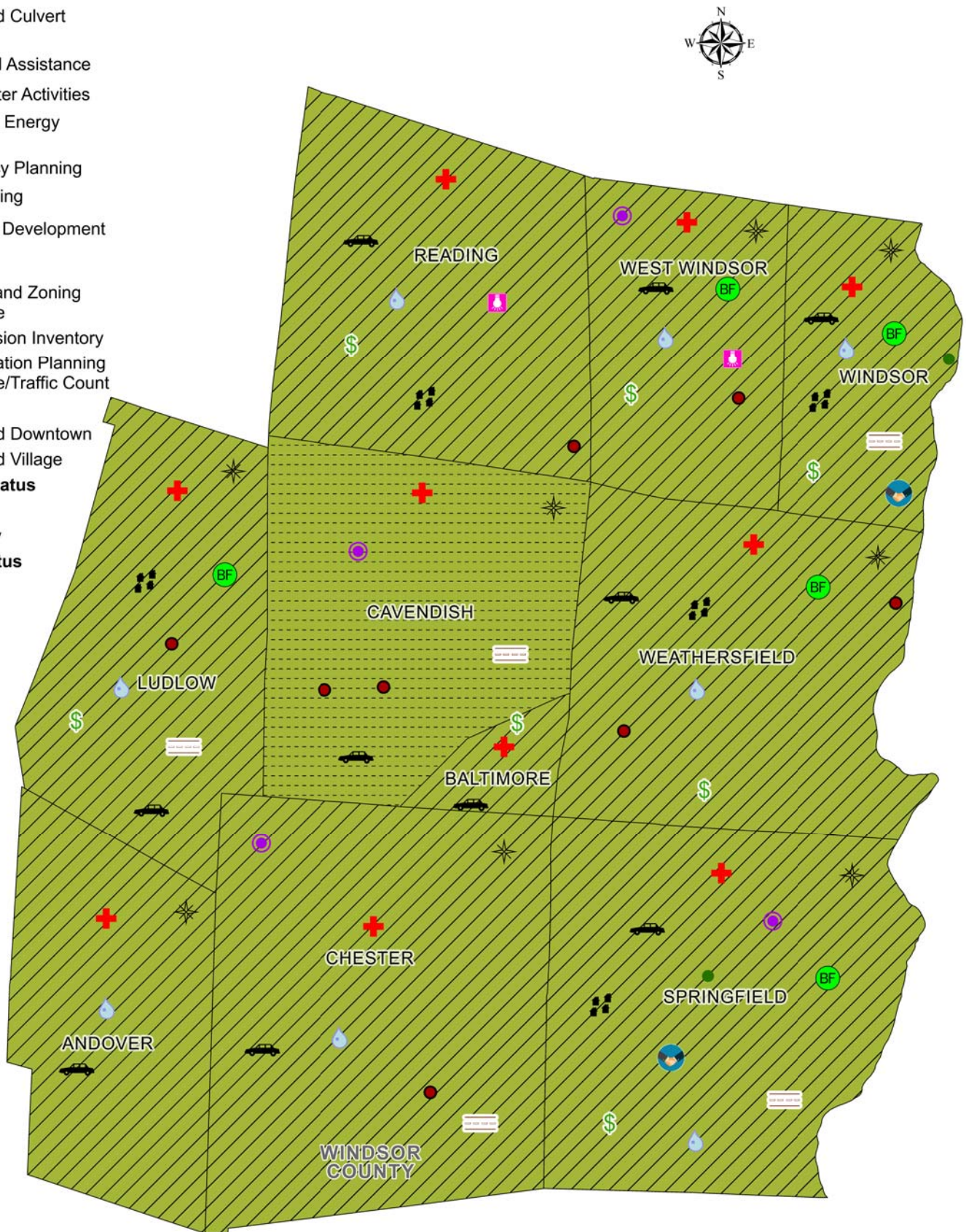
-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village

Town Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only

Town Plan Status

-  Current



Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

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 & 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. We act as a cost-effective professional planning staff for many of our 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 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 TRORC at Work map; highlights include:

- TRORC staff worked on comprehensive town plan rewrites with Bethel, Corinth, Fairlee, Granville, Randolph, Rochester, Royalton, Topsham, and Sharon.
- In addition to the extensive town plan rewrites above, TRORC provided technical assistance to 16 additional towns related to plan language and bylaws changes.
- TRORC hosted two statewide training events in FY20. These events were attended by many types of town officials.
 - Land Use Decisions Training (Tunbridge, VT), with 9 participants
 - Subdivisions & Density Training (Tunbridge, VT), with 9 participants

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: TRORC has continued to eliminate redundancies and update the Regional Plan. In FY20 TRORC started the hearing process for adoption and we fully expect adoption in early FY20. This update will incorporate new language and maps to protect forest blocks and habitat connects, incorporate the Energy Implementation Plan, and new land use designations throughout the Region.
- Regional Plan Implementation: TRORC used the Regional Plan to evaluate applications and participate in the Act 250 and Section 248 projects. In FY 20, forty-nine applications were received.

BROWNFIELDS

- 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 15 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. Selected accomplishments for FY 20:
 - Conducted Phase I assessment at a site in Rochester.
 - Conducted Phase II assessment at a site in Bethel.
 - Supplemental site investigation conducted at sites in Springfield and White River Junction.
 - Conducted a supplemental site investigation and cleanup planning at sites in White River Junction and Bethel
- TRORC has been awarded an additional \$300,000 in EPA assessment funds through September 2022.

ECONOMIC & 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 continues to support the Cornerstone Creative Community of Vermont (3CVT) as the Zone Agent to help implement projects related to the creative economy. Through this effort, TRORC also serves on the statewide Vermont Creative Network as the RPC representative. During FY20, TRORC assisted the Vermont Arts Council in its efforts to complete a statewide economic impact study for Vermont's creative sector. TRORC hosted 3CVT steering committee meetings and created a community discussion email list for creatives.
- TRORC continues to work with East Central Vermont Economic Development District in supporting the implementation of the goals, strategies and actions of our federally approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) activity - Total of 3 meetings held, average member participation rate 40% (expressed as a % of total TAC membership)

TAC Outcomes

- TRORC participated in numerous policy stakeholder meetings as requested by VTrans and other agencies:
 - VTrans VPSP2 launch (project prioritization revamping methodology) – 10 meetings.
 - Staff continued RPC road erosion methodology discussion for road erosion inventory collection for summer 2019 and 2020

- **Other Outreach** - 2 Public Transit Elderly and Disabled meetings held, 3 Vermont Local Road Stakeholder meetings, 3 2020 VT Walk Bike Summit planning committee calls
- **Data collection RPCs do for VTrans** – 5 bridge/culvert inventories completed, 3 Park & Ride counts conducted, 16 Bike ped counts, 15 traffic counts, 25 town complete streets inventory)

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- **Participation in Project Development Activities** - Three project scoping efforts
- **Participation in Act 250 review related to transportation issues** - none in 2019-2020

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- **Seventy-five percent (75%) of TPI budget (Task # 4 Short Range Transportation Planning) supports municipal planning.**
- **Other Better Roads (BR) - related work** – assisted 16 towns with 20 BR grant applications for 2019-2020 and completed 8 town 2018-2019 BR road erosion and culvert inventories. All 30 towns will have a completed REI by DEC's MRGP deadline of Dec. 31, 2020 – a significant undertaking by staff.
- **Participation in public transit efforts** – TRORC staff continued to participate in Stagecoach's changed service routes reflected by mapping technical assistance.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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.

- TRORC staff are often tasked by VEM 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 we staff our regional LEPC #12.
- All our municipalities have updated local emergency management plans, and TRORC staff went out to assist towns in filling out the plan format.
- Writing Hazard Mitigation Plans for our towns.
 - Overall in TRORC Region: 28 Towns with Final Approval by FEMA for Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.
 - TRORC staff are working with seven communities on updating their Plan.
- TRORC staff was appointed to the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) to represent regional planning commissions.
- TRORC has worked with Tunbridge to plan for and conduct tabletop exercise and worked with Norwich to perform a functional exercise.

- 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.
- TRORC staff were trained to be staff in the State Emergency Operations Center.
- TRORC staff assisted communities with COVID-19 response and planning.

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.

- Produced custom maps for town requests (EAB ash, road name, infrastructure atlases etc.).
- Managed ArcGIS Online portal with several web maps (energy, regional plan, flooding)
- Updated town plan maps and zoning maps.
- Supported town asset inventories (culvert, road erosion).
- Supported parcel mapping project with town outreach
- Uploaded updated town zoning layers to VCGI portal
- Completed regional plan maps.
- Completed Hazard Mitigation Plan analysis and maps.
- Act 174 renewable energy generation maps

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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 has continued to update and maintain town energy data reports and energy resource maps that align with the data needed for Act 174 compliant plans.
- TRORC reviewed or commented on sixteen petitions for a Certificate of Public Good within the region, the bulk of which were for solar projects.
- TRORC provided technical assistance to nine municipalities towards draft enhanced energy plans: Bethel, Thetford, Corinth, Fairlee, Hancock, Hartland, Rochester, Hartford and Royalton.
- TRORC contracted with BCRC to work on energy planning and training under Efficiency Vermont.
- TRORC continues to work with partners on regional energy planning implementation through participation with Efficiency Vermont, Vital Communities Energy Advisory Committee, and Green Mountain Power programming.

WATERSHED PLANNING & 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 have remained active in both the Basin 9 and 14 planning processes and have supported the implementation of water quality initiatives identified through the most recent Basin 10 planning process. We have also remained active in Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) designations as well as reclassification of waters to A1 or B1.
- TRORC continues to coordinate our Clean Water Advisory Council (CWAC) which plays an active role in advising TRORC activities. The CWAC provides local and regional input regarding storm water, groundwater, wetlands, stream stability, project priorities, and other water quality issues.
- TRORC serves on the Connecticut River Joint Commission Board and participates with the CT River Conservancy on the FERC Dam relicensing process along the CT River
- 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. TRORC also held a Flood Bylaw Administration Training to support Zoning Administrators in their work regarding flood regulations.

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 150 buyouts statewide. TRORC has also managed 12 buyouts that have been redesigned as river access points or parks.
- TRORC has continued to partner with the Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership (MAPP) in working with communities on policies that focus on healthy communities. In FY 20, TRORC worked to put together an online database of resources and example policies to support healthy communities. TRORC also continues to share our health chapter template with planning commissions, select boards, and other Upper Valley health groups.

ADMINISTRATION & 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 20 budget was approximately \$2.2 million. Property Transfer Tax 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 created a non-profit arm to complement and further the work of TRORC and access national foundation funding on emerging topics.

TRORC had a Single Audit conducted by an independent Certified Public Accounting firm 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.

'AT WORK' MAP




The map depicting the range of services provided by the TRORC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

TRORC at Work: FY 2020



Projects

-  Bridge and Culvert Inventory
-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/
Traffic Count




Designation

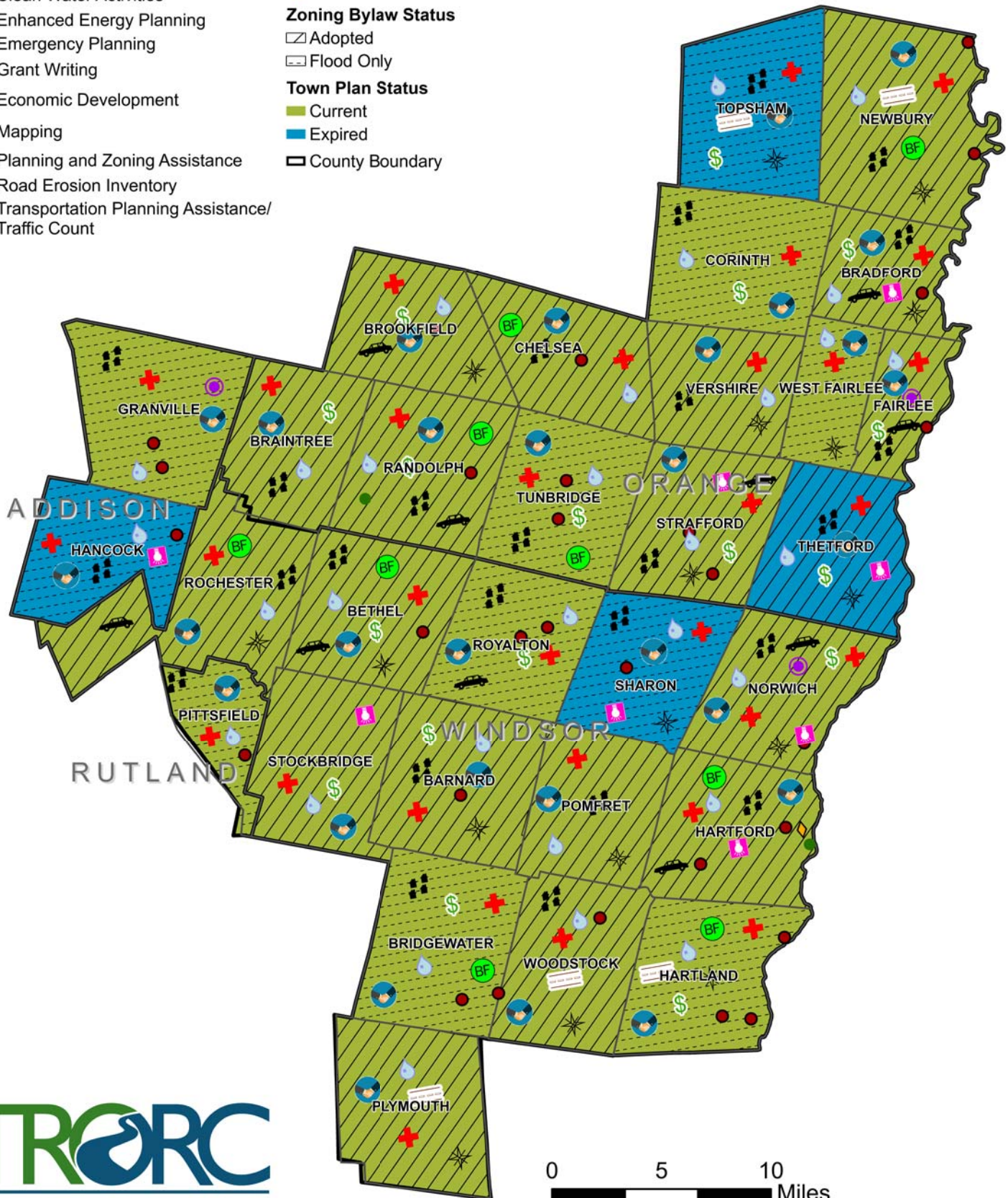
-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village
-  Growth Center

Zoning Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only

Town Plan Status

-  Current
-  Expired
-  County Boundary



Windham Regional Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

Celebrating our 55th year, the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is an important resource to 27 towns of southeast Vermont, including all of the towns of Windham County, the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg, and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County. In the absence of county government we are an essential link between local, state, and federal government. Our mission is to assist towns in Southeastern Vermont to provide effective local governance and work collaboratively with them to address regional issues.

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 a town supervisor 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](#) who provide support to the committees, and execute the Commission's [program of work](#).

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost-effective professional planning and plan implementation staff for many of Vermont's municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education, municipal consultations and on-site training, bylaw modernization, and implementing new requirements for flood resiliency, forest blocks and connectivity, energy, and water quality planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential to smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions, and other grants. The technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Provided assistance to towns in updating and adopting town plans (12 towns) and land use regulations (15 towns). This included work on town plans, zoning bylaws, flood hazard area regulations, and subdivision regulations. Updating town plans included assisting towns with addressing Act 174 enhanced energy planning standards and associated requirements and the new Act 171 planning standards for forest blocks and habitat connectors. Updating bylaws included assisting towns with updating flood hazard area regulations to address protection of river corridors, as well as with administration and enforcement of such regulations.
- Provided general technical assistance to 17 towns on topics including Chapter 117 processes and requirements, Corona pandemic-related changes to them (Act 92), Interim Bylaws, and with general administration and enforcement of land use regulations.
- Worked extensively with one town on a new Village Center designation application.
- Presented a regional training session on Basics of Land Use Planning and Regulation; participants included 27 people representing 15 towns. Also provided customized Basics of Land Use Planning and Regulation training for Planning Commission members and interested others, e.g., Selectboard and Zoning Board of Adjustment or Development Review Board members, in several towns.

- Conducted four municipal consultations, involving town Planning Commissions and Selectboards, to discuss town plan review and approval and the towns' planning processes.
- Assisted five towns in developing and submitting Municipal Planning Grant and Transportation Alternative grant applications for community development and flood resilience projects.
- Worked extensively with Whitingham to implement flood resilience projects, including assistance in applying for grants to fund scoping, project management, and a FEMA buyout.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related plans and studies such as the regional energy plan and regional transportation plan. 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. In 2018 the WRC adopted a regional energy plan as an amendment to this plan. We are now in the process of assessing the plan for readoption to position ourselves for a major plan update on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it presents for public engagement, outreach and education.
- Project Review - During this reporting period the WRC reviewed 18 Act 250 applications and 5 Section 248 applications. The latter were mainly solar projects. Act 250 applications included those related to the Hermitage Resort, Mount Snow Resort, Stratton Mountain Resort, redevelopment at the Magic Mountain ski area, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital building changes, and a vehicle storage facility in Searsburg.
- WRC is following the decommissioning and site restoration of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.
- The WRC is active in the deliberations over the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of dams on the Connecticut River in Vermont and Massachusetts.

BROWNFIELDS

- The WRC [brownfields program](#), since its inception in 2000, has brought a total of \$5.2 million dollars in federal brownfields funds to the region for assessment and cleanup of brownfields sites.
- WRC received an \$300,00 Brownfields Assessment Grant from the U.S. EPA. This funding will be used to assess sites in the Windham Region.
- Attended statewide brownfield roundtable meetings with other planners, Vermont Agencies and the U.S. EPA.
- Attended National Brownfields Conference in Los Angeles.
- Presented Brownfields Session about Putnam Block at NNECAPA and SNEAPA conferences fall 2019.
- During this past year WRC Brownfields program has worked on the following sites:

| Site | Town/Village | Brownfields Work | Reuse plan |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 22 Gates Pond Rd. | Village of Whitingham | Phase I and II ESA. Phase I completed this year and Phase II underway. | Reuse plan for mixed use – commercial and residential. |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---|--|
| 47 Flat St. | Brattleboro | Phase I underway. | Reuse plan for mixed use – commercial and affordable housing. |
| 5354 Coolidge Hwy./Winchester | Guilford | Phase I completed this year. | Plan is to continue use as site for mobile homes. |
| BMAC/11 Arch St. | Brattleboro | CAP update and related work approved this year. Historic and Archeological Assessment underway. | Plan is to demolish structure and reuse site for new uses related to expanded BMAC. |
| CF Church/80 Flat St. | Brattleboro | Phase I completed this year. | Plan is for continued commercial use. |
| Friends of the West River | Londonderry | Phase I and II ESA. Phase II Supplemental testing completed this year. | This site will be conserved and provide public trail access. |
| Green River Floodplain | Guilford | Phase I and II ESA. ABCA CAP completed this year. | The site will be conserved through a conservation easement held by Vermont River Conservancy. The easement will restrict future development and provide public access. |
| Groundworks Collaborative | Brattleboro | WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant for asbestos removal. Project completed September 2019. | Building demolition to make room for new structure for homeless shelter and associated support services. |
| Long Falls Paperboard | Brattleboro | Phase II ESA funded by WRC and the State and completed this year. | Redevelopment for continued industrial use. |
| NEYT Arts Campus - 48/64 Elm St. | Brattleboro | WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant/Loan Part B approved this year and preparing for closing. | Redevelopment by New England Youth Theatre for additional outdoor space. |
| Putnam Block | Bennington | WRC Brownfields Cleanup Loan. Clean up work completed this year. | Major mix used redevelopment in the heart of downtown Bennington underway. |
| Red Clover Commons 2 | Brattleboro | WRC Brownfields Cleanup Loan for RCC2 approved this year. | Site was previously cleaned up and redeveloped for affordable housing. Current clean up effort will make way for |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| | | | additional affordable housing. |
| Robertson Paper Mill | Village of Bellows Falls | WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant. | Town has been marketing site and has redevelopment partner in place. |
| Saxtons River Park | Village of Saxtons River | Project management and close out assistance for EPA Cleanup Grant. WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant. Project was completed September 2019. | Redevelopment of former mill and gas station parcels into a community park. |
| Thermal House | Brattleboro | Supplemental Phase II completed this year. Office Space Assessment underway. | Redevelopment for maple syrup warehouse and distribution facility. |
| Unified Data | Grafton | Phase I and II ESA. Additional testing and revised CAP completed this year. | Reuse plan for continued light industrial use. |
| Vermont Graphics | Village of Bellows Falls | Phase I and II ESA. Supplemental testing and ABCA CAP completed this year. | Redevelopment by owner of industrial building for light industrial use. |

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning. 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 position Vermont for long-term economic gain.

- Participated on Southeastern Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) Board.
- 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.
- Worked extensively with Londonderry to support its Project Londonderry initiative.
- Assisted the Town of Vernon with the development of a grant to the U.S. Economic Development Administration to support the development of plans to develop a new village and the connection thereof to the redevelopment of the Vermont Yankee site.
- Actively participated in the development of two Working Communities initiatives.
- Supported Opportunity Zone prospectus development efforts in the region.
- Provided support to towns as they deliberate on the needs and potential benefits of community water and wastewater systems.

- Have been active at the state level in advocacy for state support for community water and wastewater systems in order to retain existing homes and businesses in villages and to make compact settlement possible per state, regional, and municipal policy.
- Continue to assist Windham Region communities with village center and downtown designation applications.
- Working to establish a Sister City/Region relationship for the Windham Region with a community in Sweden.

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.

The following five categories are performance measures reported to VTrans as part of their report to the legislature.

Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions, and Municipalities

- Held 5 TAC meetings. Engaged 8 non-municipal TAC members actively in transportation planning. The number of TAC meetings was reduced due to response to the COVID-19 pandemic and initial public meeting challenges using remote meeting platforms.
- Actively engaged 26 municipalities in transportation planning.
- Coordinated 15 RPC activities with municipalities and VTrans.

Objective # 2: Better Connect Federal, Regional, and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Regional transportation plan is current (within 8 years).
- Reviewed 2 Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation.
- Coordinated 5 activities in support of regional public transit providers.
- Staff participated on 3 VTrans committees.
- Participated in Project Prioritization.

Objective # 3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- 13 municipalities participated in road foreman meetings.
- Assisted 5 municipalities with transportation-related grants.
- Spent 47% of budget on municipal technical assistance.
- Conducted 6 municipal transportation inventories.
- Supported 4 transportation-related studies.
- Assisted 6 municipalities with transportation element of municipal/town plan.
- Conducted 7 road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and other funding sources.

- Serving as Municipal Project Manager (not using TPI funds) for Weston Bike/Pedestrian safety scoping study, and salt sheds in Brookline, Newfane, and Wardsboro.

Objective # 4: Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

- Performed 152 data collection activities specifically for VTrans. This includes:
 - 10 bike parking counts (once each month, except during COVID stay at home)
 - 25 traffic counts (10 in Newfane, 3 in Weston, 10 in Windham, 2 in Vernon)
 - 8 bike counts
 - 50 pedestrian counts

Objective # 5: Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

- Coordinated with VTrans on outreach for replacement of deck on bridge in Putney Village on Route 5.
- Participated in community meeting with VTrans senior staff concerning road safety on Route 9.
- Facilitated meeting in region with the state Staying Connected Initiative committee (habitat connectivity).
- Participated in development of Local Planning for Food Access tool kit led by Sustainable Jobs Fund and Hunger Free Vermont.
- Participated in discussions and supported public meetings about the Transportation Climate Initiative.
- Reviewed projects submitted to the Federal Lands Access Program.
- Reviewed projects submitted to the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economy Collaborative grant program.
- Participated in development of guidance for municipalities by the Vermont Transportation Board concerning helipads and private air strips.
- Organized public meetings about emerald ash borer and the impact on local roads (and other public properties).

Highlights

- Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Infrastructure Planning - Currently undertaking the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge project that calls for replacing the existing Route 119 bridges crossing the Connecticut River between Downtown Brattleboro, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Planning for the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge project began in the early 1990's. The new bridge is to be a steel I-beam girder bridge with aesthetic enhancements and a sidewalk on the upstream side. The existing Route 119 bridges will remain open at all times during project construction. After construction, the existing Route 119 bridges are planned for rehabilitation as a recreational, pedestrian, and bicycle resource.
- Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Scenario Planning - The Hinsdale/Brattleboro Existing Bridge Subcommittee is tasked with identifying a vision for the reuse of the existing Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridges. The purpose of the Existing Bridges Subcommittee "is to develop a vision for the Charles Dana and Anna Hunt Marsh Bridges and Hinsdale Island, including the envisioned activities and uses of the bridges and island, physical changes, management and maintenance considerations, and expected impacts on economic development, tourism, transportation/access, and recreational opportunities." The committee decided to pursue a scenario planning approach to arrive at a recommended vision. WRC, in collaboration with our counterparts in New Hampshire, the Southwest Region Planning Commission, arranged for a

UMass Amherst junior landscape architecture design studio to develop a site inventory and analysis and conceptual designs for the reuse of the island. This work will continue with a UMass Amherst landscape architecture graduate student. The Subcommittee also helped organize initial clean-up of the island.

- Vilas Bridge Community Connections – Facilitated conversations between the Town of Rockingham in Vermont and the Town of Walpole in New Hampshire about the rebuilding and reuse of the Vilas Bridge and other areas where the two towns can collaborate on community and economic development as they relate to transportation connections (including bicycle and pedestrian connections).
- Studying Connections to Increased Rail Service to Greenfield, MA - The WRC is working with our counterparts in Greenfield, Massachusetts, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, to promote use of the Valley Flyer. This rail pilot provides two additional round trips per day from Springfield to Greenfield, and one round trip on the weekends, as part of a 2-year pilot, which will be extended as a result of the cessation of passenger rail because of the pandemic. This pilot allows for one-seat trips to New York City departing from Greenfield including round trip day trips. We recognize the importance of increased passenger rail service in the larger area to improve mobility and community and economic development. We would like to see the expanded service extend into Vermont, and we are discussing what the implications would be of commuter rail service to southeast Vermont within 10 years.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & 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. RPC's also help update floodplain bylaws and hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans, and serve as local liaisons between towns and the State Emergency Operations Center in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other hazard events. This year we assisted towns with their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and communications with state agencies.

- The WRC responded quickly upon learning about the potential of the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on we collaborated with local Vermont Department of Health (DOH) staff to organize a Continuity of Operations planning session for municipalities. We reached out to local Agency of Human Services (AHS) and DOH staff to establish lines of communication between state agencies and local municipal officials. We also served as a conduit for information from the state to the region's towns and fielded questions. WRC worked directly with legislative committees and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) in support of legislation that would enable municipalities to continue to be able to function remotely while remaining in compliance with Vermont open meeting law, and we advised the legislature on municipal processes and deadlines that would put towns in difficult legal and operational positions. This led to authorization for deadlines to be extended. We collaborated with a number of local service organizations to develop and host a comprehensive local COVID-19 resource guide for individuals, and developed a resource page for towns. We supported the development of the region's COVID-19 Community Recovery Committee in collaboration with local service organizations, the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, and local offices of state agencies. We worked to further develop and reinforce the local COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) to both support long-term COVID-19 recovery and be prepared

to address other disasters that may occur (especially flooding). We hosted weekly (and then bi-weekly, and now monthly) conference calls between local Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), AHS and DOH staff and town officials to field questions and assist with overall situational awareness. We also assisted towns with compliance with open meeting law within the confines of emergency orders and amendments to statute. We began the process of identifying public WiFi sources in towns that could serve as points for public internet access from nearby parking areas.

- The WRC develops local hazard mitigation plans for our towns, with the exception of Brattleboro, which created its own.
- WRC holds quarterly Emergency Management Director (EMD) and Fire Chief Roundtables. Topics are chosen by the EMD and fire chief participants.
- WRC has re-established the WRC Emergency Planning Committee. The group helped develop a phone-tree tool to connect towns with agencies serving vulnerable populations living independently.
- WRC holds trainings and meetings for Floodplain Administrators in the region to learn about topics related to floodplain regulation, as well as to serve as a roundtable discussion opportunity about the responsibilities of the role.
- The WRC serves as the local liaison to communicate damages and the 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, has in place a damage reporting/situational awareness protocol that expedites the gathering of accurate information from towns with the goal of minimizing duplicate requests for information. That protocol is kept updated and shared with new staff members that have a role.
- WRC worked with towns on developing updated flood hazard bylaws, which incorporate state-designated river corridors.
- WRC supported the development of proposals to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Most projects focus on flood mitigation.
- WRC staff participated in numerous FEMA sponsored trainings as part of the new State Emergency Operations Center training program.
- Staff attended the annual Vermont Emergency Management conference.

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.

- GIS staff provided support to the Transportation Planning Initiative for data collection activities, which included culvert inventories, sign inventories, parking inventories, traffic counts, park and ride counts, and bike/ped counts.
- WRC continued their effort to study bike parking in downtown Brattleboro by conducting an inventory of bike racks, and on one day each month of bikes parked in the downtown district.
- Town plan maps were updated in draft or final format, guidance was given to towns on their maps, or mylar overlays were printed out for Guilford, Marlboro, Stratton, and Wardsboro. Mylar overlays of various resources were created for Westminster's zoning administrator, we began a project with Rockingham to provide support in refining and modifying their zoning district boundaries, and we worked with Windham on their zoning maps.

- We continued to help in the Village Center application process for two towns (Grafton and Townshend) as they work to apply for Village Center designation.
- GIS staff continues to provide support for transportation-related inventory and mapping work. We updated culvert inventories and/or maps for Athens, Brookline, Dover, Guilford, Jamaica, Newfane, Readsboro, Searsburg, Wardsboro, Weston, and Winhall, and completed a sign inventory for Jamaica. Support for towns as they begin to work on compliance with Vermont's Municipal Roads General Permit has been extensive. One aspect of this support is conducting road erosion inventories; we worked on inventories for Athens, Brookline, Dover, Dummerston, Guilford, Jamaica, Readsboro, Searsburg, Wardsboro, Weston, Windham, and Winhall.
- WRC continues efforts to provide support for our communities regarding trails and recreation paths. We have been working with the Brattleboro District Office of the Vermont Department of Health to provide mapping support and trail information for their "Windham on the Move" initiative, and in cooperation with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the RiseVT passport program. We organized a presentation on Rails with Trails by the Northeast Director of the Rails to Trails Conservancy for local planners, a trail group, and staff from adjacent regional planning commissions. We supported the Jamaica Area Mountain Bike Alliance's efforts by mapping proposed trail networks and created a tool for them to help identify Class 4 town highways and legal trails for bike use. We finalized our efforts with Vernon on their revived town forest trail, and continued to work with Wilmington on mapping issues with the Valley Trail and enhancing their trail mapping and kiosks.
- Staff worked to get a group of Keene State College Geography students to conduct their senior seminar project on trails and recreation in Vernon.
- WRC continues its robust pedestrian counting program on sidewalks, recreation paths, and trails. We undertook 58 counts in 14 towns. We conducted many of our counts in spring 2020 to coincide with the same time period as in years past to compare use numbers during the coronavirus pandemic to that pre-pandemic. We noticed a significant increase in use on recreation paths and trails, including an increase in bike use, while downtown Brattleboro sidewalk traffic was significantly less.
- WRC continues to do traffic studies, generally at the request of towns. We did 13 studies in four towns in FY20.
- WRC conducted nine counts (three on multi-use pathways and six on state or town highways) in six different towns during FY20.
- WRC provides mapping support to towns when they apply for various grants, including Athens, Newfane, Readsboro, and Townshend.
- WRC continued to participate in the US Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program. FY20 participation involved follow-up on WRC's recommended updates to census tracts, block groups, and census designated places. WRC proposed to add 13 census designated places to be able to get detailed census data for villages and hamlets, and changes to block group boundaries in five towns so that they better align with the town's local geography. WRC also participated in the Boundary Validation Program, identifying numerous errors in the Census Bureau's data of town boundaries.
- Staff continued to provide E911 data and mapping support to Marlboro, and worked on an E911 map for Dover. We also participated in the planning of a statewide building footprints data layer.

ENERGY CONSERVATION & 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 planning, 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 to work with public serving institutions as they transition to wood heat through the Windham Wood Heat Initiative. In the past year, the program has assisted 4 institutions (2 schools, 1 set of municipal buildings, and 1 public serving institution) in switching to modern wood heating systems through technical and financial assistance. This program has been a tremendous success and WRC is pleased that several more projects are being considered or are getting underway with the conversion. The WRC solicits advice on the program and systems from 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.
- The WRC worked with Town Energy Committees throughout the region. A regional energy committee gathering was held to share information and collaborate on common projects. This regional forum will continue to be a support system for our Energy Committees. Five communities participated as Button Up Vermont towns and WRC worked with them to distribute energy and weatherization information to residents.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to implement the state's Clean Water Initiative through basin planning and assistance to municipalities in meeting statutory and regulatory requirements. RPCs also work with municipalities and watershed organizations to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions. The WRC has gone a step further in organizing community efforts to connect people with their watersheds, and to create watershed "identities."

- The WRC worked with the Clean Water Advisory Board (CWAC) to assist the VT DEC's Watershed Coordinator in promoting the draft Tactical Basin Plan for the Deerfield River Watershed (Basin 12-13) for public and municipal comment. The Deerfield plan was successfully adopted after being presented to and commented on by municipalities, organizations and the public in the region.
- The WRC continues to administer the Green River Watershed Alliance. This alliance, with support of the High Meadows Fund and VT DEC Watershed grants, addresses environmental issues, watershed study, place-based education, and ecological restoration within the Green River Watershed. The work of the Alliance highlights the importance of watershed awareness in the Green River watershed for water quality and flood resilience.
- Participated in various collaborative watershed efforts, including:
 - Worked with the Connecticut River Conservancy and the Green River Watershed Alliance on funding berm removals and site restoration of two parcels along the Green River.

- Worked with and staffed the Green River Watershed Alliance in securing a VT DEC Watershed grant to extend public outreach and education.
- Worked with the Connecticut River Conservancy to complete removal of a defunct dam on the Crosby Brook in Dummerston, with two grants secured through the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP).
- Worked with the Connecticut River Joint Commission's (CRJC) Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee to link and represent Connecticut River towns to relevant planning issues along the River. WRC serves on the CRJC and our Executive Director is currently Chair of the Vermont Commission.
- In coordination with the Rich Earth Institute, finalized and submitted a report on the Village Sanitation Pilot Study, which provided Westminster West and West Dummerston with technical assistance and customized information regarding their septic systems and proposed alternatives to those systems, such as urine diversion or composting toilets. This pilot project informed neighborhoods about how eco-sanitation systems might be more broadly applicable to help sustain our historic village centers.
- Successfully assisted with the enrollment of 24 towns in the FY20 Municipal Roads Grants in Aid Program to proactively reimburse towns for road drainage improvements that bring hydrologically-connected road segments up to fully-meeting the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) standards.
- For the previous FY19 Municipal Roads Grants in Aid program, facilitated the reimbursement of over \$300,000 to 20 Windham Region towns that had completed work on these road segments.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Led the Windham Region Broadband Project, funded by a Department of Public Service Broadband Innovation Grant, with the goal of producing a feasibility study and business plan to provide access to broadband fiber for unserved and underserved areas within our region. Our consultant team developed a survey and feasibility study. WRC provided community engagement and support. The Deerfield Valley Communications Union District, which organized itself and is recruiting the towns of the region, will implement the business plan and has participated in its development. WRC connected with communities throughout the region and held multiple public meetings and a webinar. The business plan is nearing completion.
- The WRC received funding from the High Meadows Fund to support the Windham Connectivity Collaborative, which is focused on policies and implementation strategies to maintain and improve habitat connectivity at the scale of the Windham Region as a whole, and within what we're calling the "southeast connector" which includes towns in the southeastern quadrant of the region. The WRC's partners in this effort include local municipal conservation commissions and their volunteers, the Vermont Land Trust, Windham County Forester, Vermont Fish and Wildlife, VT Coverts, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District, and the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center.
- 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.
- 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.

- WRC continue to participate in the Nuclear Decommissioning Collaborative in an advisory capacity. The purpose of the collaborative is to help mitigate the economic impact of nuclear plant closures.
- Actively engaged with 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. Executive Director Chris Campany concluded his chairing of the panel.

ADMINISTRATION & 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). Our budget and work program is available on our [About the WRC page](#) on our website.

The WRC has an audit on an annual basis, and a single audit as required by Federal rules.

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.

'AT WORK' MAP

A map depicting the range of services provided by the WRC to member municipalities is included on the next page.

WRC at Work: FY 2020




Projects

-  Bridge and Culvert Inventory
-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/Traffic Count

Designation

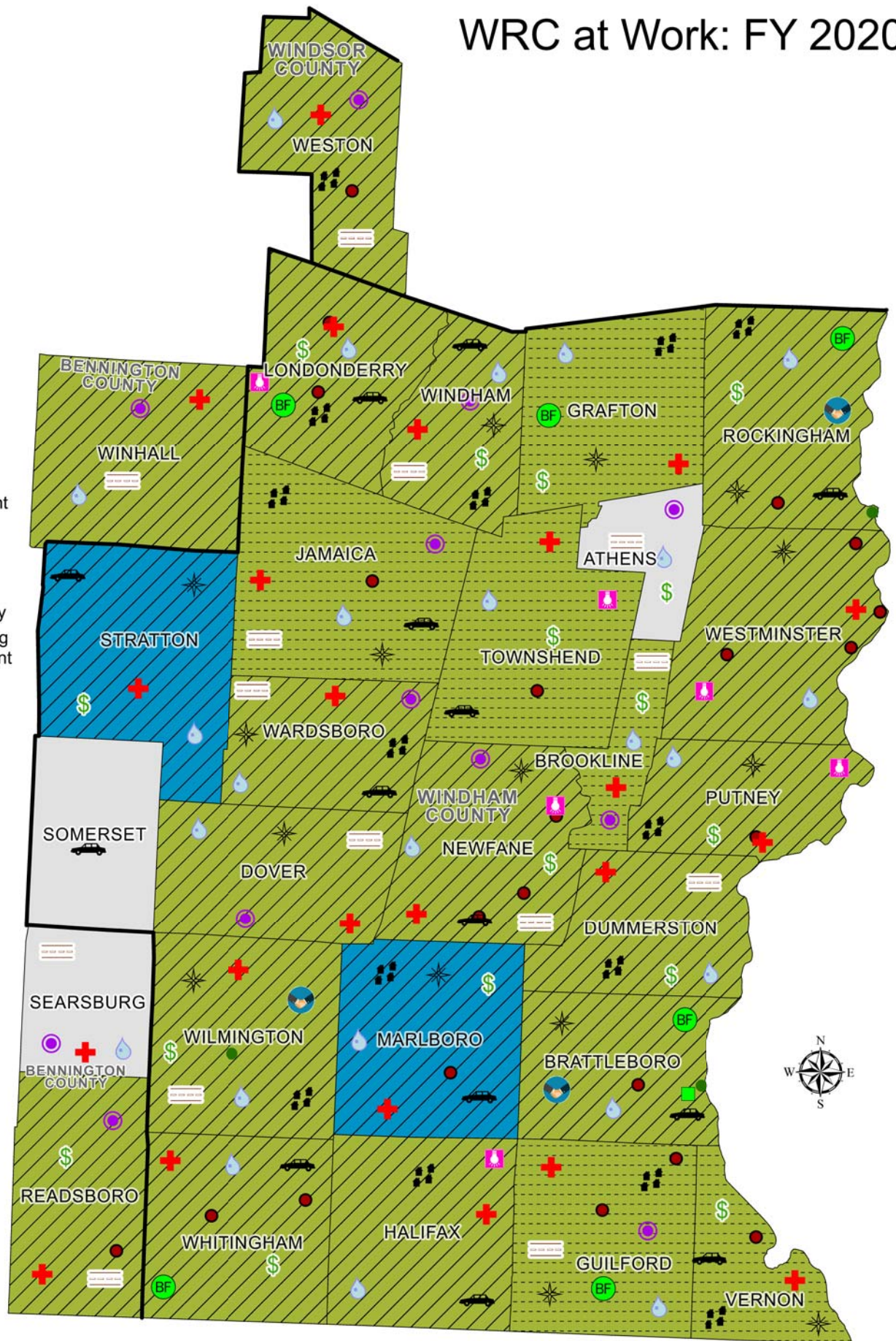
-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village
-  Neighborhood Development Area

Town Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only
-  None

Town Plan Status

-  Current
-  Expired
-  No Town Plan
-  County Boundary



0 5 10 Miles

