

Chittenden County Municipal Legislative Briefing

December 8, 2022

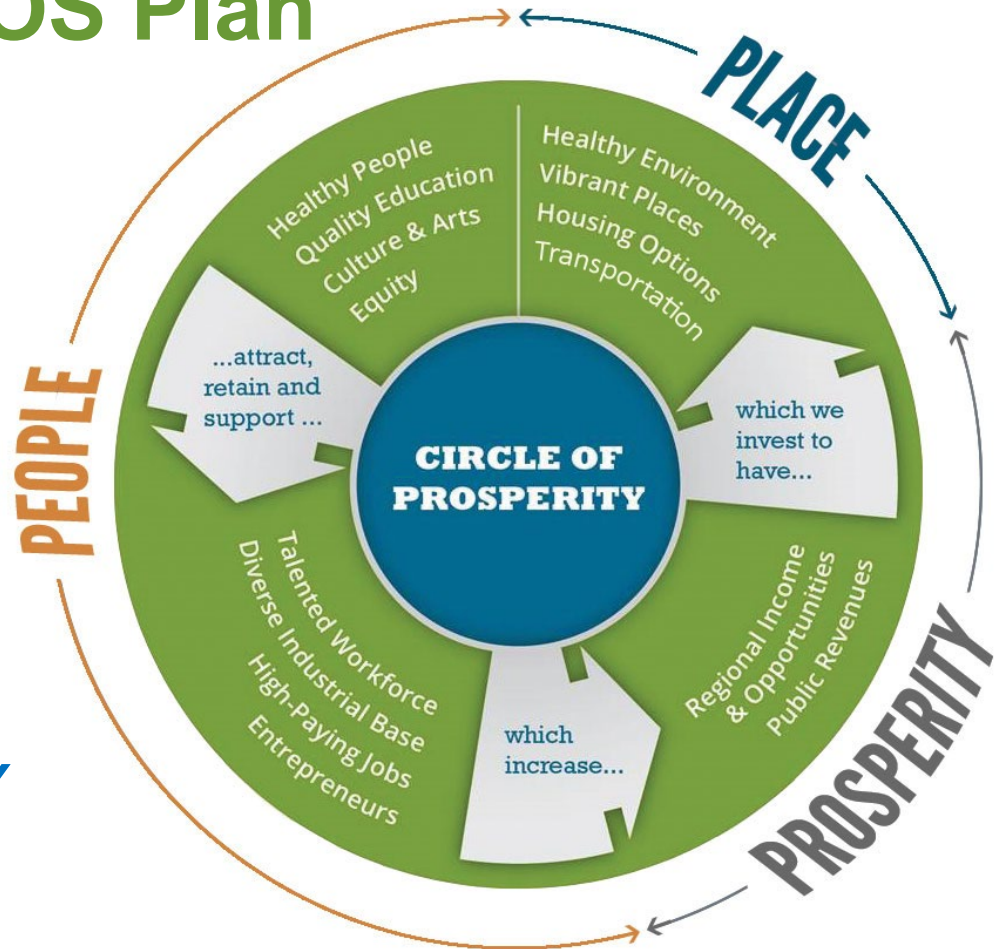
- 8:00 - 8:10 Welcome and Introductions – Chris Shaw, CCRPC Vice-Chair
- 8:10 - 8:30 Key Issues Introduction – Charlie Baker, CCRPC Executive Director
1. Housing and more Housing
 2. Housing - Permit System
 3. Water and Sewer
 4. Housing – Equity and Climate
 5. Equity
 6. Climate/Energy
 7. Transportation
 8. Transit Revenue Options
 9. Workforce
 10. Broadband
 11. Regional Dispatch Start-up – update & thank you
 12. Open Meeting Law
 13. Agency/Department contracting with RPCs
 14. Planning Funding
- 8:30 - 9:00 Discussion

Implementing Our ECOS Plan

- Update state laws & use federal and state funds to increase smart growth investments.
 - Economic recovery
 - Housing
 - Water/Sewer
 - Climate change
 - Equity

• Circle of Prosperity →

• **WHEN CHITTENDEN COUNTY PROSPERS, VERMONT PROSPERS**



1. Housing and More Housing

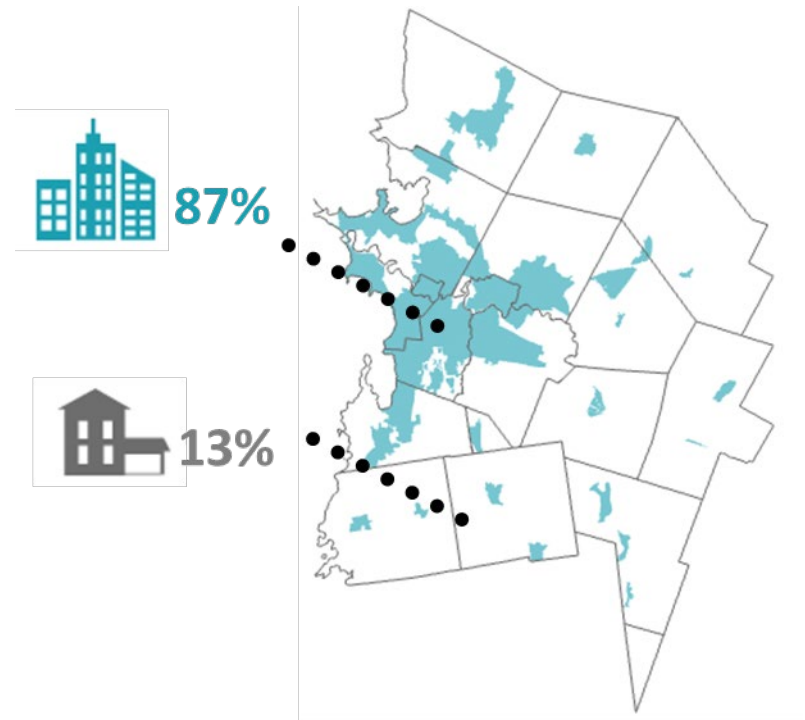
Homes Built in Chittenden County 2017-2021

5-Year Average for Net New Units
3,959 homes built in last 5 years

➤ **Housing Crisis Getting Worse**

- **More expensive housing**
- **Less housing available**
- **Limiting job growth**
- **Increasing inequities**
- **Increasing GHG emissions**

➤ **Building Homes Together campaign – Build 1,000 homes per year for the next five years**



2. Housing - Permit System

- *Update Act 250 & Chapter 117 to accomplish smart growth goals: encouraging development in our centers and discouraging rural development*
- *End duplication of review between Act 250, State agencies, and municipalities. Improve how different agencies and permit reviews relate to each other. – single review(er) for each issue, delegation to towns?*
- *Provide pathway for existing Act 250 permit holders in areas exempted to get out from under Act 250 jurisdiction, as new permittees can*
- *Continue investments in modernizing zoning*
- *Improve Chapter 117 to achieve what is called for in town plans and zoning by decreasing discretion in permitting and reducing baseless appeals.*
- *Consider a Housing Goal and how the State, regions, and municipalities can help achieve it. Vermont Futures Project goal of 5,000 units per year?*

3. Housing - Water and Sewer

- **To support smart economic growth and housing, water and sewer are essential. Key recommendation of Climate Action Plan.**
- ***Continue investing federal and state funds to:***
 - ***upgrade existing water and sewer systems (combined sewer overflows, mobile home parks, etc.)***
 - ***build new water and sewer systems in villages and existing communities***
- ***100% planning funds are great!***
- ***Need stronger state funding commitment for engineering and construction – 80% grants rather than loans***
- ***Authorize RPCs to access CWSRF to assist in engineering and construction stages***

4. Housing

- *Invest in housing development, especially affordable.*
- *Improve statewide system for ensuring minimum health and safety standards are met for rentals – rental registry; invest in making code improvements*
- *Create statewide standard for building energy standards*
- *Invest in weatherization, especially for lower income and renters*
- *Review lending practices, increase tax credits*

5. Equity

- This is one of our ECOS Plan Strategies. Addressing systemic racism and economic inequities will take a concerted effort by everyone and will benefit everyone.
- CCRPC retained an equity consultant to deepen our understanding, help our municipalities, and help us create meaningful change. Completed CCRPC Organizational Equity Assessment Report in 2021. Formed Equity Advisory Committee in 2022. Hired Equity and Engagement Manager – November 2022.
 - ***Conduct equity impact assessments on plans, policies, and investments recommended above.***
 - ***Support environmental justice efforts – maybe expand scope.***
 - ***Support implementation of VTrans' Transportation Equity Framework.***

6. Climate/Energy

- CCRPC adopted Regional Energy Plan in 2018 to achieve 90% renewable by 2050. Working with municipalities to implement enhanced energy plans. Will begin updating the Regional Energy Plan to incorporate State Climate Action Plan and 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan. Equity impacts will be a focus.
 - *Weatherization, energy efficiency, and energy conversions – especially for rental properties*
 - *State energy codes need improved inspection & enforcement options -AIA VT supports giving inspection/enforcement authority to Vermont Division of Fire Safety and renaming Division of Fire and Building Safety (DFBS)*
 - *Consider clean heat standard to address thermal conversion to cleaner fuels - statewide policy is critical to meet the targets of the Global Warming Solutions Act while ensuring an equitable transition for all Vermonters*
 - *Local renewable energy generation and storage consider affordable housing as preferred sites for net metering to offset the capital and operating costs.*
 - *Alternative modes of transportation – smart growth & investments in broadband, ridesharing, bus, bike, ped, etc. Electric vehicle transition and charging stations (need >89% of passenger cars/trucks to be EV), including e-bikes*
 - *More focus needed on Adaptation - Investments in electric grid distribution and transmission system and resiliency of bridges, culverts, and roads*
 - *Thank you for H.518 Municipal Energy Resilience Initiatives*
 - *Seeking support for RPCs to provide staff assistance to municipalities for implementation work like FY22 (expand H.518 scope of RPC work?)*
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7. Transportation

- 33% of workers in Chittenden County live outside County compared to 25% in 2002. Causes multiple issues: housing, energy, traffic, etc.
- Last 5 years investment in Chit Co has been about 17% of State \$
- ***Invest in Capital Program & Transportation Improvement Program Projects***
 - ***Circ Alternative Projects need to keep moving***
 - ***Continue to invest in placemaking: streetscapes, walking, biking, transit, electric vehicles, water quality, and climate resilience.***
 - ***Consider using state funds for paths and sidewalks.***
 - ***Re-examine speed limit setting process especially in villages.***
 - ***Increase investment in technology: smart traffic signals, testing for autonomous and connected vehicles***
 - ***Increase town highway and bridge funding***

8. Transit Revenue Options

- The limited ability of the State and municipalities to support transit services with local funding is constraining transit agencies from meeting local demands.
 - The demands for more transit service continues to increase as our population ages and we work to provide transportation options to driving to reduce energy use.
 - There are options to continue fare free service and to remove the pressures on the property tax.
- ***Consider options offered in the Transit Financing Study developed by CCRPC and GMT.***

9. Economy - Workforce

- CCRPC & GBIC received funding from EDA to update our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with Central Vermont, Addison, and Rutland RPCs and RDCs.
- Key Employer concerns:
 - Workforce/labor availability and job education & training
 - Housing: availability & cost (rentals and owned)
 - Childcare
 - Incentives for investment in people, equipment and facilities
 - Population stagnation: Vermont is not growing & we must
- Vermont and Chittenden County labor market is at virtual full employment (state 2.3% unemployment; Chittenden County at 1.6%). However, both the state and the County have seen a significant decline in available labor (**40,000+ (>10%) drop in Vermont** since 2009).
- Crisis in preparing high school students for life and career. Vermont needs workers in advanced manufacturing & technicians, nursing & health care, construction & trades, services sectors.
 - Please read: VT DOL job projection data.
 - Please read: VSAC-VSC reports of the VT High School Class of 2012
 - Over 50% of Vermont High School Graduates either go on to NO higher education or drop out within 3 semesters. This is a crisis.

9. Economy – Workforce cont'd

Workforce Development & Education Solutions:

- ***Increase access and participation in career, technical & vocational education & training in Career Technical Education (CTE) centers & high schools; for both youth and adults.***
- ***Increase incumbent worker & adult education and training and certificate training through CTEs, CCV, VTC.***
- ***Retain graduates of UVM, VSU & other colleges and universities, invite and attract remote workers.***
- ***Increase childcare and housing***

10. Broadband

- 100/100 service is the standard, improves economic equity and job growth, decreases driving, important for smart electric grid; be careful with encouraging sprawl and forest fragmentation
- 75% of Chittenden County sites have 25/3 service or less
- **4% (~2,000) have 4/1 or less service**
- ***CUD has been formed by Essex, Essex Junction, Shelburne, South Burlington, and Williston***
- ***Broadband Board has been very supportive – developing plan for Chittenden County (should be completed by end of 2022)***
- ***More funding that can be used in Chittenden County is likely to be needed – perhaps federal grants***

11. Regional Dispatch Start-up

- As the State looks for alternatives to the current system, we created a Chittenden County Public Safety Authority for the purpose of regional dispatch. This is a real need that is increasing as time goes by.
- This concept works financially and operationally in the long term and will provide better service; however, there is a significant amount of funding needed for start-up.
 - ***There is \$3.5 million needed in capital funding for start-up. Thank you for supporting about \$1 million State capital funding to help get this project off the ground. Still a gap of over \$1 million for capital startup funding.***
 - ***There is also a need for startup operational funding. First year costs may exceed current costs by \$1 million. Member municipalities are now determining if they can make their budgets work to begin operations sometime in FY2024.***

12. Open Meeting Law

- The flexibility allowed during the state of emergency continues to be helpful.
- *Update statute to permanently allow for virtual meetings if desired by the public body.*

13. Agency/Department contracting with RPCs

- RPCs are having issues with entering into agreements with state agencies unless RPCs are specified in the law. This situation is leading to sham competitive procurement processes. The process can be modernized to reduce administrative burdens and costs for both the state and RPCs.
 - ***Update Title 3 to recognize the unique role that RPCs fill in the state and allow Agency Secretaries or Department Commissioners to determine if they want to directly contract with RPCs.***

14. Planning Funding

- In order to address our economic, housing, climate, energy, water quality, and transportation challenges, more resources are needed for planning and community engagement by RPCs and municipalities.
- ***THANK YOU for the first significant increase in regional planning funding in 20 years, now at \$4.5 million.***
- ***RPCs have asked ACCD for a 3% increase like other state agencies. (The statutory formula would provide over \$10 million.)***
- ***Vermont Planners Association is asking for \$800,000 for municipal planning grants. (The statutory formula would provide almost \$2.9 million.)***

CCRPC Current Work

This is only a snapshot of current CCRPC work; for more information view our **2022** Annual Report at www.ccrpcvt.org/annual-reports

- **Water Quality** | Road erosion inventories and conceptual designs. Started up Basin 5 Clean Water Service Provider. Assisting towns with wastewater planning.
- **Transportation Studies** | Corridor studies, scoping, safety, traffic signal timing analyses, and inventories.
- **Emergency Management** | Supplemental SEOC staffing, disaster local liaison, FEMA and LGER grant assistance, local emergency management plans
- **Energy Plans** | Regional Energy Plan; Municipal Energy Plan assistance with CCRPC's Determination of Energy Compliance.
- **Housing** | Building Homes Together campaign and regional housing convenings.
- **Land Use** | Municipal plan, bylaw, and capital program assistance.
- **Equity** | Hosted summit on November 6, 2021. Completed Equity Assessment Report. Formed Equity Advisory Committee. Hired Equity and Engagement Manager. Partner in Dept. of Health – Health Equity grant work.

CCRPC Resources

- **ECOS Scorecard** | 90+ indicators tied to our ECOS Plan goals relating to people, place, and prosperity | <https://app.resultsscorecard.com/Scorecard/Embed/8502>
- **Our Communities** | A link to all of our municipalities; our current and past work with each; links to their websites; basic data | <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-communities/>
- **Current Transportation Projects** | Organized by topic | <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/>
- **ECOS Annual Reports** | Data and progress on ECOS Regional Plan implementation | <http://www.ecosproject.com/annual-report>
- **ECOS Map Viewer** | State, regional & municipal data layers | <http://map.ccrpcvt.org/ChittendenCountyVT>
- **Data** | Links to various transportation, socioeconomic, and geo data | <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/data>

Thank you!

We are a resource to you!

Questions/Discussion?

Please contact us for any assistance or to find people to testify:

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www.ccrpcvt.org

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