

Brownfields Advisory Committee, Online only
Monday, June 12, 2023

Scheduled Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12 Noon **APPROVED Meeting Summary**

Held via Zoom: Various documents referenced below are available for download at:
<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/economic-development/brownfields/#advisory-committee>

In Attendance (all virtual unless otherwise noted)	
Committee Members:	
Jon Rauscher, City of Winooski	Amanda Froeschle, VT Dept. of Health
Pablo Bose, University of Vermont (arrived	Samantha Dunn, Burlington Community & Economic Development Office
Alex Demoly, GBIC	
CCRPC-retained Qualified Environmental Professionals	
Guests	
CCRPC Staff	
Dan Albrecht, Senior Planner	Darren Schibler, Senior Planner
EPA and State Staff	
William Lariviere, EPA Region One	Caitlyn Bain, VT Department of Environmental Conservation

- 1. Call to Order, Introductions and Changes to the Agenda** The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. Darren Schibler facilitated the meeting. Introductions were made. Participants introduced themselves.
- 2. Public comments on items not on the Agenda**
There were no members of the public and no comments provided.
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
Dunn made a motion, seconded by Rauscher to approve the minutes of January 6th, March 13th and May 9th, 2023. The motion passed 4-0.
- 4. Overview of New Funding Sources**
Schibler provided an overview of the CCRPC’s funding sources. The CCRPC was just awarded an FY23 EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant of \$500,000 which will start July 1st and ends 9/30/27. We have a new pass-through grant from ACCD via the Budget Adjustment Act that started May 1st. That is a minimum of \$50,000 and once that is reached and funds are needed for new projects, the CCRPC can ask for more. There should also be a similar FY24 ACCD grant coming on top of that when the FY24 State budget becomes final and assuming nothing changes during the upcoming legislative override session.
- 5. General Policy Considerations for Use of Funds**

Schibler explained that as a result of the new funds as well as recent committee discussions we want to revisit our criteria. ACCD funds are limited to \$50,000 per site.

[Pablo Bose joined the meeting.]

Albrecht provided more detail on the EPA workplan. Initially the focus of the workplan from July into the fall will be to update their outreach materials, to work with the Committee and with CCRPC's new Equity & Engagement Manager (Anne Nelson Stoner) to come up with some good approaches to outreach. So far we are planning presentations to each of the Burlington and Winooski Planning Commissions and a presentation at the November 8th Vermont Development Conference. We have six consultants on retainer right now with their master agreements valid for two more years. We will issue another RFQ in 2 years. We will need to issue an RFQ for Archeological / Historic Preservation firms this summer. For the next several months we will be spreading the word that we have funds.

Schibler noted that ACCD wants the funds to promote housing and economic development. EPA funds are a little broader as long as they pass muster via the EPA Brownfields eligibility form which Lariviere indicated has just been updated. For petroleum-contamination-only sites, EPA will defer to VT DEC to confirm eligibility. For ACCD funds, the project site must also be enrolled in BRELLA, the state's liability protection program or be eligible to do so. Additionally, if the current or immediate prior owner caused contamination and is liable, then DEC would not sign off on ACCD funds being spent on that site. This was the case for the Community Sailing Center site on the Burlington waterfront. EPA funds are available July 1st and ACCD funds via the Budget Adjustment Act are available as of May 1st. The FY24 ACCD funds are not confirmed yet since the FY24 budget bill was vetoed by the Governor and may still be changed. Lariviere noted that CCRPC can charge towards the grant effective July 1st but cannot get reimbursed for any work until October 1st. Lariviere is pretty sure there is no per-site cap to costs but he will check on that. EPA funds can be used for most anything short of physical remediation work.

6. Intro to Project Screening Documents Revisions

Schibler explained that CCRPC wanted to talk with the Committee about how we prioritize our use of the funds, how we maximize the impact of the funds, how meet the guidelines of the grants. Today's meeting is just the start. We can spend more time on it at a subsequent meeting.

Schibler first walked through the draft edits to the [Site Selection Principles](#). The document already includes some suggested language changes by staff.

Eligibility Requirements Section

Dunn suggested adding links to the various forms and programs that are required.

Schibler noted that we may also have a different lower baseline criteria for Phase I ESA with Albrecht noting that it is seed money, its quick and its helpful and helps to start a good conversation. We may just plan to automatically fund these for municipal or non-profit projects but have a cost-share for private sector applicants if for example it was not a housing project.

Dunn asked if there was any discussion about prioritizing applications from BIPOC or women-owned ventures who might have been left out of the real estate process in the past. Schibler noted that CCRPC has been thinking about how to encourage that access by tweaking the project review score sheet. We also are thinking about ways to improve outreach as a way to improve that access. Another option would be to reserve some funds for those categories of applicants. Lastly, we are thinking about ways to prioritize projects that provide broad benefits to those populations (e.g., community health center vs. a

private business).

Froeschle suggested we could allocate 50% of funds towards projects with a public benefit vs. a smaller percentage for private sector. Albrecht stated that he heard her point but the challenge, for example with our EPA grant the priority (and the challenge we identified in the grant application) is housing. If a private sector housing project comes to us, and if we stayed consistent with what we did in the past, we would strongly support it. Schibler noted we would want to prioritize residential development over general commercial development. Albrecht noted that our EPA grant prioritized three categories: housing, small-business development and open space / recreation. Albrecht noted that we can track how we spend funds per category. In the beginning, being flush with money, we may not worry about it too much, but it will be helpful as funds dwindle so we can realize if we are coming up short on certain categories. Schibler wrapped up discussion on this section indicating staff will think more about prioritization and reserving funds and follow up with revised drafts for the Committee to review at future meetings.

Site Selection Section

Schibler then walked through the next section of text regarding Site Selection. The focus is on sites with existing infrastructure. We also possibly want to reference the goals in the recently approved West Central CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy). No comments were made. He noted that members should feel free to send him feedback directly such as health equity feedback he has already received from Froeschle and her colleagues.

Phase I Assessments Section

Schibler then turned to the principles for funding Phase I Assessments. These would be fairly open and flexible for municipal and non-profit projects with perhaps some cost share required for private sector projects. Dunn said this section is where we should prioritize e.g., 100% for non-profit, BIPOC or women owned 80%-for private projects.

Regarding Phase II ESAs and CAPs, most of the language is unchanged from the 2016 text. Albrecht suggested we may want to add some more guidance on this as costs are increasing and not all Phase II ESAs are created equal. CCRPC had an unofficial policy in prior years of supporting 80% of Phase II costs of the first \$30,000 in costs. Perhaps we have different funding tier percentages for different types of projects depending upon the # units, the ownership, the amount of sq. ft. of commercial space, types of business (e.g., grocery store in a low-income neighborhood vs. a yoga studio).

Schibler asked if the Committee wanted to talk about the Site Evaluation Criteria checklist or pivot to Public Engagement. Members declined to talk about the checklist. Rauscher noted that the Selection Principles provide some baked-in criteria, and the checklist is just putting numbers to it. Schibler indicated he will send members an updated version of the score sheet and potentially some examples of how some projects would score now compared to using the old scoring system. Albrecht indicated he could create a simple spreadsheet of the approximately 30 projects over the last 10 years and plot them on a graph. Dunn stated that we need to award more points for affordable houses as well as scoring a municipal project that has a broad public benefit e.g., a Department of Public Works' purchase of land for expansion of water services. Albrecht agreed noting that we have had an unwritten policy of backing municipal projects at a 100% so we might as well capture that. Schibler concluded we could also have less rigorous scoring requirements for municipal and non-profit projects.

7. Public Engagement Efforts Ideas

Albrecht recapped the planned outreach efforts written into the workplan for the new EPA grant. This includes annual presentations to each Burlington and Winooski Planning Commissions and one annual community meeting in both Winooski and Burlington Census Tract 10. For the latter, it would be best for CCRPC to piggyback onto an existing community meeting. In our EPA grant we talked a lot about immigrants and refugees, but we struggle with how best to do that without being extractive. Bose agreed that this is a challenge: how to engage, who comes to public meetings. Usually it is ex-politicians who show up at these forums. It is difficult for a person to figure out why they should show up as well as the challenges of childcare, elder care, time constraint, language barrier. It would be great to ask them WHAT they would like to see improved. The ECOS consultations were good examples of this. Neighborhood charettes are good and working with CEDO is good.

Bose has found that the best way to engage with communities is to try and find community events already happening and assist financially with food. Albrecht noted we have funds set aside for meeting room fees as well as translators. Meeting spaces might include the Old North End Community Center in Burlington, and the O'Brien Center in Winooski; and/or we could put posters in those places. Schibler noted that even though it may not show up in a score sheet this outreach can help influence how we incorporate community benefits, how we prioritize projects, or even spark ideas for developers as to what local priorities are.

Staff and members discussed the challenges of resident displacement during rehab/redevelopment of older apartment buildings as well as gentrification broadly. Schibler noted this is an issue we can try to incorporate into the scoring criteria. Albrecht asked a hypothetical of do we even want to fund a project that causes displacement.

Bose stated that the key question is what input are we looking for and what will we do about/with It is important not to overpromise during community outreach, that can lead to mistrust especially if nothing changes. We need to be upfront that public engagement and redevelopment is a long process. Albrecht answered saying they can illustrate before/after pictures of the numerous brownfields projects we have aided as a way to demonstrate the end goal. Lariviere added that we also need to note the cleanup aspects of redevelopment: no asbestos, PCBs, PFAS plus cleaner water. Yes, you don't want to cause displacement but we also want to get them out of unhealthy buildings.

8. Next meeting time

After discussion, it was agreed that a regular monthly meeting time be set and Schibler will reach out to members with options. Dunn suggested having a booth at the Burlington Farmer's Market as it is in the heart of the Pine Street Corridor, and it is well attended.

9. The meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Darren Schibler and Dan Albrecht.