



CHITTENDEN COUNTY

Municipal  Legislative  
**BREAKFAST**

December 5, 2023



An aerial photograph of a town, likely in Vermont, showing a river, a large building with solar panels, and a road. The image is used as a background for the left side of the slide.

# AGENDA

**8:00-8:10 | Welcome and Introductions** *(Bard Hill, CCRPC Vice Chair)*

**8:10-8:30 | Key Issues Introduction** *(Charlie Baker, CCRPC Executive Director)*

- Housing - Planning & Permitting System
- Climate Resilience
- Open Meeting Law
- Transit Revenue Options
- Municipal Local Options Tax
- Updates
  - Equity
  - Chittenden County Communications Union District
  - West Central VT Economic Development District
- Chittenden County's Importance to the State of Vermont

**8:30-9:00 | Discussion**

# HOUSING

## The housing crisis is getting worse.

- Housing is more expensive
- Less housing is available
- Limiting job growth
- Increasing inequities
- Increasing GHG emissions



*The **Building Homes Together 2.0** campaign calls for 1,000 homes per year for five years (2021-2025).*

## Homes built in Chittenden County 2018-2022

5-year average for Net New Units

3,567 homes built in last 5 years



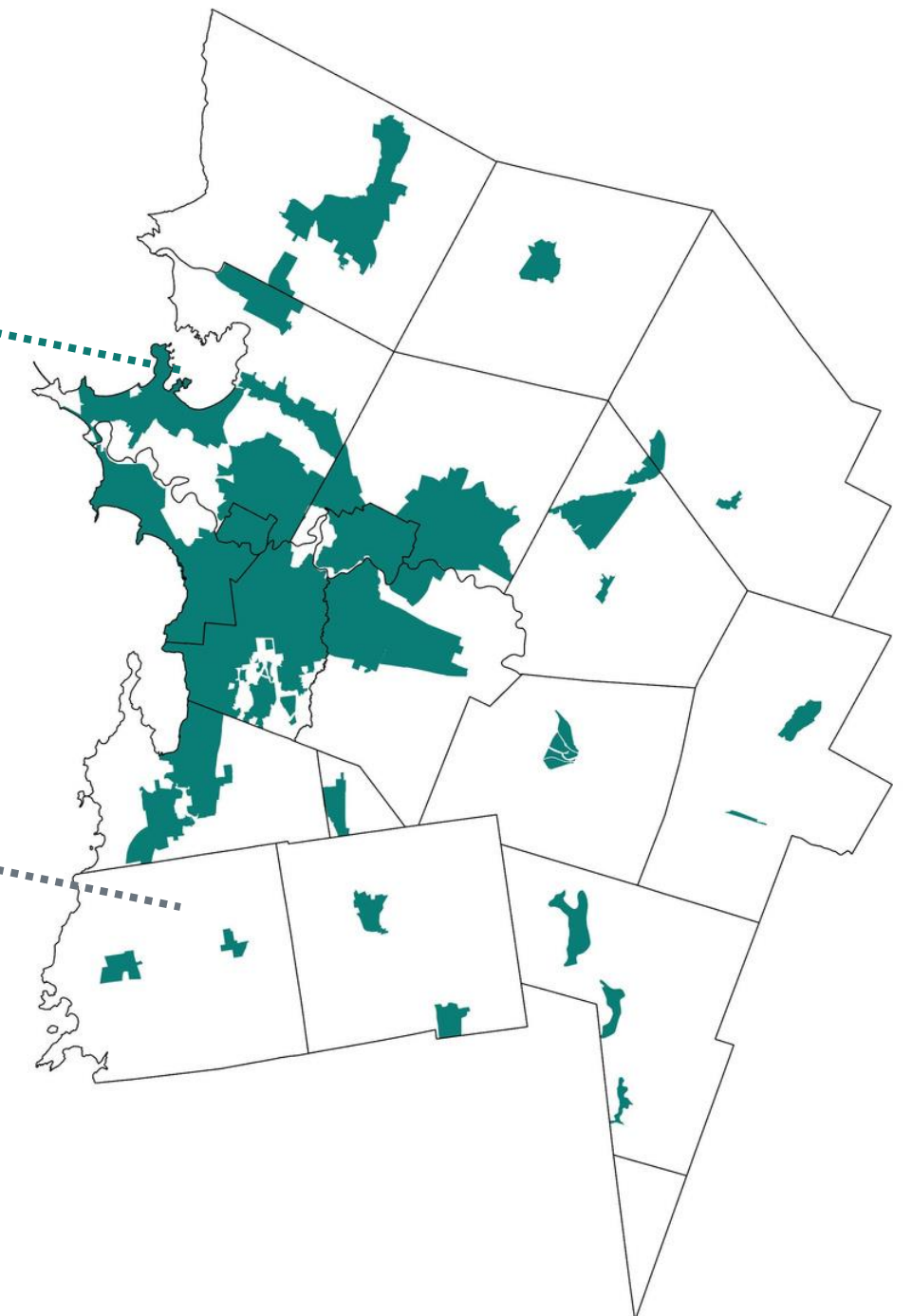
**87%**

built in areas  
planned for  
growth



**13%**

built in rural  
planning  
areas



# HOUSING · PLANNING & PERMITTING SYSTEM

**Act 147 - HOME Act (S.100) required *four studies* related to Act 250, State Designations, and Regional Planning.**



## **Study 1: Act 250**

***Recommending the State be divided into 3 areas:***

### **TIER**

**①**

Areas planned for growth with good zoning, water, & sewer. These areas could be approved through a designation process for exemption from Act 250 to encourage growth. Maybe 5-10% of the State.

### **TIER**

**②**

Leave Act 250 requirements in place. Maybe 25-70% of the State.

### **TIER**

**③**

Important natural resource areas. Either lower the threshold for Act 250 review or consider other triggers to decrease forest fragmentation and natural resource impacts. Maybe 20-70% of the State.

# HOUSING · PLANNING & PERMITTING SYSTEM



## Study 2: Designation

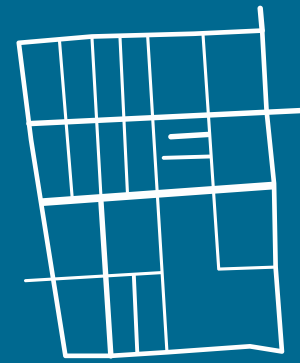
*Recommending a simplified designation system:*

**Core Areas:** Downtowns and Village Centers. Mapped by towns and RPCs. Primarily tax credits and state investment benefits.

**Neighborhood Areas:** Areas adjacent to core areas planned for growth to encourage housing infill and development.

**Build Ready Areas:** Combination of a. and b. with approval of NRB to provide Act 250 exemption. Same as Tier 1 in Act 250 study.

# HOUSING · PLANNING & PERMITTING SYSTEM



## **Study 3: Regional Planning Report**

*Recommending consistent future land use mapping by RPCs to support Act 250, designations, and State investment:*

**Planned Growth and Village Areas:** Same area as Tier 1 in Act 250 Study and Core/Neighborhood Areas in Designation Study.

**Transition, Resource-based Recreation, Enterprise, Hamlet, Rural-General Areas:** Same as Tier 2 in Act 250 Study.

**Rural-Agriculture and Forestry and Rural-Conservation Areas:** Possibly same as Tier 3 in Act 250 study. Needs more process to finalize.

# HOUSING · PLANNING & PERMITTING SYSTEM



## Study 4: Municipal Delegation Report

*Recommending a process for municipalities to enter into a delegation agreement with the NRB:*

**Functional Equivalence:** Proposes high requirements for municipality to demonstrate that their regulations are functionally equivalent or better than applicable Act 250 criteria.

**RPC Role:** Has a significant role for RPC involvement and review to address potential regional impacts and ease the administrative burden on the NRB staff.

**NRB Authority:** Allows NRB to retain jurisdiction over certain criteria, uses, or geographies.

# HOUSING · PLANNING & PERMITTING SYSTEM

**Broadly: Update Act 250 & Chapter 117** to accomplish smart growth goals and make it easier to build more housing in planned growth areas,



encouraging development  
in our centers

**AND**



preserving our  
rural areas.

- *Update regional planning requirements for consistent future land use definitions and criteria.*
- *Establish alternative mechanism for state agencies to provide input to municipal permit processes.*
- *Provide pathway for existing Act 250 permit holders in areas exempted to get out from under Act 250 jurisdiction, as new permittees can.*

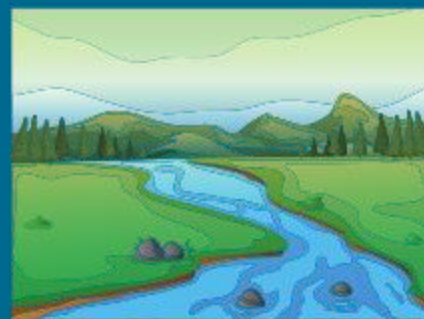
# CLIMATE RESILIENCE



**We need to improve how we regulate and invest to protect people and property from flooding.**

Currently, municipalities regulate floodplains, some municipalities have requirements that protect river corridors (more so in Chittenden County than the rest of the State).

DEC has a limited river corridor permit statewide for uses that municipalities can't regulate, and DEC reviews river corridor impacts through Act 250 (very limited practical impact).



*Look at having DEC take over regulation of river corridors in areas exempted from Act 250. Possible floodplain regulation as well. Allow for delegation agreements with municipalities.*



# OPEN MEETING LAW

**The flexibility allowed during the state of emergency continues to be helpful in increasing participation.**



*Update statute to permanently allow for virtual meetings if desired by the public body. Especially for non-primary (not Selectboards or School boards) government agencies or committees.*



# TRANSIT REVENUE OPTIONS

**Widening gap between revenue and costs will severely impact service levels when COVID relief funds exhausted, especially in Chittenden County.**



**Demographic shifts, especially an aging population, and move towards more climate friendly transit will result in continued high demand.**

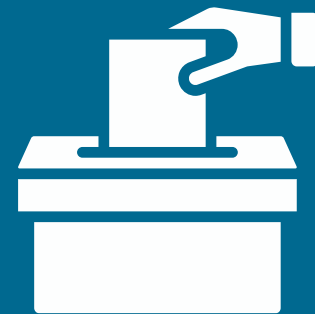


*Consider recommendations coming from the Vermont Public Transit Association study on non-federal match funding funds.*



# LOCAL OPTIONS TAX

**Municipalities currently must gain voter approval of a local options tax and then need to get approval from the Legislature and Governor to implement a local options tax.**



*Enable municipalities to adopt a local options tax based solely upon a vote of the municipality's residents.*



# EQUITY UPDATE

**Equity is one of our ECOS Plan Strategies. Addressing systemic racism and economic inequities will take a concerted effort by everyone and will benefit everyone.**

- **2021:** Hired The Creative Discourse Group; CCRPC Organizational Equity Assessment; Planning for Equity Summit; Formed an Equity Advisory Committee
  - **2022:** Hired Equity & Engagement Manager
  - **2023:** Adopted an Organizational Equity Statement/Commitment; Updating Organizational Code of Conduct; Developing Strategic **Equity Action Plan**
- BUILD:** Build internal organizational capacity
- TRANSFORM:** Transform CCRPC's project and regional planning processes
- COLLABORATE:** Collaborate to increase meaningful engagement and mutually beneficial relationships with marginalized and underrepresented communities
- LEAD:** Leverage CCRPC's authority, expertise, and resources to support member municipalities and become a regional equity leader

# BROADBAND UPDATE

**100/100 service is the standard, improves economic equity and job growth, decreases driving, and is important for smart electric grid; be careful with encouraging sprawl and forest fragmentation.**



At least **4%** of Chittenden County sites have 25/3 service or less.



With CCRPC support, CUD has been formed by Essex, Essex Junction, Jericho, Shelburne, South Burlington, Westford, Williston, and Underhill.



VBBB paid for an initial plan for Chittenden County and a consultant to help bring in service providers to reach sites considered unserved or underserved in the above municipalities. An RFP is being drafted and should be issued in the coming weeks.



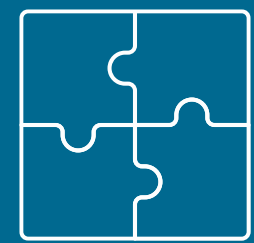
*More funding that can be used in Chittenden County may be needed. Current VCBB funding does not allow overbuilding where service is considered adequate.*

# WEST CENTRAL VT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

**During 2021 and 2022, CCRPC worked with the RPCs and regional development corporations in Chittenden, Addison, Rutland, and Washington counties to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the “West Central Vermont” region.**



**Our CEDS was approved by US Economic Development Administration (EDA) in June 2023.**



We are now working with these same partners to submit an application for this larger region to be approved by the US EDA as an Economic Development District (EDD).



This will provide us access to additional federal funding resources and provide full coverage of Vermont by EDDs.

# CHITTENDEN COUNTY'S IMPORTANCE TO THE STATE



**The economic health of Chittenden County is vital to the State's economy.**

**Recent data shows Chittenden County accounted for:**



**26%** of Vermont's population



**36.1%** of Vermont's GDP in 2021



**33.6%** of Vermont jobs in 2022



**35%** of the State's sales and use tax receipts excluding online sales in 2022



**31.6%** of the State's personal income tax revenue in 2021



# CCRPC RESOURCES

**Our Communities** • Municipality-specific information; our current and past work with each; links to their websites; basic data

**Current Transportation Projects** • Organized by topic

**ECOS Annual Reports** • Data and progress on ECOS Regional Plan implementation

**ECOS Map Viewer** • State, regional & municipal data layers

**ECOS Scorecard** • 90+ indicators tied to our ECOS Plan goals relating to people, place, and prosperity

**Data** • Links to various transportation, socioeconomic, and geo data

An aerial photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, there's a residential area with houses and trees. A road runs horizontally across the middle. To the right of the road, there's a large, multi-story building with a flat roof and many windows. Further back, there's another large building with a similar design. A river or large body of water is visible on the left side of the image, flowing towards the bottom. The sky is clear and blue.

# CCRPC WORK

This is only a snapshot; for more information about our work in your municipality(ies) visit [\*ccrpcvt.org/our-communities\*](http://ccrpcvt.org/our-communities).

- **Water Quality** • Road erosion inventories and conceptual designs. Serving as Basin 5 Clean Water Service Provider. Assisting towns with wastewater planning.
- **Transportation** • 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** • Completed Equity Assessment Report; formed Equity Advisory Committee; hired Equity and Engagement Manager; partner in VT Dept. of Health Health Equity grant work; adopted an equity statement.



# **THANK YOU!**

## **WE ARE A RESOURCE FOR YOU!**

### **QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION?**

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

**Charlie Baker, Executive Director**

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ccrpcvt.org | ecosproject.com



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