FY24 ANNUAL REPORT

TOWN of ESSEX

All information available at: ccrpcvt.org/essex

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. The CCRPC also serves as the region's sole federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operating in Vermont and is responsible for transportation planning in Chittenden County in close collaboration with our municipalities, state and federal agencies, other partners, and the public.

The CCRPC is governed by a 29-member board consisting of one representative from each of the County's 19 municipalities, transportation representatives, and at-large members representing the interests of agriculture, environmental conservation, business, and housing/socio-economic. CCRPC's 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.

Learn more about CCRPC »

In **FY24**, the CCRPC invested about **$6 million** in:

The program leverages more than **$5.4 million** in Federal and State investment with $263,000 in municipal dues and another $340,000 in local match for specific projects—a 10:1 return on local investment.

Specific activities the CCRPC is engaged in with **Essex** and CCRPC's regional activities are discussed in the following sections of this report and at ccrpcvt.org/essex.

FY24 **ESSEX** REPRESENTATIVES

CCRPC Board | Rep: *Andy Watts* | Alt: *Tracy Delphia*
Transportation Advisory Committee | Rep: *Aaron Martin*
Planning Advisory Committee | Rep: *Katherine Sonnick*
Clean Water Advisory Committee | Rep: *Annie Costandi*
Regional Emergency Management Committee | Rep: *Ron Hoague* | Alt: *Charlie Cole*
Long Range Planning Committee | Rep: *Tracy Delphia*
Long Range Planning Committee Energy Sub-Committee | Rep: *Daniel Parkins*

ESSEX ACTIVITIES

In FY2024, the CCRPC provided assistance to Essex on the following projects and initiatives:

- **Essex Build-Out for Bylaw Modernization:** CCRPC completed an analysis to model potential housing growth and wastewater demand given the HOME ACT in Essex's sewer core area for the Susie Wilson Rd and Jericho Rd study areas. The final StoryMap is available here.
- **Energy Implementation:** CCRPC assisted Essex with the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, including gathering utility data, answering questions, and scheduling and attending building assessments.
- **Essex Stormwater CCTV Inspection (Phase 3):** This project focused on inspection of existing storm drainage infrastructure and development of an asset management database of the assessed drainage system. Data and information generated by this effort could be used to create a stormwater infrastructure replacement plan. Phase 1 was completed in FY21, Phase 2 in FY23, Phase 3 in FY24, and Phase 4 in FY25. Information from all 4 phases will be consolidated, and the findings will be used to schedule implementation of pipe repairs, lining or replacement. Total consultant budget for Phases 1, 2, and 3: $192,340
- **Water Quality Planning Assistance:** CCRPC continued to assist with Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP) compliance, Road Erosion Inventories, and other transportation-related water quality tasks. In FY24, CCRPC met with town staff to discuss funding opportunities on various stormwater assets. In June, RPC staff met with Essex to visit an eroded outlet on Sand Hill Road and complete the necessary pre-construction site visit summary. This MRGP outlet is slated to be upgraded during early FY25.
- **Chittenden County Brownfields Program:** This year in Essex, using funds from both the EPA and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, a supplemental site investigation was conducted at the Potvin Automotive property at 104 Center Road to assess for contamination to prepare for further development of a mixed-use project.
- **Technical Assistance**: CCRPC staff provided a variety of technical assistance to Essex Town:
    - Completed the Formal Town Plan Review process for the new Essex Town Plan. Subsequently, the CCRPC Board approved the Essex Town Plan.
    - Provided guidance on how the HOME Act affects the Town's sewer system planning.
    - Provided guidance on emerald ash borer management and general planning issues to the Conservation & Trails Committee.
    - Reviewed an Act 250 application for 150 Red Pine Circle.
    - Worked with Town staff to prepare the 2023 Annual Monitoring report for review by the Selectboard on progress by the Town towards implementation of actions detailed in the Town's 2022 All-Hazards Mitigation Plan.
    - Provided a letter of support for the Town's Better Roads grant.
- **Traffic Counts:** No traffic counts were completed in FY24. Traffic counts conducted in support of Essex's transportation projects and studies can be found here.
- **Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (O&D) Transportation Program:** The Chittenden County O&D Transportation Program supports community members through affordable transportation to medical appointments, access to fresh food at the grocery store, and social visits. In FY24, 112 trips were provided to Essex residents as part of this program.

FY2025 CCPRC WORK PROGRAM

Project Name	Brief Description	Total Budget
Lower Sand Hill Road Truck Traffic Study	Essex is looking to analyze truck traffic and other transportation patterns related to the commercial / industrial uses located on Corporate Drive, Thompson Drive, and both current and future impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhoods within the corridor.	$50,000
Essex Active Transportation Plan	This project will develop a comprehensive and actionable Active Transportation Plan with recommendations to create a safe, desirable and connected biking and walking network in the town.	$80,000
Essex Stormwater CCTV Inspection – Phase 4	This is the fourth of four phases and consists of hiring a consultant to use a camera to televise the pipes in identified areas. This video will generate a condition assessment report that will be consolidated with the condition assessment reports completed in the previous phases.	$75,000

PROJECTS IN THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The TIP is a prioritized, multi-year list of transportation projects in Chittenden County. To receive federal funds, each transportation project, program, or operation must be authorized through CCRPC approval of the TIP. Essex projects included in the TIP are listed below. These projects are also included in the Vermont Agency of Transportation Capital Program for design or construction.

- **Stormwater Detention Pond Design and Construction at LDS Church**: 2018 and 2022 Municipal Highway and Stormwater Program awards for a stormwater treatment project. Construction is scheduled for 2024.
- **Stormwater Retrofit at VT289/VT15**: $796,000 for design and construction of stormwater retrofit to implement VTrans flow restoration plans. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2025.
- **VT15 Traffic Signal Replacement**: $2.7 million to replace traffic signals on VT15 from Campus Avenue to Ethan Allen Avenue in 2025.
- **Resurface VT15**: $4 million to resurface VT15 from Winooski City Line to Susie Wilson Road in 2025.
- **VT128/Alder Brook Culvert:** $650,000 to replace a culvert on VT128 in 2025.
- **Susie Wilson Road Corridor and Intersection Improvements:** $1.8 million CIRC Alternatives Phase III project to improve the VT15 corridor including intersections with Susie Wilson Road and Kellogg Road. Construction to begin in 2026.
- **VT 117/North Williston Road Intersection Improvements:** $2 million CIRC Alt Phase III project. Construction scheduled for 2026.
- **Resurface VT128, Essex to Fairfax:** $4 million paving project extending from VT15 to Fairfax. Paving scheduled for 2026.
- **VT 15/Sand Hill Road Intersection Improvements:** $2.5 million CIRC Alt Phase II Project for installation of a signal. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2026.
- **VT 117/North Williston Road Hazard Mitigation Improvements:** $400,000 CIRC Alternatives Phase III project to install a box culvert, safety enhancements and armoring. Construction schedule to be determined.

- **VT 15 Sidewalk Old Stage Road to Essex Way**: $160,000 CIRC Alternatives Phase III project. Construction schedule to be determined.
- **Culvert Upgrades -- Bridge 11 on VT2A, Bridge 17 on VT289, Bridge 2 on VT15:** Scoping is underway for three culvert upgrade projects in Essex. Project schedules are to be determined.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **ECOS Plan Implementation and Update:** The 2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan (Environment; Community; Opportunity; Sustainability) is the regional plan for Chittenden County and combines the Regional Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy into one. Efforts to update the ECOS Plan to be consistent with Act 181 (the Act 250 bill) began in 2024. Staff conducted six months of ECOS specific community engagement activities to gather input from underrepresented communities to inform this plan update. The engagement strategy and compiled results can be found on our website. The Plan will be turned into an interactive website which will launch in the coming months. The Plan will be further updated with Town input when regional housing targets are available, and the future land use map is updated per Act 181. Additional discussion is needed on this topic.
- **Public Engagement and Equity**: The CCRPC continued to build organizational capacity to address systemic racism and inequities in our communities through the following actions:
    - The CCRPC developed an equity webpage and adopted an organizational equity statement.
    - Supported and facilitated an Equity Advisory Committee.
    - The Equity Advisory Committee worked on the organizational Equity Statement, Core Values and a Code of Conduct for CCRPC Staff and representatives. The committee also supported and advised community engagement for the ECOS Plan update.
    - Strengthened relationships and partnerships and forged new ones with organizations, grassroots organizers, and individuals working with marginalized communities.
- **Housing:** On behalf of all of the RPCs, CCRPC drafted a Regional Planning Report, recommending a new role for regional plans related to Act 250. CCRPC worked with the legislature to adopt comprehensive Act 250 reform through H.687 or Act 181. Additionally, CCRPC organized two Housing Convening events to facilitate peer exchanges on housing tools, sponsored National Fair Housing Month events in partnership with CVOEO, and assisted communities with implementing the HOME Act (S.100/Act 47). The Building Homes Together 2.0 campaign launched in fall 2021 with the goal of building 1,000 homes per year by 2025 for people of all incomes, including 25% affordable homes. In 2022, 594 homes were built, 110 were affordable.
- **Regional Energy Planning**: The CCRPC drafted the ECOS Plan's enhanced energy plan sections to be consistent with the 2022 Department of Public Service's Energy Planning Standards. The CCRPC also began to update energy targets for each municipality with an enhanced energy plan. Under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, CCRPC also provided assistance to create or update municipal enhanced energy plans with implementation actions consistent with the Vermont Climate Action Plan.
- **Regional Energy Implementation:** CCRPC provided technical support to municipalities regarding the state-wide Municipal Energy Resilience Program for municipal buildings and other energy and climate-related grant and incentive programs. CCRPC coordinated with the Climate Action Office, the Public Service Department, and other partners on potential funding for municipalities.
- **Public Transportation Planning:** The CCRPC remains engaged with Green Mountain Transit (GMT) in a wide variety of public transit planning projects and initiatives. Within the CCRPC's FY24 UPWP,

$442,340 was provided to GMT for transit planning in Chittenden County.

- **Northwest VT Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** Beginning in FY23, the CCRPC commenced work on a RAISE federal grant to analyze real estate market demand and develop comprehensive plans for transit-oriented development for 10 communities across five-counties in Northwest Vermont. The $2.1 million grant will also support planning to assess how to enhance public transportation services in these communities to connect them with the region's economic hubs. In FY24, the CCRPC finalized the RAISE grant agreement with FTA, held a kick-off meeting with participating RPCs, contracted with a consultant for the real estate market analysis task, completed Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) between the CCRPC and each participating RPC/municipality, and contracted with eight land use consultants to initiate the TOD master planning work. This planning grant is expected to be completed in FY26.
- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**: CCRPC began work on a Regional Transportation Options Plan to assess the feasibility of transportation demand management (TDM) options, and advance recommendations of both the 2023 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Chittenden County I-89 2050 Study. CCRPC staff participated in CATMA's 2nd Annual Transportation Summit and their Transportation Coordinator (TC) Network program and events to learn from other TC Network members about employee TDM benefits and programs.
- **Walk/Bike Planning**: CCRPC staff collaborated with CATMA and local municipalities to support the regional bikeshare program. The CCRPC also promoted TDM strategies and provided bike/ped-related technical assistance to municipalities and businesses, assisted municipalities with bike/ped grants and UPWP applications, managed bike/ped-related UPWP projects, and conducted bike/ped counts on paths, designated bike lanes, and other roadways. CCRPC staff assisted with planning the 2024 VT Walk/Bike Summit, held in June in Saint Johnsbury.
- **Clean Water**: The CCRPC continued to host the Clean Water Advisory Committee and the MS-4 Sub-Committee. CCRPC staff continued to serve on the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program Advisory Committee. The CCRPC managed education and outreach programs such as the Rethink Runoff on behalf of our MS-4 municipalities. As Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) for the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages (Basin 5), CCRPC worked with its Basin 5 Water Quality Council (BWQC) to oversee the development and implementation of non-regulatory water quality improvement projects that reduce phosphorus loading into these streams and Lake Champlain.
- **Emergency Management**: CCRPC continued to staff the Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC). CCRPC staff participate in a wide array of emergency management-related workshops and exercises to support our role in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) when called upon. The CCRPC served as the local liaison between municipalities and the state to collect damage assessment information after significant storm events, helped with emergency preparedness for hazardous materials incidents, collected information from each municipality on annual implementation of hazard mitigation activities, and worked with municipalities to complete Local Emergency Management Plans.
- **Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Compliance and Water Quality Planning Assistance:** CCRPC staff continued to assist Chittenden County municipalities to meet their MRGP obligations. This includes evaluating segments through Road Erosion Inventories (REIs), tracking and documenting upgraded segments and outlets, and reporting to DEC. Staff also assists municipalities with the State's Grants in Aid (GIA) program, which allocates funding to participating towns for stormwater improvements related to the MRGP. In FY24, 14 Chittenden County municipalities signed up to participate in the GIA program. An estimated 20 non-compliant segments will be upgraded using an allocated $410,000.

- **Traffic Alert Program:** CCRPC compiled and sent out 35 traffic alerts about activities impacting traffic in Chittenden County over 8 months (no alerts January-March).
- **VT Culverts:** The VT Culverts website can be used to view a town's bridges and culverts on a map or chart based on condition or inventory date. CCRPC is one of two RPCs that manage the website. VT Culverts continues to gain traction in our region and throughout the state. At the end of June, six municipalities have actively used VT Culverts to inventory town-maintained bridges and culverts.
- **Chittenden County Communications Union District (CCCUD):** CCRPC assisted the CCCUD as they explored opportunities to provide high-speed internet access to under- or unserved addresses in their 8-municipality district. After much deliberation, the CCCUD voted to apply to the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) for available funds to bring high-speed internet access to half of the under- and unserved addresses in its district.
- **Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (O&D) Transportation Program:** The Chittenden County O&D Transportation Program supports community members through affordable transportation to medical appointments, access to fresh food at the grocery store, and social visits. In FY24, the O&D Committee held three meetings to discuss program funding, volunteer driver outreach and opportunities to involve more mobility partners in O&D transportation planning. CCRPC staff participated on the planning committee for the 5th Annual O&D Transportation Summit which was held in June.
- **Chittenden County Brownfields Program:** In May 2023, CCRPC secured a competitive EPA grant of $500,000 for Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Planning over the next four years to aid property owners, potential developers and municipalities in investigating environmental issues before potential property redevelopment. In FY24, using these Federal and State funds environmental assessment and clean up planning was conducted at 13 project sites in eight municipalities. A web-map of all brownfield sites in Chittenden County was also developed.
- **Exit 14 Scoping Study:** The CCRPC, in collaboration with VTrans, the Cities of South Burlington and Burlington, and other partners initiated a scoping study to evaluate alternatives to improve safety, connectivity, and operational efficiency for all users of the Exit 14 Interchange area. The study will select a locally preferred alternative to recommend to VTrans for consideration and implementation.

For further information about the CCRPC, please visit http://www.ccrpcvt.org/ or contact CCRPC Executive Director, Charlie Baker: cbaker@ccrpcvt.org.

The CCRPC's Summary of Act 181 & Community Engagement Plan

Last Updated: September 11, 2024

Overview of Act 181

Act 181, passed into law June 2024, overhauls Vermont's planning framework for coordinating state, regional, and municipal land use.

- **Location-based Act 250 Jurisdiction and State Designation Programs:** The Act modernizes how Vermont maps and directs public investments to designated centers and creates location-based Act 250 jurisdiction. This change is intended to recognize that some areas of Vermont are planned for growth, contain necessary infrastructure (e.g. water, wastewater), and have sufficient local zoning regulations in place to adequately regulate development. The map used to determine location-based Act 250 jurisdiction and designation boundaries is the Regional Future Land Use Map adopted by the RPC and approved by the State Land Use Review Board (LURB) based upon statutory definitions.
- **Meaningful Participation & Environmental Justice:** The Bill revises the adoption process that regional plans undergo to provide the opportunity for a more robust and comprehensive public participation process, with a specific focus on environmental justice (EJ) focus populations as defined in 3 V.S.A. 6002. It necessitates that RPCs evaluate the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens in the development of the Future Land Use Map.

Goals of new Future Land Use Map & Housing Targets: The new Future Land Use (FLU) Map will guide development in Chittenden County by designating areas for growth, conservation, and other purposes based on environmental, infrastructure, and community factors. Additionally, The Department of Housing and Community Development will set regional housing targets, which will be disaggregated by CCRPC for each municipality. CCRPC will work with each municipality to develop a regional future land use map that can meet these housing targets.

Interested & Affected Parties (IAPs): Municipal selectboards, planning commissions and other committees; municipal community members and interest groups representing EJ focus populations; regional and statewide interest groups.

Who makes what decisions? The CCRPC will attempt to build community consensus between all interested and affected parties, especially each municipality. Ultimately, the CCRPC Board must ensure the FLU Map complies with legal requirements (24 V.S.A. 4348a) to be approved by the State's Land Use Review Board (LURB).

Overview of The CCRPC's Engagement Plan

Goals of Engagement

1. Ensure all 19 municipalities are fully informed about the Act 181 (H.687) requirements.
2. Collect detailed input from each municipality to help inform the new Regional Future Land Use Map through multiple forms of engagement.
3. Foster a collaborative environment to attempt to build community consensus on the Regional Future Land Use Map, including with marginalized communities.
4. Provide clear, accessible information and resources to all participants throughout the process.
5. Develop a draft Regional Future Land Use Map with Housing Targets by June 2025.

Engagement Activities & Timeline

Phase 1 | CCRPC Internal Planning & Coordination (August 2024 - Ongoing): • Develop initial draft FLU maps and housing target disaggregation methodology. • Create educational materials, including summaries and municipality-specific two-pagers. • Develop municipal engagement templates and materials.
Phase 2 | Inform & Educate about Act 181 & Engagement Process (Fall 2024): • Hold educational meetings with selectboards and city councils to introduce the project, explain Act 181, and outline the engagement process. • Distribute informational materials to municipalities, relevant regional and state agencies, and planning commissions. • Develop customized engagement plans for each municipality based on their input.
Phase 3 | Assess Environmental Benefits & Burdens (Fall - Spring 2025, ongoing): • Map environmental justice focus populations within Chittenden County. • Define and visualize environmental benefits and burdens. • Assess how the proposed map changes affect environmental justice (EJ) populations.
Phase 4 | Engagement to Review Draft FLU Map (Winter 2025): • Conduct municipal and regional meetings to review and amend the draft FLU map. • Hold discussion groups and community meetings as per the municipal engagement plans. • Distribute an interactive map to gather public feedback.
Phase 5 | Review Final FLU Map Draft & Discuss Housing Targets (Spring 2025): • Conduct review meetings with all interested and affected parties to reflect their input and reach consensus. • Discuss housing target methodology and implications. • Hold selectboard and planning commission meetings to review the final draft and housing targets.
Phase 6 | Finalize Map & Housing Targets, Prepare for Formal Approval (Summer 2025): • Present final map and housing targets to the LRPC, CCRPC Board, and the State Land Use Review Board for approval.