



February 8, 2017

Dear Vermont House and Senate Committees on Appropriations,

The Town of Chittenden has recently received two Municipal Planning Grants. The first in 2015 was to update our Municipal Plan and the second in 2016 was to educate town property owners on river corridor protections and the value of flood insurance. In both grants, we partnered with planners from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) to complete the grant workplans.

The MPG program allowed a small town like Chittenden to receive funding for projects that likely would not have been undertaken without these grant opportunities. With a volunteer planning commission and emergency management team, it would have created a burden on members who are already volunteering their time for meetings.

With grant funding, we were able to benefit from the expertise of regional planners who have their finger on the pulse of Rutland County. In both grants, a workplan was developed and carried out by a RRPC planner who worked closely with our local members. There was regular and ongoing communication and any feedback from Chittenden was always incorporated into the final product. Having this person who lead and coordinated this work was extremely beneficial to us.

Small towns, especially those that have only volunteer commissions and teams, strongly need the opportunity to apply for Municipal Planning Grants and to work collaboratively with their regional planning commissions. This is a partnership that is allowing towns to accomplish major projects that will allow for increased funding opportunities, such as ERAF, without adding another burden to the local tax base.

Please strongly consider funding this highly successful partnership! It has worked very well in Chittenden and can be replicated with success in other towns. Having these grants gains us the expert knowledge base of regional planners, allows us to stay connected at a regional level and benefits local towns by completing major projects!

Thank you for taking the time to seek this feedback and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have in the future. You may reach me at 802-775-9633 or by email at jsotirakis@aol.com.

Very truly yours,

Jan Sotirakis

Town of Chittenden

Planning Commission Vice Chair

Emergency Management Director