

Regional Planning Commission/ACCD Contracts

Summary of FY16 Performance

DHCD, November 1, 2016

This summary is based on the final reports provided by the 11 regional planning commissions (RPCs) in response to the Work Plan attached to the FY16 RPC/ACCD contract.

1. Regional Planning

All Regional Plans Conform - Every regional planning commission now has a regional plan in effect that meets the statutory requirements. This is the culmination of a four-year process of evaluating and updating regional plans statewide.

Increased Focus on Implementing – Plans with concrete, measurable implementation strategies will become the norm through statewide use of a model implementation template created in FY16. Future progress in achieving those strategies will be reported by all the regions. This coincides with new statutory requirements for RPCs to evaluate the progress of municipalities in implementing their plans.

Redirected Data Collection Methodology – Efforts to develop a methodology for collecting baseline data on multifamily units, essential for measuring the progress of planning, were discontinued due to the lack of consistent and reliable data sources available to the RPCs. Instead, VCGI will take the lead in working with the tax department to improve the reports it receives from municipal grand lists to make baseline data on the number of multifamily units available statewide.

2. Municipal Plan Assistance

Review of Municipal Plans Occurring Statewide – RPCs reviewed 100% of the plans from municipalities that requested a regional review. All regions met the performance standards for completing the reviews and issuing a decision within the statutory timeframes.

Consultations Improve Local Planning – RPCs conducted 100% of the municipal consultations that were due in FY16. A cycle of municipal consultations, with each municipality reviewed at least once every four years, is now well-established statewide. 60% of the municipalities that adopted plans in FY16 addressed recommendations made by the RPCs in the consultations.

Checklist Raises Awareness of Flood Resilience Options – Using a flood resilience checklist updated by DHCD with RPC and ANR assistance during the first half of FY16, RPCs completed the checklist for 134 municipalities statewide, raising local awareness and producing data on municipal capacity that will be useful for the RPCs and state agency policy-making. The checklist aims to help Vermont communities prepare so expensive damages in future flood events can be reduced.

3. Municipal Training and Education

Useful Education Provided to Towns – RPCs held nearly 78 training events for municipal staff and volunteers in FY16. 73% of municipalities were represented, totaling 1,611 participants. Only a third of the participants completed surveys in 10 regions, but 94% of those surveyed said the training was useful. Some regions defined “training” more broadly than others, including presentations given at regional planning commission meetings and project presentations. Notable training examples:

- Planning Commissioners’ Summit – evening event with “lightning talks” and peer to peer discussion – CCRPC
- Housing is Affordable – TRORC training held in two towns
- Zoning/Floodplain Administrator Brown Bag Lunch – WRC
- 35 people attended “Essentials” training in Dorset - BCRC

4. Act 250/Section 248 Participation

Section 248 Reviews Increase – Review of Section 248 applications that involved a hearing increased sharply in FY16 with a total of 98 applications statewide. By contrast, the number of Act 250 applications went down from the previous two years.

Number of RPC Reviews	FY 14	FY15	FY16
Act 250	79	82	58
Section 248	39	52	98

Most of the RPCs described making substantive comments that influenced the outcomes of a number of applications in both arenas.

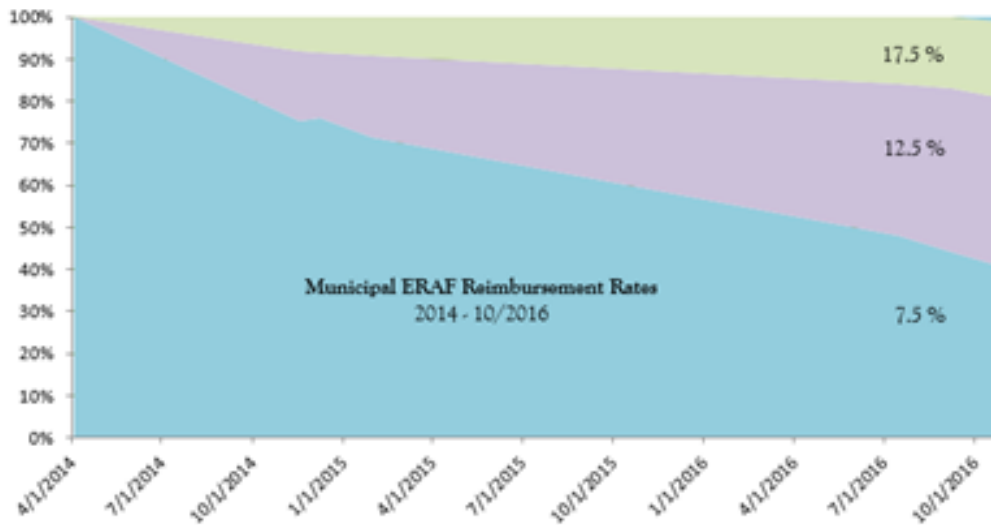
5. Regional and State Issues

All RPCs Participated in Statewide Initiatives - As required in the contract, all RPCs participated in the BACHDA training to coordinate data collection following a disaster, and all participated in reviewing, commenting and receiving training on the new Planning Manual.

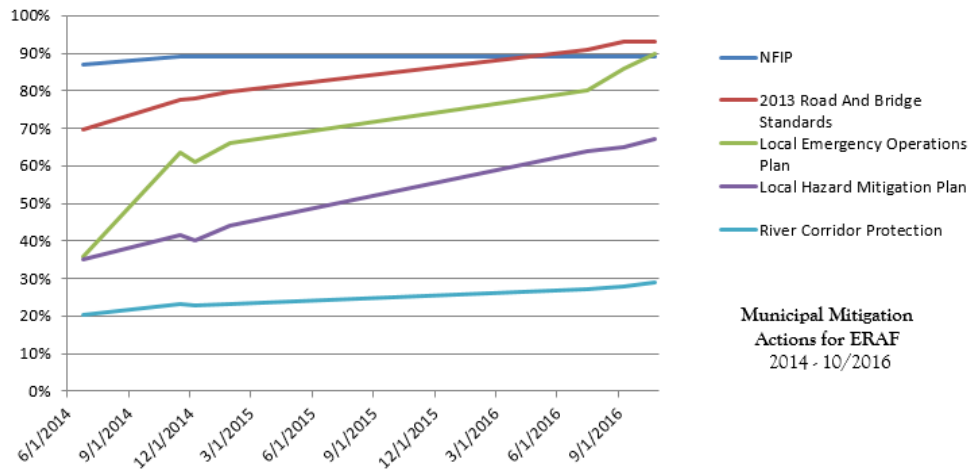
Public Water/Wastewater Priorities Identified - All RPCs submitted spreadsheets on the status of water and wastewater facilities in their municipalities and identified those communities needing immediate support. This list was shared with DEC and other funding agencies that are proceeding with outreach to those communities. DHCD used the data to produce a rough estimate of the number of “centers” statewide without community water and wastewater systems. About half of Vermont’s compact settlements – 167 centers – have no facilities.

6. Core Functions

Nearly all Municipalities Receive RPC Support – 255 municipalities received RPC assistance (98% of Vermont municipalities) in FY16. A comprehensive annual report was submitted describing the services provided by the RPCs. The ERAF Rates are steadily improving statewide.



Also useful to break it down to individual ERAF requirements:



Contract Administration

All but one region submitted final reports on time. Most RPCs misunderstood the reporting on the Flood Resilience Checklist but corrected their reports and submitted any missing documents within a month of the original submission. The one remaining region addressed incomplete items before the end of October.