

VAPDA

VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

VERMONT'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS 2020 AT WORK



The Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies consists of Vermont's 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs).

In the absence of county government, RPCs are an essential link between local, state and federal government and related programs that serve community needs.

RPCs are political subdivisions of the State of Vermont, uniquely positioned to provide broad services to every Vermont municipality.

Regional Planning Commissions are governed by Boards made up primarily of locally appointed officials. These ties to local government help RPCs serve as a bridge between local, state and federal governments.

Regional Planning Commissions have federal and state statutory responsibilities in transportation, land use, emergency management, brownfields, housing, energy, and economic development.

The work of Regional Planning Commissions is supported through a complementary combination of local, state and federal funding. Local and state funding for RPCs helps maximize the recovery of federal dollars for our economy, our environment and our communities, and plays a key role in applying for grants that have broad benefits across each region.



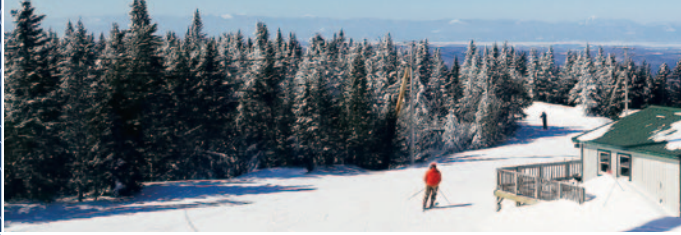
WE ARE VERMONT'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

- ACRPC** Addison County Regional Planning Commission
- BCRC** Bennington County Regional Commission
- CVRPC** Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
- CCRPC** Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- LCPC** Lamoille County Planning Commission
- NVDA** Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- NRPC** Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- RRPC** Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- TRORC** Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
- SWCRPC** Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission
- WRC** Windham Regional Commission

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FROM AROUND THE STATE

Addison County Regional Planning Commission worked with the Town of New Haven and City of Vergennes, with support from many organizations, to plan a regional approach to retrofit and sign a dedicated rural cycling loop to offer safer roads where vehicles, cyclists and public transit can co-exist. The Addison County Bike Loop Master Plan sets the stage to provide a safer, more enjoyable rider experience and increase connectivity between Middlebury, Bristol, Vergennes, and New Haven, establishing a sustainable and valued recreational resource.

Bennington County Regional Commission worked with communities to strengthen historic community centers by supporting village center and neighborhood development area designations and assisting with updates to local land use regulations. Designations have led to over \$300k in new funding for village center revitalization projects, and regulatory reforms that allow for higher densities of housing and additional mixed-use development – under review throughout the region – have been implemented in Pownal, Stamford, and Bennington.

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission advanced Vermont's effort to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Champlain via the Winooski River Basin. It completed stormwater mitigation final designs for three sites in Berlin and one in Plainfield, initiated final designs for four sites in Woodbury and two in Calais, completed stormwater mitigation construction projects in Barre City and Northfield, and engaged municipalities in public-private partnership work for complying with the new 3-acre stormwater regulation.

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission supported population health by continuing work on the Regional Prevention Partnership (RPP) grant with the Chittenden Prevention Network, United Way of Northwest VT, and the VT Department of Health and by being a core organization of the Chittenden County Population Health Alliance. Through RPP, four municipalities now include healthy community design and substance use prevention actions in their comprehensive plans, another municipality has a substance-free parks and public event ordinance, and the first sharps disposal kiosk was established.



Lamoille County Planning Commission worked with residents and broadband committees to study options for high-speed internet deployment. It organized meetings with Internet Service Providers, studied success stories, guided local leaders in engaging with their communities and elected officials, and commissioned a broadband feasibility study funded by the VT Department of Public Service. This work led to official formation of the Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District.

Northeastern Vermont Development Association continued to pursue investments to accelerate economic recovery, including: Securing funding from a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to establish a regional Communications Union District; securing a \$250k grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission to advance the outdoor recreation economy in the NEK; sub-granting to four outdoor recreation projects with the Northern Forest Center and the NEK Collaborative; and obtaining more than \$4M in grants to fund construction of the Hardwick Yellow Barn Business Accelerator.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission expanded its support for the agricultural economy and food systems, and in 2019, brought the Healthy Roots Collaborative under its umbrella. Healthy Roots and NRPC supported the expanded charitable food system through deliveries of food boxes, donated meals, gleaning, stipends to local food shelves, and data collection. NRPC received a grant from the US Economic Development Association that will support new food systems infrastructure, municipal education around on-farm businesses and a pilot agricultural apprenticeship program.

Rutland Regional Planning Commission continued work on numerous economic development initiatives including leading the re-design

of Center Street in Rutland City, broadband feasibility and deployment, creation of a Comprehensive Economic Development Study and operating the Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board, which conducted a virtual job fair for some of the region's largest employers.

Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission continued to expand its water quality program and is administering the second round of clean water projects under the Design/Implementation Block Grant of \$1.5M from the VT Agency of Natural Resources which, to-date, has awarded 44 projects throughout the state.

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission is managing the grant selection, awarding and payment processing for business assistance grants to sole proprietors in half of Vermont's counties (Windsor, Orange, Caledonia, Essex, Orleans, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Chittenden), which assist in covering expenses during the pandemic. The program is funded from the US Housing and Urban Development's CDBG Program and passed through the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Windham Regional Commission led the development of a high-speed broadband fiber-to-home feasibility study and business plan using a Broadband Innovation Grant through the Department of Public Service, with the goal of serving the unserved and underserved in the region. This was concurrent with the self-organization of the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District, which will implement the business plan and serve the region.

Municipal Planning and Implementation



▲ The BCRC worked with the Town of Bennington to revise its Land Use and Development Regulations by replacing many of the traditional zoning standards for areas within the town's growth center with new form-based standards.



RPCs provided 152 municipalities with planning and bylaw assistance.

Regional Planning Commissions serve as cost-effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont's municipalities and help communities improve town plans and bylaws through education and technical assistance to municipal staff.

RPCs have helped municipalities modernize bylaws and implement economic development, flood resiliency planning, energy and forest resources planning initiatives. Current and clear plans and bylaws guide smooth local and state permitting.



Regional Planning

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. These plans form a single vision and guide local planning and investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

◀ A public meeting in Chittenden County.

Transportation Planning



▲ LCPC's Meghan Rodier setting up a traffic count.



RPC staff assisted 149 municipalities with traffic counts, culvert and erosion point inventories and other transportation planning assistance.

Through a contract with Vermont's Agency of Transportation (VTrans), RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort is a statewide framework for public involvement in planning improvements to Vermont's transportation system and land use patterns, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs).

Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state's transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support the local, regional, state and federal transportation network.

Energy Conservation and Development



RPCs assisted with the creation of enhanced energy plans in 84 communities.



▲ Dragon Brook, Part of the Proposed Krusch Nature Preserve in Cambridge, VT.

A focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges.

RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project planning and implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to guide the permitting process.

	1	2	3	4	5
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INITIATIVE	Enhance Cooperation & Coordination Between VTrans, RPCs & Municipalities	Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning	Provides Technical Assistance to Municipalities	Advances VTrans Strategic & Long-Range Transportation Plans	Provides a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach & Education
The TPI program's mission is to enhance cooperative decision-making among state, regional, and local partners about the transportation system. It has five main objectives, each covering a variety of projects.	244 municipalities actively engaged in regional transportation planning	60 coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers	55 municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken	599 data collection activities conducted for VTrans	Objective 5 shares many cross-cutting performance measures with 1-4
Here are a few highlights from FY 2020.	80 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings	24 VTrans committees that involve RPC staff participation	123 municipalities assisted with transportation related grants	<p>Note: Due to the advent of the COVID-19 State of Emergency and related changes in operations and communications necessitated by compliance with the Executive Orders, fluctuations in indicators involving public meetings and outreach to municipalities should be anticipated.</p>	
	90 non-municipal representatives actively engaged via TAC meetings RAIL, AIR, PUBLIC TRANSIT, BIKE/PED, DISABILITY RIGHTS, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTEREST GROUPS	50% of transportation budget spent on municipal technical assistance	75 road inventories conducted in support of Municipal Roads General Permit		

Economic and Community Development



▲ *RRPC led the redesign of Center Street in Rutland City.*

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid land use planning. The community infrastructure and development patterns that RPCs help plan for and create provide the foundation and public support for private economic development.

RPCs work with municipalities and in partnership with local and Regional Development Corporations in several ways, including creating economic development sections in town and regional plans, helping municipalities plan for and develop critical infrastructure, and developing comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long-term economic prosperity.



RPC staff helped 165 communities write and administer grants.

Brownfields



Photo: Mike Nosek, Essex Reporter

▲ *Trustees, Staff, and Developers Pose in the Foundation for the New 3 Maple Structure in Essex Junction, VT.*

Environmental site assessments and remediation planning allow properties to be sold or re-developed to benefit the local and state economy, improve public health, facilitate development in designated Downtown and Village Centers, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.



RPCs have received over \$10 million in EPA funds for brownfields assessment and redevelopment.

Special Projects



▲ *Greenride Bikeshare is Vermont's first publicly available bikeshare system with bikes and stations located in Winooski, Burlington and South Burlington.*

RPCs often engage in special projects that address unique community needs in many different areas such as flood resiliency, economic development, and transportation.

Often, these special projects create opportunities to identify and leverage future funding sources and result in future infrastructure improvements.

Geographic Information System Services

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies, private entities and non-profits with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.



RPC staff provided mapping services to 180 communities.



Watershed Planning and Project Development



RPCs assisted with clean water activities in 211 communities.

◀ *Stormwater Mitigation on Water Street in Northfield, VT.*

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Resiliency



▲ *Kevin Geiger of TRORC working at the State Emergency Operations Center.*

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources.

RPCs provide staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, support to local emergency management directors and coordinators, Local Emergency Management Plan assistance, and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State's Public Safety Districts.

RPCs also help update floodplain and river corridor bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, arrange trainings and assist municipalities during disaster events.



RPCs assisted with emergency planning in 249 municipalities.