



# House Appropriations Committee

February 16, 2021



[2020 VHCB Annual Report to the General Assembly](#)

# Vermont Housing & Conservation Board Statutory Purpose



“the dual goals of creating affordable housing for Vermonters, and conserving and protecting Vermont’s agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas, and recreational lands of primary importance to the economic vitality and quality of life of the State.”

10 V.S.A.15 §302

# Lake Paran in Shaftsbury: VHCB-funded housing, recreation, and historic preservation



Clockwise from top left: Lake Paran recreation area; Lake Paran Village housing; the Robert Frost House Museum. The Robert Frost Trail runs between North Bennington and Shaftsbury, from the museum to the Lake Paran recreation area, linking to the housing.



## **VHCB Results: FY 2020 and FY 2021**

**State Investment: \$29M**

**Leverage: \$174M**

- 775 homes and apartments
- 36 farms; 5,579 acres conserved
- 27 natural areas; forests; parks and trails: 8,504 acres conserved
- 4 historic preservation projects
- 186 farm and forest enterprises were provided business planning and technical assistance.

### **VHCB Program Impacts**

- Downtown/Village Revitalization
- Outdoor Recreation
- Housing the Homeless
- Rural Community Development
- Homes for Workers
- Farm and Forest next generation transfers
- Water Quality
- Historic Gathering Places

# VHCB Key Indicators FY20 & FY21

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## Housing Revenue Bond

- **843 new and rehabilitated homes** occupied or nearing completion generating more than \$170 million in construction activity. 23 communities in 11 counties.

## Federal Funding

- New resources to the state including **\$10 million for water quality, \$4 million to remediate lead paint and \$624,000** to build a regional network to support **farm, food and forest businesses.**

## Rural Economic Development Initiative

- **\$225,000 in appropriations** over 3 years converted to **\$4,938,094 million** for rural community development projects in **27 small towns**; \$2.5M in requests pending

## Water Quality

- **68 miles of buffers** along streams and rivers
- VT Ag Water Quality Partnership: **96% of phosphorus reductions come from ag**

**Intergenerational Transfers** facilitating **11 farms changing hands** to new owners

**Climate Change** Energy efficient housing: saving \$2.1M annually and **reducing carbon emissions**; conserving forestland and wetlands: **increasing flood resiliency.**

# COVID Response and Recovery

Housing for the Homeless; Business Support for the Farm, Food & Forestry Sectors



\$32.9 M in CRF invested in 26 sites securing **247 new homes and beds for those experiencing homelessness as well as improvements to 12 shelters** around the state with 253 beds for health and safety during COVID.

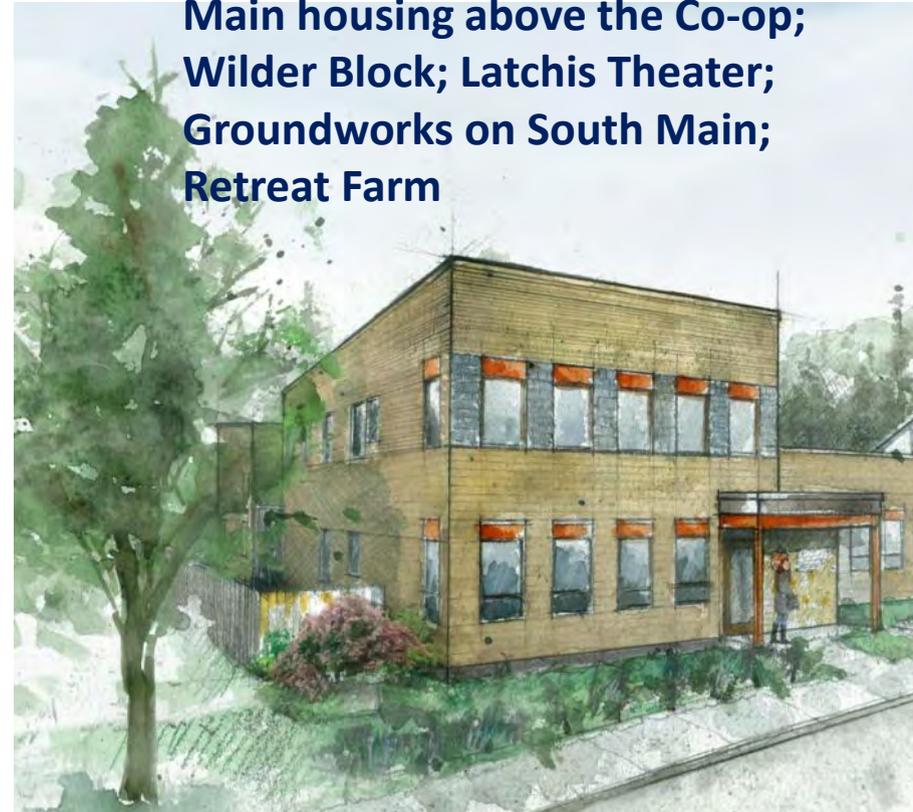
VHCB's Farm & Forest Viability Program used \$192,000 in CRF funding to provide rapid-response **business coaching for 524 enterprises**, helping them apply for state and federal relief programs, work on financial planning, re-orient to new markets, connect to health and wellness resources and manage human resource challenges.



## Brattleboro: Community Impact



Clockwise from top left: Canal & Main housing above the Co-op; Wilder Block; Latchis Theater; Groundworks on South Main; Retreat Farm



# Casey's Hill, Jericho



Mills Riverside Park  
Jericho/Underhill

# Natural Resource Conservation



**Bridgewater Hollow Bramhall Preserve**



## Community Revitalization

The former Bridgewater School is being converted to a community center with a child care center and space for local businesses. With support from REDI, they received two grants bringing \$430,000 to the project.

With VHCB support, The Northeast Wilderness Trust conserved 359 acres with permanent public access for swimming, hunting, fishing and hiking. Located in the Chateaugay No Town Conservation Area. Improved parking and trails to swimming areas on tributaries of the Ottauquechee River.

# Otter View Park, Middlebury



The **Middlebury Area Land Trust** created a new park with frontage on the Otter Creek and a wheelchair accessible path. Three homes were built on the site, and stormwater runoff installed.

## Last Resort Farm, Monkton

With VHCB conservation funding and business planning assistance from the Farm & Forest Viability Fund, the owners are transferring the organic produce and hay farm to their son Silas.

# Woolson Block, Springfield

Downtown revitalization: previously vacant historic building

20 New Apartments and Commercial Space on Main Street



20 new apartments including 4 service-supported homes for at-risk young adults with a live-in supervisor  
Housing Pipeline: \$37 million for 54 rental housing developments, homeownership and accessibility improvements

# New Avenue Building Project Nears Half-way Point

Caledonian Record – January 15, 2021



# New and Rehabilitated Homes

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In Middlebury, Lyndon, Fairhaven and Rutland, recent examples of affordable apartments, including 9 service-supported homes for households experiencing homelessness developed by the Rutland Housing Authority with Coronavirus Relief Funds, below.



Weybridge Street Apartments, Middlebury



Olivia Place, Lyndon

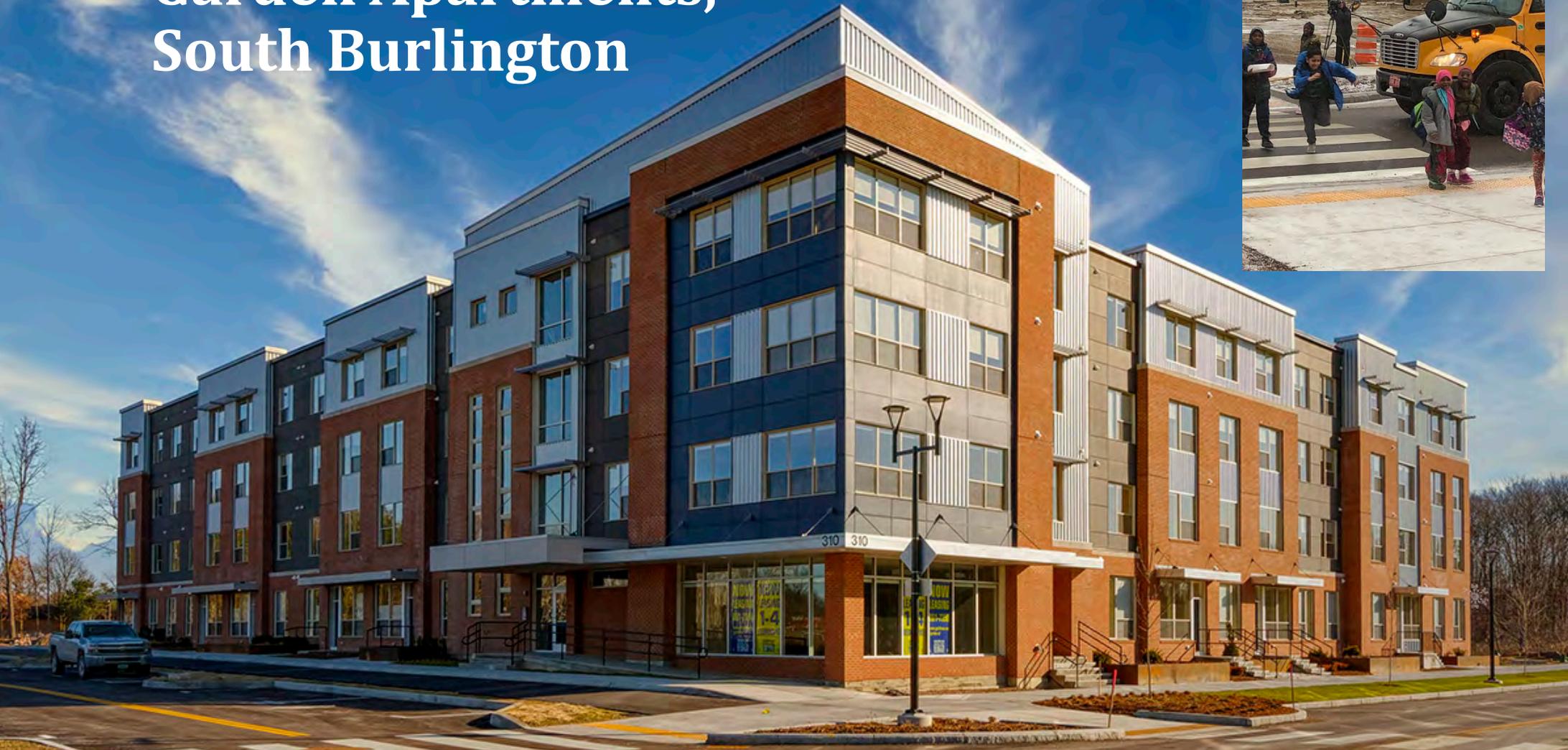


Appletree Apartments, Fairhaven



Woodstock Avenue, Rutland

# Garden Apartments, South Burlington



With \$3,900,000 in HRB funding, the Champlain Housing Trust and Housing Vermont constructed 60 mixed-income, family rental apartments close to schools, a library, a park and trails in South Burlington's new city center.

# Addressing Homelessness



- State investment in affordable housing results in permanent homes dedicated to those experiencing homelessness.
- 15% to 40% of the apartments in the state's non-profit housing portfolio by region are occupied by individuals and families that came from homelessness.
- In FY20, nearly a third (31%) of all apartment turnovers in the non-profit network were leased by someone who was experiencing homelessness.

# How Housing Matters

“Housing is a critical vaccine that can pave the way to long-term health and well-being.”

Megan Sandel, MD, MPH  
Associate Professor of  
Pediatrics at the Boston  
University School of Medicine



# Bluffside Bike Path Recreation Corridor in Newport

VHCB committed \$199,000 targeted to economic and community development in the Northeast Kingdom towards a recreation corridor and bridge connecting Bluffside Farm with Newport's Prouty Beach and trails in downtown Newport and Quebec. REDI grant-writing assistance helped secure an additional \$678,000 in federal grants for the project, which is expected to boost tourism.



# Investing in the Recreation Economy

Recreational activities are estimated to generate \$2.5 billion annually in economic activity.



# Helping Young Vermonters onto the Land



Karin Bellemare and her partner Jon Wagner-Hebert returned to Vermont, purchased and conserved 10 acres of farmland in South Barre, and started a new ag business: Bear Roots Farm. In 2018, they expanded, purchasing 248 acres of conserved farmland in Williamstown with help from VLT's Farmland Access Program, VHCB's Farm & Forest Viability Program, and VHCB funding. In 2020, they opened a farm store in Middlesex at the location of the former general store.



# VHCB Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

- 18 years of in-depth advising
- More than 850 farm, food, and forest product businesses served
- Approximately 30% of enrollees are conserved farms



## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS



## ACCESSING RESOURCES OR SPECIALISTS TO ASSIST BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



## Skills: Before & After

## PLANNING FARM INVESTMENTS



## STRATEGIC PLANNING



# Supporting the Rural Economy



## Rural Economic Development Initiative

- For communities under 5,000 in population.
- From FY18 to FY20, \$225,000 in special appropriations for grant writing helped 27 rural enterprises and small towns win **\$4.9 million** in federal, state, and philanthropic funding.
- An additional \$2.5 million in federal, state, and philanthropic funds are pending.
- Projects span the state from Pownal to Newport, and have helped with outdoor recreation infrastructure, agricultural and forest industry projects, downtown revitalization, and developing rural childcare centers.

# Clean Water Initiative

## Water Quality Farm Improvement and Retirement Projects



WQ Grant to Stonebroke Farm, Pawlet



Farm Retirement, Colchester

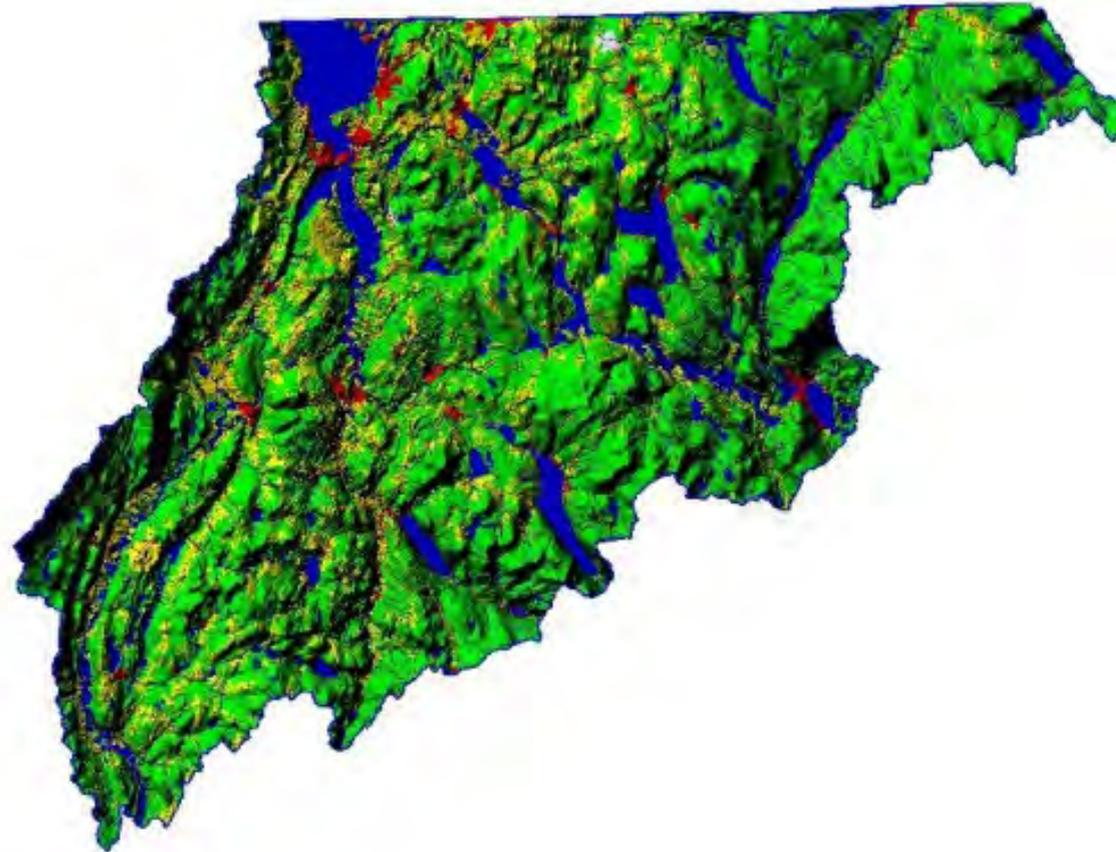
## Land Conservation and Water Quality

Boissoneault Farm, St. Albans - \$230,500 in capital bill funds leveraged \$356,500 in federal and private funding to conserve 264 acres on Lake Champlain including 140 acres of wetlands with multiple rare and uncommon natural communities.



# VHCB to act as Clean Water Service Provider for the Lake Memphremagog District

Beginning in 2021, VHCB has been selected to serve as CWSP for the district, collaborating with partners to protect and improve water quality in the 687-square mile basin (489 square miles in Vermont and 198 square miles in Quebec).



# Farmland Succession: Intergenerational Transfers



Land conservation and business planning support to farm and forest businesses helps new farmers afford farmland and diversifies agriculture.

# Farmland Succession: Intergenerational Transfers



Young farmers are starting new businesses, raising beef, lamb, elk, venison, vegetables, herbs, making cheese, and selling wholesale and direct to consumers.

# Farmland Succession: Intergenerational Transfers



The Vermont Land Trust has assisted more than 100 farmers to own their own land through the Farmland Access project. The average age of Vermont farmers is 57 years old. VHCB & VLT plan to support at least 200 transfers to new farmers over the next 10 years.



## Historic Preservation

Investing in the rehabilitation and preservation of historic downtown and village center buildings adds to community vitality and generates economic activity.



# VHCB projects are cost-effective and lasting investments that address many of Vermont's most pressing needs and challenges

- Nature's services protect and enhance water quality and reduce the vulnerability of downstream communities to flooding
- Intact forests absorb and store carbon, slowing the pace of climate change
- Builds resilience of communities and ecosystems to climate change by protecting key forest blocks and providing undisturbed habitat for native plants and wildlife
- Securing outdoor recreation opportunities contributes to health of people, communities and economy



# Conservation supports an ecologically functional and resilient landscape now and as the climate changes

## Okemo Wildlife Corridor Conservation Project



- Okemo State Forest, Mount Holly
- Mount Holly Conservation Trust, VT Dept. FPR, Vermont Land Trust
- Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority:
  - Connectivity Block
  - Representative Physical Landscape
- VCD Priority:
  - Interior Forest Block

# Preston Pond, Bolton



In 2003 VHCB funded the conservation of 403 acres, including 9-acre Preston Pond, transferred to the town of Bolton as a town forest. The property includes significant natural communities, rare plants, wildlife habitat, 3,750 feet of the Long Trail, a VAST trail, and a scenic viewpoint.

# Need and Potential for Housing is Great



New Affordable Condominiums to offer Homeownership to BIPOC Households



Public-private Partnership Planning a New Residential and Commercial Development

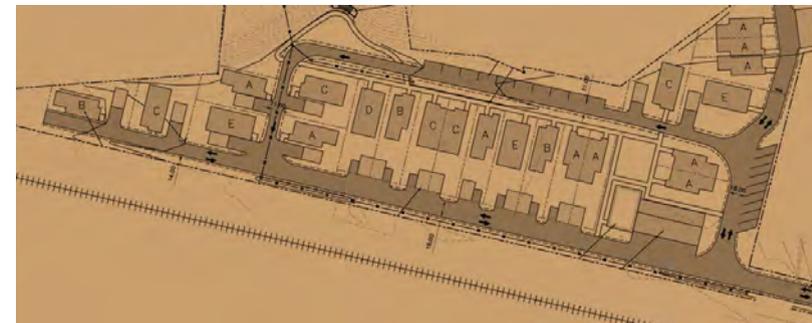


Repurposing College Dormitories for Affordable Rental Housing

Infill Development in Community Centers



New Housing in Restored Historic Buildings



New Development on Existing Infrastructure



Fairbanks Museum, St.  
Johnsbury



Lamoille River Access,  
Cambridge



Wentworth Housing II,  
Hartford

## 18-Month Pipeline

### Housing, Conservation & Historic Preservation

- \$37 million for 54 rental housing developments, homeownership and accessibility
- \$10.5 million for 35 farmland conservation projects
- \$5.7 million for 63 natural resources and recreational areas projects
- \$1.2 million for 22 historic community buildings

# Rural Economic Development Opportunities

Providing support for the Vermont Food Hub Collaborative, which generates **\$6.1 million annually in sales of local farm and food products in Vermont and regional markets.**

Helping farm, food and forestry related businesses establish and expand enterprises.

Supporting the conservation of recreational land for trail systems, bringing millions in economic activity to small towns.



# Proposed Increase to VHCB will support:

Multi-family rental housing

Homeownership

Housing for the Homeless

Mobile Home Parks

Farm Labor Housing

Accessibility Improvements

Rural Economic Development Initiative

Farm & Forest Viability Program

Conservation for Rural Economic Development



Tri-Park Mobile Home Park

# Summary of VHCB State Funding

Governor's FY22 Budget Proposal

Statutory Amount in FY22: \$29,302,000

Summary of State Funding	FY2021 Budget & Capital Bill	FY2022 Governor's Recommend
Property Transfer Tax to VHCB	\$10,580,695	\$10,804,840
Capital Bill Appropriations	\$6,600,000	\$4,000,000
One-time Appropriation		\$20,000,000
<b>FY2021 and FY2022 State Funding</b>	<b>\$17,180,695</b>	<b>\$34,804,840</b>
<b>Special Initiative</b>		
CRF Appropriation – Housing for Homeless	\$32,899,499	
CRF Appropriation – Farm & Forest Business Advising	\$192,000	

# Proposed Language

Governor's recommend in black. VHCB additions in Red.

## Sec.B.1100 FISCAL YEAR 2022 ONE-TIME GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

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(12) \$20,000,000 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to be used **primarily** for affordable housing initiatives. **Up to \$5,000,000 of this amount may be used for conservation projects and Farm and Forest Viability Program activities that support the rural economy.**

**Vermont Housing & Conservation Board**  
**FY2022 - Budget based on Governor's Recommendation**  
**SOURCES & USES**

<b>PROGRAMS/GRANTS:</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Conservation (Trust Fund)</b>	<b>NRCS ALE &amp; RCPP (USDA)</b>	<b>Capital Bond Farm Retirement</b>	<b>Farm &amp; Forest Viability Program</b>	<b>Ameri-Corps</b>	<b>HOME (HUD)</b>	<b>HOPWA (HUD)</b>	<b>NHTF (HUD)</b>	<b>LEAD Hazard Red. (HUD)</b>	<b>FY2022 TOTALS</b>
<b>SOURCES:</b>										
Net Property Transfer Tax to receive	8,732,367	519,439	-	1,003,161	432,009	102,835	15,029	-	-	10,804,840
Capital Bill - State	3,100,000	-	300,000	600,000	-	-	-	-	-	4,000,000
One Time - General Fund	18,750,000	-	-	1,250,000	-	-	-	-	-	20,000,000
Loan Repayments	54,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54,000
Interest on Fund	60,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60,000
Federal Grants	-	4,000,000	-	627,760	418,052	2,955,000	506,668	3,000,000	1,142,857	12,650,337
Housing Mitigation Funds	25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
Act 250 & Other Mitigation Funds	250,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	250,000
Other - Foundations, Miscellaneous	5,000	-	-	171,710	-	-	-	-	-	176,710
<b>Subtotal FY2022 Sources</b>	<b>30,976,367</b>	<b>4,519,439</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>3,652,631</b>	<b>850,061</b>	<b>3,057,835</b>	<b>521,697</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>1,142,857</b>	<b>48,020,887</b>
Completion of Prior Years' Federal Awards		1,688,000				2,856,000		2,242,000		6,786,000
<b>TOTAL Sources:</b>	<b>30,976,367</b>	<b>6,207,439</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>3,652,631</b>	<b>850,061</b>	<b>5,913,835</b>	<b>521,697</b>	<b>5,242,000</b>	<b>1,142,857</b>	<b>54,806,887</b>

<b>USES:</b>										
Board Operations	2,057,296	480,439	-	65,592	29,174	321,835	43,697	263,140	114,286	3,375,458
Direct Program/Project Expense	598,820	39,000	-	1,737,039	820,887	36,000	478,000	16,000	338,010	4,063,757
Project Grant and Loans	28,320,251	4,000,000	300,000	1,850,000	-	2,700,000	-	2,720,860	690,561	40,581,672
Project Grant and Loans-Expenditures of Prior Years' Federal Awards		1,688,000				2,856,000		2,242,000		6,786,000
<b>Total Uses:</b>	<b>30,976,367</b>	<b>6,207,439</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>3,652,631</b>	<b>850,061</b>	<b>5,913,835</b>	<b>521,697</b>	<b>5,242,000</b>	<b>1,142,857</b>	<b>54,806,887</b>

**Gus Seelig**  
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Policy Director  
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**Larry Mires**  
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**Hubbardton Town Forest**