



Preservation Trust of Vermont

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ESTABLISHED 1980

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February 24, 2023

TO: Representative Diane Lanpher, Chair, House Appropriations
Committee and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

Dear Chair Lanpher,


The work of the Preservation Trust of Vermont ('PTV') is to build community through the preservation and revitalization of Vermont's historic buildings, villages, and downtowns. As an organization that works on community-led projects across the state (250 projects in 143 communities last year), we have followed with interest the budget process this year and we would like to share with you what we see as funding priorities for Vermont communities:

- **Full statutory funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.** PTV works closely with VHCB on multiple historic preservation projects across the state each year and currently co-holds 59 preservation easements on 83 buildings, 1 structure, and three architectural sites. Beyond our partnership to save these historic assets, PTV counts on the leadership of VHCB to help revitalize our state's villages and downtowns through their support of affordable housing development and the rural economy. Coming out of the pandemic, our most rural communities are particularly fragile. Now is the time to fully fund VHCB so they can continue to provide the kind of support these communities need.
- **Full statutory funding for the Regional Planning Commissions and Development Corporations.** Many rural communities we work with lack the capacity to envision a community development project or the skills to apply for and administer complex federal grants. The technical assistance provided by our RPCs and RDCs is critical to helping communities take advantage of available resources and as with VHCB, that work is more important than ever.

- **Funding our Designated Downtown Organizations.** Vermont's 24 designated downtowns are the places where commerce, culture, and civic life come together. The relationship between the historic built environment and our working landscape is the defining feature of Vermont's sense of place. For years, under-resourced downtown organizations have celebrated and activated these incredible assets. Vermont cannot maintain its sense of place, of community, without thriving downtowns—especially after Covid and with the rise of online retail. Providing support to the Agency of Commerce Designated Downtown Program and to each of our 24 designated downtowns is essential.

I recognize that there are many demands on finite State resources. I hope you will agree, however, that the investments I have described above will contribute to the future sustainability of our rural way of life. Having supported communities on the ground for over 40 years, the Preservation Trust has a solid understanding of what works in community preservation and revitalization; funding these organizations WILL make a difference. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Ben Doyle, President