

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Board Handbook 2016

Getting Started

- Welcome to CVRPC
- What is CVRPC?
- Enabling Legislation
- Funding

Getting to Know the Organization

- The Board of Commissioners
- Committees
- Staff

Roles and Responsibilities of Commissioners

- The Role of a Citizen Planner
- Commissioner Roles
 - Policy Setting
 - Legal Concerns
 - Stewardship
 - Advocacy
- Commissioner Responsibilities
 - Mission
 - Executive Director – selection, support, review
 - Organizational Planning – current resources, growth, priorities
 - Resources – ensure adequacy, oversee/monitor use/performance
 - Programs and Services Direction
 - Self-Evaluation
- Commissioner Expectations

Planning Basics

- Regional Planning
- Municipal Planning

Responsibilities of Governmental Agencies

- Eight Characteristics of Good Governance
- The Importance of Public Engagement

Appendices

- Commission Bylaws
- Commissioner Job Description & Duties
- Commissioner Contact Information
- Commission Policies & Procedures
- Staff Contact Information
- Committee Membership

1 State Statues
2 RPC Duties
3 RPC Options Duties and Power
4 Purposes of a Regional Plan
5 Resources
6 Abbreviations & Acronyms
7 Roberts Rules of Order
8 A Guide to Vermont Open Meeting Law
9 The Role of the Chair
10 Act 250 Primer
11
12

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1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

Getting Started

Welcome to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

This Commissioner Handbook describes:

- ❖ What the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) is;
- ❖ How it is organized;
- ❖ What activities CCRPC can and must do;
- ❖ The planning and funding processes;
- ❖ The powers and duties you have as a Commissioner;
- ❖ How you can be an effective Commissioner;
- ❖ Staff and staff responsibilities; and
- ❖ The resources available to you.

The Handbook cannot possibly answer every question you will have. Please do not hesitate to ask your fellow Commissioners (especially members of the Executive Committee) and the Executive Director for guidance and assistance. They can supplement the Handbook’s resources by describing how the Commission previously has addressed your concern and concerns similar to it.

Serving on the Commission calls upon you to think regionally and invest your best efforts to help CVRPC succeed on behalf of all of the communities and organizations it convenes. Your service requires a certain level of commitment and investment of time. The learning curve is fairly steep, but there are plenty of people and resources available to help and support you.

We want you to succeed as a Commissioner. To be successful, you should:

- ❖ Prepare thoroughly before each meeting by reading the board packet and related materials;
- ❖ Communicate the ideas and opinions of your community or organization clearly;
- ❖ Listen fully to the ideas and opinions of others;
- ❖ Be flexible and diplomatic; and
- ❖ Be true to the organization’s guiding principles and laws.

The more you invest in the organization, the more rewarding you will find your service to be.

What is CVRPC?

The overall purpose of planning at the regional level in Vermont is to bring communities together to address common issues and concerns. The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) does this by providing planning and technical assistance that meets the needs of our member municipalities and the public, while remaining consistent with our federal and state requirements. Our work will result in the development and implementation of plans that support sustainable development and improve the region's quality of life and environment.

Enabling Legislation

The legal basis and powers for Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission as the region's regional planning commission stem from Vermont laws as stipulated in 24 V.S.A. § 4301 et seq., as amended, 24 V.S.A. § 4345 et seq. The CVRPC was chartered by the municipalities of Lamoille County on February 13, 1964 as the Lamoille County Development Council, with an amendment to the original charter dated February 9, 1988 to change the name to Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, Inc. CVRPC is funded in part through the State of Vermont property transfer tax as outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a).

Funding

Legislative funding and town appropriations provide the base of funding for CVRPC's work program activities, such as the regional transportation program, community development planning, and emergency preparedness. CVRPC receives funding from four main sources.

Town Appropriations/Dues

CVRPC depends upon allocations from the ten towns served. The appropriations are per capita based, meaning the amount is based on the municipality's population. In FY17, municipalities contributed \$71,537 to the Commission, which was 5% of its annual budget. Town appropriations demonstrate support for CVRPC's services and leverage additional funds that support local and regional planning.

State Regional Planning Allocation

The Vermont Legislature provides funding for all Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) through the Property Transfer Tax. The funding is dispersed to RPCs through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development using a four-part formula. The formula provides an equal share to all RPCs for operating expenses and balances anticipated planning needs with a proportional share for number of municipalities served, number of residents served, and property transfer tax receipts from the region.

Annual Contracts

Three state agencies have consistently provided funds to RPCs through annual contracts. The Vermont Agency of Transportation, Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and Agency of Natural Resources support local and regional planning. This consistent funding reflects their appreciation of RPC success in bringing local and regional successes and input to statewide discussions.

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Project-Based Contracts

CVRPC uses project-based contracts to support local efforts or regional strategies. One-time grants and contracts aim to further specific planning efforts or to implement projects with communities.

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Getting to Know the Organization

The Board of Commissioners

CVRPC is governed by a Board of Commissioners and functions with a professional staff. Standing and special committees complement the work that the Board of Commissioners and staff perform. An overview of how the Commission is formed and operates, Committee assignments and responsibilities, and staff positions are listed below. Contact information for Commissioners is included in Appendix C.

The Board of Commissioners is composed of one representative from each of the Commission's 23 member municipalities. The municipality's locally elected legislative body may appoint a Commissioner and Alternate Commissioner to vote in the Commissioner's absence. CVRPC requires annual certification of the appointment.

Alternate Commissioners provide a voice for the municipality when the appointed Commissioner is unable to participate in meetings. Commissioners can facilitate participation by Alternates by encouraging alternates to attend Commission meetings, linking alternates to Commission committees and workgroups, regularly conveying updates, helping them understand their duties, insuring they are provided with all information that a Commissioner receives, and briefing them when they will be the voting member at a Commission meeting.

CVRPC member municipalities include:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| ❖ Barre City | ❖ Marshfield | ❖ Waitsfield |
| ❖ Barre Town | ❖ Middlesex | ❖ Warren |
| ❖ Berlin | ❖ Montpelier | ❖ Washington |
| ❖ Cabot | ❖ Moretown | ❖ Waterbury |
| ❖ Calais | ❖ Northfield | ❖ Williamstown |
| ❖ Duxbury | ❖ Orange | ❖ Woodbury |
| ❖ East Montpelier | ❖ Plainfield | ❖ Worcester |
| ❖ Fayston | ❖ Roxbury | |

Annually, the Nominating Committee recommends to the Board of Commissioners a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers are elected by a majority vote at the first meeting after June 30. You can learn more about this in the Bylaws section in Appendix A.

Meetings follow an established agenda. To add an item to the agenda, contact either the Chair or the Executive Director at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting date. While meeting agendas may be amended at the start of any meeting, Vermont Open Meeting Law no longer allows for agenda items previously described as "other business".

Meetings of the Board of Commissioners occur the second Tuesday of each month and begin at 7:00 pm. Committee meetings are scheduled individually. All meetings of the Commission, its committees, and any workgroups are open for public attendance. Meetings of the CVRPC Board

of Commissioners and Committees established by the Commissions established by the Commission - whether standing, advisory, or project related - are subject to Vermont's Open Meetings Law. You can read more about the Open Meetings Law in Appendix **XXX**.

The Commission uses Roberts Rules of Order to guide discussion and decision making during its meetings. While the procedures associated with Roberts Rules can seem awkward initially, they are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas.
[INCLUDE ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER BRIEF FROM ULM.EDU]

When a motion has been made, seconded, and opened for discussion, no other business should be discussed until action has been taken on the motion before the Commissioners. All Commissioners are encouraged to add to the discussion of a motion. The Chair will make every effort to ensure that all members are given the opportunity to speak. Except when otherwise provided by CVRPC's Bylaws, meetings and voting are conducted in accord with *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

Committees

CVRPC has two standing committees, Executive and Nominating. It also has eight special committees: Project Review, Town Plan Review, Regional Plan, Transportation Advisory, Brownfields Advisory, Personnel Policy Review, Clean Water Advisory, and Regional Energy. CVRPC staff assist the Committees in all functions as needed.

All CVRPC Commissioners are encouraged to participate in a minimum of at least one committee. For details about the committees, their focus, membership, and charge, please see the Committee descriptions and contact information in Appendix C.

Standing Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the four officers of the Board of Commissioners and three other Commissioners appointed by the Chair at the first meeting of the Board of Commissioners after June 30. **The appointments to the Executive Committee by the chair shall be deemed ratified unless the Board votes otherwise at the meeting when the appointments are made. Vacancies on the Executive Committee may be reappointed at any time if necessary.**

Key Duties

- 1.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee consists of at least three (3) members appointed by the Commission. The appointments are on a rotating basis, and a Commissioner may not serve two successive terms on the committee.

Key Duties

- 1.

Special Committees

CVRPC has eight special committees: Project Review, Town Plan Review, Regional Plan, Transportation Advisory, Brownfields Advisory, Personnel Policy Review, Clean Water Advisory, and Regional Energy.

Project Review Committee

The Project Review Committee (PPR) consist of no fewer than five (5) members of the Board of Commissioners. The Chair of the Board appoints a member of the Executive Committee to serve as the Chair of PPR.

Key Duties

- 1.

Town Plan Review Committee

XXX

Key Duties

- 1.

Regional Plan Committee

The Regional Plan Committee consists of five (5) members of the Board of Commissioners plus an alternate. The Chair is elected from the committee.

Key Duties

- 1.

Transportation Advisory Committee

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) provides local and regional input to the Vermont Agency of Transportation to identify needs and to develop transportation improvement programs for the Central Vermont Region. The TAC's membership includes one appointed representative from CVRPC's 23 member towns. The TAC meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Key Duties

- 1.

Brownfields Advisory Committee

The Brownfields Steering Committee consists of representatives from (LIST). The chair is elected by the Committee. The Board of Commissioners has the final authority in decision making related to this program.

Key Duties

- 1.

Personnel Policy Review Committee

XXX. The Committee meets at least annually to review CVRPC's Personnel Policy Manual and recommend changes as needed. The Committee consists of three members of the Commission's Executive Committee. The chair of this committee is elected by the committee.

Key Duties

1. Develops, administers, reviews, and recommends changes to CVRPC's personnel policies.

Clean Water Advisory Committee

XXX. The Committee meets as needed to ... The chair of this committee is elected by the committee.

Key Duties

- 1.

Regional Energy Committee

The Regional Energy Committee evolved out of state funding to translate goals of the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan to a regional perspective. Representatives include: . The chair of this committee is elected by the committee.

Key Duties

- 1.

Staff

CVRPC has eight professional staff, and may employ temporary staff with the approval of the Executive Committee. All Commission staff work to integrate CVRPC programs, including transportation, land use, emergency preparedness, natural resources, municipal planning, community development, and energy planning. Staff positions have job descriptions, and each member of the planning staff has one or more major areas of focus. Current CVRPC staff include:

Executive Director, Bonnie Waninger

The Executive Director translates Board policy into programs, plans, and actions for staff, Commissioners, and committees and ensures that the CVRPC is responsive to its member municipalities and other stakeholders. The Director is responsible for overall management of all programs and staff, and for development and oversight of the organizational budget and for long-range organizational planning. The Director is directly accountable to, and meets on a regular basis with, the Executive Committee and reports to, plans, and coordinates regular and special meetings of the full Commission.

The Director is responsible for preparing, or working with staff to prepare applications and work programs required by funding agencies and for preparation of special grant applications to support the CVRPC's work. The Director ensures that all required reporting to funding agencies is complete and correct, and provides regular reports to the Commission on the status of projects, personnel and fiscal matters. The Director most often works with municipal leadership and State and Federal agency leadership from department/division heads to Agency Secretaries. The Director is CVRPC's representative on statewide organizations and to the Legislature.

Program Manager, Dan Currier

Program Managers are senior planning staff with additional responsibilities to manage one or more of the Commission's program areas. They usually have supervisory roles for one or more staff positions. Dan Currier's major area of work is transportation. He manages the Regional Transportation Planning Program and supervises other Commission staff and private

consultants in transportation work. This includes working with the Transportation Advisory Committee and staff at VTrans to provide information on funding opportunities; identify transportation system needs and project priorities; and related activities.

He also develops, updates, and integrates the Transportation Chapter of the Regional Plan; conducts and oversees special transportation planning studies; works with municipalities, regional partners, and VTrans to identify and develop projects that increase the resiliency and diversity of the transportation system; provides technical assistance to municipalities and oversees transportation field work; reviews the transportation impacts of new land development proposals; works with organizations and volunteer committees that oversee the region's scenic byways and trails; works with municipalities, regional and state partners, and local organizations to integrate concepts, such as Complete Streets and Healthy Communities, into transportation initiatives; provides management support for local transportation facility project development; and completes other transportation project development as needed. He supervises the Planner (GIS & Transportation).

Senior Planner, Eric Vorwald

Senior Planners manage major projects and core programs of the Commission and conduct policy analysis, regional studies, and similar work as necessary. Senior Planners perform advanced professional work related to all regional program areas; manage complex planning studies; review development proposals; develop project budgets; administer bidding processes, manage consultants, and verify contract expenditures and compliance. They provide professional planning assistance to member communities and manage projects on behalf of municipalities on varied projects; develop plans, studies and analyses on varied subjects; and, as skills permit, supervise more junior planners within the organization as determined by the Executive Director. Senior Planners most often works with municipal boards on intermunicipal projects and State and Federal agency program staff, and may work with municipal leadership and State and Federal agency department/division heads.

Eric Vorwald's major area of work is land use. He assists municipalities with various planning activities and works to integrate land use planning with other municipal planning activities. Land use planning activities commonly include drafting or updating land use plans, zoning and other ordinances, subdivision regulations, capital improvement plans, and other planning and growth management tools. He also facilitates comprehensive regional planning efforts necessitated by Vermont Statute as well as the various collaborative planning efforts CVRPC conducts in partnership with other regional, state, and federal agencies. The Regional Planner most often works with municipal staff and volunteer Commissioners and State and Federal agency program staff.

Senior Planner, VACANT

VACANT's major areas of work are GIS/IT and natural resource planning. VACANT operates, maintains, and manages the Commission's Regional GIS Service Center, provides mapping and spatial analysis services related to all regional program areas and municipal projects and programs. VACANT manages and works on independent projects related to river hazard mapping, forest analysis, energy facility siting studies, and other subject areas. VACANT acts as primary contact to CVRPC's IT consultant and manages the CVRPC's IT equipment. VACANT directs the Planner's work and workload as it relates to GIS activities.

VACANT also (NR planning focus)

VACANT most often works with municipal staff and volunteer Commissioners and State and Federal agency program staff.

Planner, Ashley Andrews

Planners ...

Ashley Andrews has dual major areas of work in GIS and transportation. She operates and maintains the Commission's Regional GIS Service Center under the supervision of a Senior Planner. She provides mapping services related to all regional program areas and municipal projects and programs. She completes project work related to municipal plan and zoning updates, parcel mapping, ??? She provides back-up support for CVRPC's IT needs.

She also completes transportation-related field work (traffic counts, turning movement studies, inventories, etc.), responds to transportation-related technical assistance needs of municipal staff and boards, and organizes and supports the region's Road Foreman Roundtable. She most often works with municipal staff and volunteer boards.

Planner, Laura Ranker

Laura Ranker's major area of work is emergency management. She supports the Commission's emergency preparedness and management program by staffing the Local Emergency Planning Committee, assisting with project development and grant applications related to emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation efforts, supporting the planning efforts of local emergency service providers, and coordinating preparedness and training opportunities with local, regional, state, and federal partners. She is the primary staff member for hazard mitigation planning.

She is also the Commission's primary staff person for Community Development Block Grant support to municipalities. She assists municipalities to write applications, and to manage and administer them.

Planner/Senior Planner, VACANT

VACANT's major areas of work are land use and natural resource planning. VACANT assists municipalities with various planning activities and works to integrate land use planning with other municipal planning activities. VACANT drafts and updates land use plans, zoning and other ordinances, subdivision regulations, capital improvement plans, and other planning and growth management tools. VACANT facilitates various collaborative planning efforts CVRPC conducts in partnership with other regional, state, and federal agencies.

VACANT also (NR planning focus)

VACANT most often works with municipal staff and volunteer Commissioners and State and Federal agency program staff.

Assistant Planner, Gail Aloisio

Assistant Planners work with other planning staff to implement projects and programs of the Commission. Assistant Planners gather and maintain demographic data and other related statistics; participate in the research, analysis, and interpretation of social, economic, population and land use data and trends; compile information and make recommendations on special studies; prepare technical reports; prepare staff reports and graphic displays; research and draft documents

for review; assist with grant writing; and may complete GIS mapping and printed resource materials, under the direction of other staff. Assistant Planners may, or may not, have a major area of work.

Gail Aloisio's major areas of work are brownfields and emergency management. She coordinates CVRPC's brownfields program...

She also assisting with grant applications related to emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation efforts and works with municipalities to draft local hazard mitigation plans.

She most often works with municipal staff and volunteers and staff at other regional organizations.

Assistant Planner, Marian Wolz

Marian Wolz works with other planning staff to implement projects and programs of the Commission. She gathers and maintains demographic data and other related statistics; participates in the research, analysis, and interpretation of social, economic, population and land use data and trends; compiles information and make recommendations on special studies; prepares technical reports; prepares staff reports and graphic displays; researches and drafts documents for review; assists with grant writing; and completes GIS mapping and printed resource materials, under the direction of other staff. The Assistant Planner most often works with other CVRPC staff, and may work with municipal staff and volunteer Commissioners.

Finance and Office Manager, Bonnie MacBrien

Bonnie MacBrien is responsible for full charge bookkeeping and other financial tasks, such as Accounts Payable and Receivable, payroll and its associated functions, tax reporting, deposit preparation, account reconciliation, maintaining the petty cash account, grant reporting, audit and indirect cost proposal preparation, draft budget preparation, cash-flow projections, and end of year reports.

She is also responsible for assisting with the smooth operation of the Commission's office, including review of office operating procedures and policies, coordination of all contract billing and reporting, research and coordination of employee benefit packages, ordering/purchasing, mailings/communications, overseeing the operation and maintenance of office equipment, tracking vacation and compensatory time, maintaining office insurance and worker's compensation records, and other activities as assigned by the Executive Director. She most often works with CVRPC staff and interacts with municipal staff and State and Federal agency administrative staff.

Roles and Responsibilities of Commissioners

The Role of the Citizen Planner

As a Citizen Planner you can look forward to a rich and challenging experience! To help you better understand your role, please read the Commissioner Job Description and Expanded Duties in Appendix D. Your role is important and the public trust is invested in you.

Being an effective Commissioner requires you to get involved in your community, be informed, communicate with your Selectboard or Trustees, and use common sense, fairness, and objectivity in all of the decisions that come before you. It is your responsibility to balance the public good with private rights and interests. Most of all, this Board makes decisions that impact an entire region, so it is important to be able to “think regionally” even though you are representing a local municipality or organization.

To understand what “regional planning” is, it helps first to understand that a “region” is a set of places that share common features or characteristics so that they relate to each other in one or more significant ways. These relationships may be defined by a specific geography (i.e. Washington County), a common natural resource (such as a watershed), a feature of the built-environment (such as a highway corridor), or a non-physical social, economic, or political feature (such as a housing market area).

Each place in a region is interrelated with the other places in the region. Consequently, it is challenging for any one place to successfully address a regional concern without considering what is happening in the region’s other places. By understanding what is happening in the entire region and coordinating local actions, a region’s places can address opportunities and problems more effectively and efficiently.

Commissioner Roles

1. Policy Setting
2. Legal Concerns
3. Stewardship
4. Advocacy

1. Define and oversee the vision and mission of the organization and keep it relevant to the needs of the region and its individual local governments and communities through policy development; .

2. Approve programs and services and monitor their effectiveness and usefulness.

3. Provide strategic guidance to the organization and the Executive Director.

4. Ensure financial solvency, integrity, and soundness.

Commissioner Responsibilities

1. Setting the organization's mission
2. Executive Director
3. Organizational planning
4. Resources
5. Program/Services direction
6. Self-evaluation

Commissioner Expectations

Accepting the role of a Regional Commissioner includes accepting the commitments associated with the job.

- ❖ Carry out the responsibility of being a liaison to, with, and for the municipality you represent;
- ❖ Know the organization's vision, mission, goals, products, and services;
- ❖ Do your homework before all meetings; and
- ❖ Focus on solving problems and achieving positive results for the region.

Here are some tips to help you in this role:

❖ (MUNICIPAL LIAISON OPPORTUNITIES)

- ❖ Recognize and avoid, or make public, any conflict of interest your position may place you in as defined in **Article IV(D)** of the CVRPC Bylaws;
- ❖ Don't pursue special privileges;
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality;
- ❖ Let your behavior contribute to the smooth operation of the Board. Since so much of your time is spent in meetings, you can help them run efficiently by preparing ahead and following the rules and agreements;
- ❖ Ask questions to gain a fuller understanding of the topics at hand;
- ❖ Communicate regularly with your local legislative body and/or constituents; and
- ❖ Become familiar with the laws that cover public open meetings and hearings.

During your term, you will become conversant in planning lingo: new terms, acronyms, and legal citations such as Act 250, SRI, ACCD will be rolling off your tongue. There will be a virtual

alphabet soup of just the acronyms. Never be afraid to ask for explanations of terms you don't understand.

You will form new relationships with other boards and commissions; you will learn to write legally binding policies; and you will have the opportunity to influence decision making that may stand for decades.

There will be times when your decisions, in whole or in part, may not be popular. Some of these may be challenged in court or written up in the local paper. You'll be thought of as a villain by some and a hero by others and the tides can change easily.

There will be times when the learning curve is steep. Take advantage of training sessions offered at Commission meetings, by CVRPC, or by the state in order to learn about general planning issues and technical topics which will be the underpinning of your decision making process.

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Planning Basics

Planning can address just about any issue of local or regional concern. In Vermont, planning is performed collaboratively by the State, RPCs, and municipalities. Laws define how this collaboration is to work, specifying different responsibilities for each level of government. This means that the regional planning undertaken by each RPC is intended to be different from the planning undertaken by municipalities and the State.

The regional planning commission is the primary body responsible for planning for the region, with the culmination of that planning documented in the regional plan. The regional planning commission or other groups may also prepare plans on specific topics, for instance, the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation may develop a plan for economic development or the Lamoille Solid Waste District may develop a plan for solid waste.

Planning can be divided into three steps:

1. **Planning** where the visions and goals of the community or region are discussed and established and a means of achieving the goals are determined. Typically, this is done in conjunction with the adoption or amendment of a plan but doesn't need to be. The development of a specific plan such as a watershed plan or economic strategy plan would follow the same process. 85% of CVRPC's work is planning.
2. **Project development** where the vision or ideas of a planning effort are further developed to insure they fit with on-the-ground conditions. Project development may include focused studies or plans that further refine a concept.
3. **Implementation** where the goals from the planning and project development stages are brought to reality through projects or regulations. The development of projects and regulations is principally undertaken by local and state government in Vermont. CVRPC may assist with project implementation, managing a local or regional project or being the applicant for and managing an intermunicipal project.

Regional Planning

Planning for an entire region is especially challenging. While we all agree that the Central Vermont Region should be a "great place to live, work, and play," there are myriad visions of exactly what this means and which actions we should undertake to achieve this goal. CVRPC is statutorily designated as the County's official forum for developing public consensus on the future of The Central Vermont Region.

Regional planning performed by RPCs is at an intermediate level between the most local planning performed by municipalities and the most general planning performed by the State. As a consequence, the regional planning responsibilities of RPCs are intended primarily to

promote the coordination and collaboration of planning activities, both between each RPC's member municipalities and between those municipalities and the State.

The Legislature calls upon each RPC to fulfill eighteen duties (Appendix G). The majority of an RPC's work will be dedicated to the six of the duties:

1. Promote the mutual cooperation of the RPC's member municipalities and cooperate with neighboring states, regions, counties, and municipalities;
2. Assist and advise municipalities in the preparation of plans, studies, and bylaws regarding the appropriate development and use of the region's physical and human resources;
3. Prepare a regional plan at least every eight years;
4. Review proposed State capital expenditures for compatibility with the RPC's regional plan and assist municipalities in assessing compatibility with municipal plans;
5. Appear before District Environmental Commissions to aid in Act 250 reviews of proposed developments and appear before the Public Service Board to aid in Section 248 reviews of proposed utilities and telecommunications facilities; and
6. Confirm municipal planning programs and approve municipal plans.

To fulfill these responsibilities, the Legislature empowered each RPC to exercise certain powers (Appendix G) including but not limited to:

1. Prepare studies, plans, and recommendations on a broad set of issues;
2. Retain staff and consultant assistance, enter upon land with the prior approval of the owner to make examinations and surveys, hold public hearings, and require municipalities and the State to provide information;
3. Carry out, with the cooperation of member municipalities, programs for the appropriate development and use of the region's physical and human resources; and
4. Perform other acts or functions that the RPC deems to be necessary or appropriate.

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission carries out programs in local and regional planning, public safety, transportation infrastructure, natural resources and water quality, brownfield redevelopment, and energy to impact these outcomes:

- ❖ Municipal permitting is predictable and effective.
- ❖ Vermont is prepared for a local, regional, or statewide disaster.
- ❖ Transportation systems are planned effectively with local, regional, and state consideration of economic, environmental, and community impact.

- ❖ Brownfield sites are assessed and cleaned up, creating and preserving jobs and housing.
- ❖ Regions and the state have access to sufficient energy resources and plans for new generation, efficiency, and conservation to support community and economic development.
- ❖ Infrastructure is planned and coordinated to meet the needs of the local economy.
- ❖ Community and economic development are coordinated within and across regions to maximize public resources and ensure strong vibrant communities.
- ❖ Vermont's land use laws are implemented.
- ❖ Vermont's working landscape is used effectively for community and economic benefit.
- ❖ Water quality is improved, and environmentally sensitive areas are protected.

Municipal Planning

Central Vermont Region has a diverse mix of municipalities, with populations ranging from **XXX to over XXX**. Some municipalities have professional planning staff and others do not. For all communities, CVRPC provides technical assistance. Technical assistance comes in the form of requests by municipalities for services, by hiring CVRPC as a consultant, through responsibilities delegated to RPCs by the Legislature or through services requested by state agencies.

Community development assistance CVRPC provides includes:

- ❖ **Municipal plan and bylaw updates and related technical assistance:** CVRPC acts as a cost effective professional planning staff for many municipalities. Current plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. CVRPC works with communities to adopt or update bylaws, including flood hazard regulations, form-based code, zoning, and subdivisions.
- ❖ **Geographic information services (GIS), including mapping:** In addition to enhancing our own work, CVRPC provides its municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.
- ❖ **Transportation planning:** CVRPC coordinates the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) in the Central Vermont Region for the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The TPI is designed to meet federal requirements to ensure local involvement in transportation decision making, and provides local and regional services such as intersection studies, corridor plans, and traffic counts. CVRPC also completes transportation inventories and assists municipalities to build transportation capital budgets as requested by municipalities.
- ❖ **Watershed planning and related project development:** CVRPC works with the Agency of Natural Resources to complete river assessments, which result in better and safer growth management decisions, help municipalities identify areas prone to

erosion and damage from floods, assist communities with erosion and stormwater management, and ensure river corridor projects are designed to be their most effective.

- ❖ **Working landscape planning and related project development:** CVRPC works with municipalities, other regional organizations, and state agencies to complete forest, soil, and other assessments and projects aimed at using and maintaining Central Vermont's working landscape.
- ❖ **Grants:** CVRPC assists local and regional groups and state agencies with identifying appropriate grant sources, defining a project scope, and writing grant applications. Staff have experience in all types of grants from CDBG applications to federal disaster mitigation grants and private foundations. CVRPC matches many federal sources from the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Federal Transit Administration. These funds benefit our communities and businesses.
- ❖ **Emergency response planning:** CVRPC works with VT Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, local emergency service responders, and municipalities to coordinate local and regional emergency response and hazard mitigation planning. CVRPC works with the LEPC to complete exercises and training to better prepare our state for disasters.
- ❖ **Brownfields:** CVRPC has sought and been awarded over \$800,000 for this community development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed, or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs, and increase housing opportunities.
- ❖ **Regional Plans:** CVRPC coordinates planning at the regional level through the development, adoption, and administration of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. The Regional Plan guides investment decisions of the public and private sectors.
- ❖ **Special Projects:** CVRPC also works on special projects such as downtown revitalization, recreation paths, farmland preservation, economic development, energy, capital planning, and affordable housing projects.

Responsibilities of Governmental Agencies

Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It's not about making 'correct' decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions. Good decision-making processes, and therefore good governance, share several characteristics. All have a positive effect on various aspects of government including consultation policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols, commissioner and officer conduct, role clarification, and good working relationships.

Eight Characteristics of Good Governance¹

Good governance is accountable

Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Government has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.

Good governance is transparent

People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made – what information, advice and consultation council considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) council followed.

Good governance follows the rule of law

This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of the governmental body.

Good governance is responsive

Government should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate, and responsive manner.

Good governance is equitable and inclusive

A community's wellbeing results from all of its members feeling their interests have been considered by government in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.

Good governance is effective and efficient

¹ UNDP (1997) *Governance for Sustainable Human Development*. United Nations Development Program

Government should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources, and time to ensure the best possible results for their community.

Good governance is participatory

Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision. This can happen in several ways – community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process.

The Importance of Public Engagement

Community planning and regional planning enable people with different outlooks and awareness to learn about important and sometimes controversial matters, to agree on common objectives, and to collaborate on undertaking coordinated agendas of actions. Planning by public bodies strives to engage people not only because our laws and democratic traditions require it, but also because public engagement makes planning better. Planning that engages affected people, communities, and organizations promotes:

- ❖ Greater understanding of key facts,
- ❖ Deeper and more widespread appreciation of divergent views,
- ❖ Increased consensus on important goals and objectives, and
- ❖ Improved collaboration in undertaking complicated sequences of interrelated actions.

Public engagement entails more than hosting public hearings/meetings. Engagement includes listening to, developing an understanding of, and interacting with people who are not commonly considered “stakeholders”.. Effective public engagement invites average citizens to get involved in deliberation, dialogue and action on public issues that they care about. And, it helps leaders and decision makers better understand the perspectives, opinions, and concerns of citizens and stakeholders. When done well, public engagement goes far beyond the “usual suspects” to include those members of the community whose voices have traditionally been left out of political and policy debates.

Accountability and Transparency

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Appendix A: Bylaws

Printed version of this Handbook includes current bylaws. The web version provides them as a separate document.

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Appendix B: Commissioner Job Description & Duties

Commissioner Job Description

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Define and oversee the vision and mission of the organization and keep it relevant to the needs of the region and its individual local governments and communities;
2. Approve programs and services and monitor their effectiveness and usefulness;
3. Provide strategic guidance to the organization and the Executive Director; and
4. Ensure financial solvency, integrity, and soundness.

Keep Your Commitments

1. Know the organization's vision, mission, goals, products, and services;
2. Do your homework before all meetings; and
3. Focus on solving problems and achieving positive results for the region.

Commitments

1. Attend each meeting of the board
2. Participate in the board's retreats
3. Participate in statewide and regional activities of the organization
4. Serve on at least one committee
5. Hold the organization to a high, ethical standard and monitor its performance regularly
6. Prepare for all meetings thoroughly by reading the meeting packet
7. Listen carefully and considerately to others and maintain an open mind
8. Promote decisions and solutions that are in the best interest of the region and the organization

9. Respect the confidentiality of the board's business
10. Be familiar with the open meeting laws
11. Avoid conflicts of interest

Commissioner Expanded Duties

Establish Policy

1. Focus on the needs of your region and constituents
2. Focus on the common good of the region, not just your individual community or organization
3. Set policies that guide the regional board to run effectively, legally, and ethically
4. Recognize policy decisions as those that effect the region as a whole
5. Establish policy and governance frameworks needed to allow management and staff to implement the vision and priorities of the board

Establish a Partnership with the Executive Director

1. Set guidelines for authority, responsibility, and accountability of the Executive Director
2. Provide support as necessary for management to succeed in advancing board goals and policies
3. Do NOT micromanage the day-to-day operations of the organization
4. Understand that the board is not the same as a local government

Nurture a Vision

1. Establish a shared vision, sense of mission, and common goals at the board level
2. Be able to articulate it to others
3. Take the long-term view with incremental performance measures to evaluate progress
4. Provide direction through regular strategic planning to establish long-term goals and objectives

Communicate Effectively

1. Conduct regular outreach and feedback sessions with the public
2. Don't limit your input and feedback to only Commissioners
3. Convey the issues and decisions facing the region back to your local legislative body or organization, seek input, and relay their comments and perspectives back to the board
4. Provide constructive and timely feedback
5. Respect the diversity of thoughts and opinions
6. Speak for the board only when authorized to do so

Maintain the Financial Integrity of the Organization

1. Develop a financial vocabulary
2. Have a firm understanding of the financial condition of the organization including its financial position, obligations, operations, budget, and expenditures
3. Conduct an annual financial audit using a reliable outside firm
4. Monitor financial outcomes and performance

Participate Responsibly

1. Commit the time necessary to serve on the board
2. Understand your role as a leader of this organization
3. Keep local politics in perspective relative to regional needs and priorities
4. Review meeting agendas and materials prior to attending any meeting
5. Ask informed, thoughtful questions
6. Work at the board level, not at the staff level
7. Follow the conflict of interest policy
8. Be open to participating on committees and serve on at least one
9. Support member retention and recruitment efforts

10. Maintain confidentiality
11. Develop trust
12. Think regionally even when you act locally
13. Evaluate performance at all levels including your own
14. Be a goodwill ambassador for the organization at the local, regional, and state levels

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Appendix C: Commissioner Contact Information

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Board of Commissioners

Municipality	Name	Telephone	Email
Barre City			
Barre Town			
Berlin			
Cabot			
Calais			
Duxbury			
East Montpelier			
Fayston			
Marshfield			
Middlesex			
Montpelier			
Moretown			
Northfield			
Orange			
Plainfield			
Roxbury			
Waitsfield			
Warren			
Washington			
Waterbury			
Williamstown			
Woodbury			
Worcester			

Appendix D: Commission Policies and Procedures

The Commission has adopted policies and procedures to guide its operations. Many of these are available on the Commission's website, including:

- ❖ Most recent work program and budget
- ❖ GIS Cost of Services Policy
- ❖ Procurement Policy
- ❖ Personnel Policy Manual
- ❖ Etc.

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Appendix E: Committee Membership

Executive

Byron Atwood (Chair)
Julie Potter (Vice Chair)
David Strong (Treasurer)
Tina Ruth (Secretary)
Don LaHaye
Laura Hil-Eubanks
Larry Hebert

Nominating

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Transportation Advisory

Project Review

Brownfields Advisory

Town Plan Review

Clean Water Advisory

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Regional Energy

Regional Plan

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Appendix F: Staff Contact Information

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Address: 29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone Number: (802) 229-0389

Fax Number: (802)

General email: cvrpc@cvrpcvt.com

Website: www.centralvtplanning.org

Position	Name	Extension	Email
Executive Director	Bonnie Waninger		waninger@cvregion.com
Finance & Office Manager	Bonnie MacBrien		macbrien@cvregion.com
Program Manager	Dan Currier		currier@cvregion.com
Senior Planner	Eric Vorwald		vorwald@cvregion.com
Senior Planner	VACANT (GIS)		
Senior Planner/Planner	VACANT (LU/NR)		
Planner	Ashley Andrews		andrews@cvregion.com
Planner	Laura Ranker		ranker@cvregion.com
Assistant Planner	Gail Aloisio		aloisio@cvregion.com
Assistant Planner	Marian Wolz		wolz@cvregion.com

Appendix G: Statutes

The legal basis and powers for Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission as the region's regional planning commission stem from Vermont laws as stipulated in the Vermont Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. § 4301 et seq., as amended, 24 V.S.A. § 4345 et seq.).

The Vermont Statutes Online is an unofficial copy of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. Available at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/sections.cfm?Title=24&Chapter=117> for convenience, it has NOT been edited for publication, and is not in any way official or authoritative. It does, however, provide a quick reference to aspects of statute relating to:

Title 24: Municipal and County Government

Chapter 117: MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Sub-Chapter 3: Regional Planning Commissions

(LIST OF SUBSECTIONS AND NAMES)

Printed version of this Handbook includes §4345, §4345a, and §4347 in their entirety.

Appendix H: Resources

There are a number of resources available to you to help get acquainted with CVRPC. Veteran Commissioners are an invaluable resource for new recruits. Talk with your predecessor, other Commissioners, and members of CVRPC. Staff can help you connect with other Commissioners who share similar interests and concerns, as well as provide administrative and technical support to the organization in order to fulfill the mission and vision. Get to know staff and other Commissioners and partner with them as you fulfill your duties on the board. Carpooling to meetings with other Commissioners, speaking with locally elected officials, and joining Committees give additional opportunities for preparation and review. Contact information for staff and Commissioners are listed in Appendices E and F . Reading through the Regional Plan, as well as local municipal plans, will help familiarize you with the goals and policies of each community as well as the direction CVRPC sets for the region. Copies of the plan are found on our website, www.centralvtplanning.org, or are available upon request. Staying tuned in to current events in your community, neighboring communities, and across the state will help prepare you to better understand the context in which local and regional planning occurs.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
604b	A grant program established under Section 604b of the federal Clean Water Act
AAP	Accepted Agricultural Practices
ACCD	Agency of Commerce and Community Development
ACRPC	Addison County Regional Planning Commission
AHS	Agency of Human Services
AMP	Accepted Management Practices (for silviculture)
ANR	Agency of Natural Resources (sometimes referred to as VANR or VT ANR)
AOT	Agency of Transportation (also referred to as VTrans)
APA	American Planning Association
BBL	Brown Bag Lunch
BCRC	Bennington County Regional Commission
BEOP	Basic Emergency Operations Plan
BMP	Best Management Practices
BOA	Board of Adjustment
CCMPO	Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization
CCRPC	Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
CVCC	Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce
CVEDC	Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation
CVRPC	Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
CVSWMD	Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District
CWI	Clean Water Initiative
DAD	Department of Aging and Disabilities
DCA	Department of Community Affairs
DDMHS	Vermont Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services
DEC	Department of Environmental Conservation
DEMHS	Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security
DFPR	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (also referred to as FP&R)
DFW	Department of Fish and Wildlife (also referred to as F&W)
DOH	Vermont Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DPS	Vermont Department of Public Safety
DRB	Development Review Board
EC	Executive Committee
EDA	Economic Development Administration (US)
EM	Emergency Management (sometimes referred to under its old name: VEM)
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator

Acronym	Explanation
EMD	Emergency Management Director
EMO	Emergency Management Organization
EMPG	Emergency Management Performance Grant
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
F&W	Department of Fish and Wildlife (also referred to as DFW)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FP&R	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (also referred to as DFPR)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GMT	Green Mountain Transit
GPD	Gallons Per Day
HCA	Vermont Health Care Authority
HMEP	Hazard Mitigation Emergency Planning
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
HSU	Homeland Security Unit
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Services
IPP	Independent Power Producer
KSA	Knapp State Airport
Kw	Kilowatt
LCBP	Lake Champlain Basin Program
LCPC	Lamoille County Planning Commission
LEC	Local Exchange Carrier
LEOP	Local Emergency Operations Plan
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
LESA	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
LVRR	Lamoille Valley Railroad
LVRT	Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
MGD	Million Gallons per Day
MOMS	Municipal Officers Management Seminar
MPG	Municipal Planning Grant
MRRA	Mad River Resource Alliance
MRV	Mad River Valley
MRVPD	Mad River Valley Planning District
Mw	Megawatts
NADO	National Association of Development Organizations
NEARC	New England Association of Regional Commissions
NFLC	Northern Forest Land Council
NFLS	Northern Forest Land Study
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRPC	Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Acronym	Explanation
NVDA	Northeastern Vermont Development Association
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PC	Planning Commission
PCS	Personal Communications Services
PDM	Pre-Disaster Mitigation
PL	Public Law
Ppm	parts per million (equal to milligrams/liter)
PPR	Plan & Project Review Committee
PSB	Vermont Public Service Board
PSD	Vermont Public Service Department
PSD	Public Safety District
RAP	Required Agricultural Practices
RCT	Rural Community Transportation
RDC	Regional Development Corporation
RMO	Regional Marketing Organization
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
RRPC	Rutland Regional Planning Commission
RSMS	Road Surface Management Systems
RTP	Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (also known as LRTP)
SB	Selectboard
SEP	Supplemental Environmental Program
SERC	State Emergency Response Committee
SHMO	State Hazard Mitigation Officer (acronym pronounced "SHH-MOE")
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer (acronym pronounced "SHIP-POE")
SPA	Source Protection Areas
SWCRPC	Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission
TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TOEC	Town Officers Education Conference
TPI	Transportation Planning Initiative
TRORC	Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
VAL	Vermont Adult Learning
VANR	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (also referred to as ANR)
VAOT	Vermont Agency of Transportation (also referred to as VTrans)
VAPDA	Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
VCDP	Vermont Community Development Program
VCEP	Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan
VCGI	Vermont Center for Geographic Information
VCIC	Vermont Criminal Information Center
VCIL	Vermont Center for Independent Living

Acronym	Explanation
VCRD	Vermont Council on Rural Development
VDPS	Vermont Department of Public Safety
VEDA	Vermont Economic Development Authority
VEM	Vermont Emergency Management (now known as DEMHS)
VEPC	Vermont Economic Progress Council
VHCB	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
VLCT	Vermont League of Cities and Towns
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VPA	Vermont Planners Association
VPSD	Vermont Public Service Department
VSA	Vermont Statutes Annotated
VTP	Vermont Telecommunications Plan
VTrans	Vermont Agency of Transportation (also referred to as VAOT or AOT)
WBRD	Wrightsville Beach Recreation District
WHPA	Wellhead Protection Area
WHPP	Wellhead Protection Program
WMZ	Waste Management Zone
WNRCD	Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District
WRC	Windham Regional Commission
ZBA	Zoning Board of Adjustment

Roberts Rules of Order

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A Guide to Open Meetings

Printed version of this Handbook includes the publication, which can be found at **XXX.**

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The Role of the Chair

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Act 250 Primer

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