

NEWS BRIEF

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

April 2012

CVRPC Commissioners

Barre City - Michael Miller
Barre Town - Byron Atwood
Berlin - Robert Wernecke
Cabot - Richard Payne
Calais - Peter Brough
Duxbury - Vacant
East Montpelier - Tim Carver
Fayston - Vacant
Marshfield - Michael Schumacher
Middlesex - Ronald Krauth
Montpelier - Tina Ruth
Moretown - Robert Roberts
Northfield - Arlington Supplee
Orange - George Malek
Plainfield - David Strong
Roxbury - Vacant
Waitsfield - Harrison Snapp
Warren - Don La Haye
Washington - Ray McCormack
Waterbury - Gunner McCain
Williamstown - Larry Hebert
Woodbury - Janet Shatney
Worcester - Bill Arrand

CVRPC's New Logo and Website

CVRPC has developed a new website and logo design. The logo and website design was lead by Grow! Internet Marketing based in Montpelier, VT. The logo design draws on four major elements of the Central VT region: transportation, geographic location, rivers, and the State Capitol.



The website redesign includes quick links to our regional documents and news, an integrated blog that feeds directly to the home page, and easier navigation to regional information and RPC services and programs.

Check out the CVRPC redesigned logo and website at www.centralvtplanning.org, and let us know what you think.

Brownfields

Brownfields assessment work is picking up as spring arrives. The Central Vermont Brownfields Inventory Assessment Initiative just completed funding a Phase I for 46 Barre St, Montpelier. The site will be purchased by a nonprofit and converted into an educational and training center for the arts. It is hoped that the nonprofit will continue to hold music lessons there. Additionally, the site will feature an artists' studio and gallery space. A Phase II assessment is also being developed and the work should be completed by the end of the summer.

Phase II work for 110 Granite St. in Barre was recently completed. The site is a form-concrete manufacturing business. A clean up action plan will be developed and will outline long term monitoring and remediation activities. Brownfield related events and activities for the future include a real estate developer forum in November. More events will be announced as EPA grantee awards are announced in June. CVRPC applied for a \$300,000 3-year assessment grant to continue funding free and reduced cost assessments.

EPA assessment funding extension – **PERFORM YOUR DUE DILIGENCE!** – Prior to purchasing a property, one should perform an environmental assessment to determine if there is contamination. CVRPC has received a one year extension of its current EPA brownfields assessment funding and has funds available to provide free or reduced cost Phase I and II environmental assessments and clean up action plans until September 30, 2012. Funding is available for sites that may be contaminated with petroleum products. Such sites include old gas stations, fuel storage areas, facilities associated with granite storage and production, as well as many others.

Calling all those interested in brownfields redevelopment! - The CVRPC Brownfields Initiative Committee is looking for new members. Meetings are held once a month on an as needed basis. If you are interested in participating on the Committee or enrolling a property for a free or reduced cost assessment, please contact Jen Mojo at mojo@cvregion.com for more information.

Front Porch Forum



Towns in the Region currently signed up with Front Porch Forum (FPF) include: Moretown, Calais, Worcester, Duxbury, Waterbury, East Montpelier, Cabot, and Middlesex.

FPF is a moderated weekly digest that can include town government updates, lost and found, meeting schedules, group activity organization etc. More recently, FPF has proved to be a valuable tool for organizing volunteer efforts in towns affected by flooding from Tropical Storm Irene, as well as publishing meeting minutes and town-wide notices. For more information regarding Front Porch Forum or to learn how to enroll your town, please contact Jennifer at mojo@cvregion.com or visit www.frontporchforum.com.

Town Plan Enhanced Consultation Process

Is your town in the midst of updating its town plan? Are you looking for guidance as to how to implement your new town plan over the next five years? Is the language in your town plan sufficient to protect natural resources or encourage development in desired areas? CVRPC is now offering a new enhanced consultation process. During the process, CVRPC will review your existing town plan or current revisions and provide feedback in order to strengthen language, identify conflicting goals, and develop additional strategies and implementation measures. Additionally, the town will have the opportunity to discuss needs for additional training and resources for town staff, planning commissioners, and select board members. If your town is interested in the enhanced consultation process, please contact cvrpc@cvregion.com or 802-229-0389.

CVRPC Completes First Energy Grant

In January 2010, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, as well as each of the other 10 regional commissions in Vermont, was awarded an energy grant through the Department of Public Service using Federal ARRA stimulus funds. During the course of the next 2 years, CVRPC was able to assist all 23 communities with the implementation and/or initiation of municipal energy committees through the dedicated work of Nancy Nottermann who we hired as our Regional Energy Coordinator. Nancy capably worked with towns on such projects as investigating alternative energy resources, developing a high school curriculum to lead students into a more energy efficient environment, assist local energy committees with energy fairs and button up workshops, and serve as a resource for a myriad of other projects and ideas.



Town Garage, Orange, VT

In addition, CVRPC's ARRA funds were used for multiple energy audits of municipal buildings in the Towns of Worcester, Waitsfield, Cabot, East Montpelier, Barre Town, Roxbury, Plainfield, Barre City, and Montpelier. When the energy audit recommendations are implemented, as they have been in 1 building in the Town of Orange, they will result in a savings of 5,993 gallons of fuel oil annually, 750 million BTU's annually, and an annual dollar savings of nearly \$18,000. And that dollar figure was calculated when fuel oil was costing less!

The balance of CVRPC's Energy Program funds, through a direct Federal Department of Energy grant, is allocated to weatherization work on the municipal buildings that had energy audits completed. Towns have been notified of the amount of weatherization funds available through CVRPC's energy program, that these funds can only be used for the purchase of materials, and that invoices are due to CVRPC by November 1, 2012. For more information, contact Laurie Emery at emery@cvregion.com.





GAS PAINS?

MAKE THEM STOP.
TAKE THE WAY TO GO STATEWIDE COMMUTER CHALLENGE.

GAS PAINS? Sign up for the Way to Go! Commuter Challenge

With gas priced at \$4.00/gallon and climbing, this would be a good year to try something else. For nearly a decade, a growing number of Vermonters have pledged to try a new way of commuting during the week-long Way to Go! Commuter Challenge May 14 - 18. Way to Go! is an incentive-based event that encourages the use of cheaper, healthier, more earth-friendly transportation alternatives to driving alone.



Last year, more than 3,200 Vermonters, from 185 towns (75%), pledged not to drive alone (a 20% increase from 2010). Together those commuters eliminated more than 400,000 vehicle miles traveled (a 50% increase from 2010), and saved nearly \$90,000 in transportation-related expenses. Their efforts resulted in a reduction of about 350,000 pounds of greenhouse gas-producing carbon emissions.

Businesses and communities compete for awards based on the percentage of participation in Way to Go! Last year in Central Vermont, National Life came in second for the Macro-Employer Award, and the City of Montpelier & Waitsfield were in the top 8 communities. In addition, the City of Montpelier won the Carbon Cup which is a rotating award (like hockey's Stanley Cup) for a combination of factors such as participation and pounds of carbon saved.



Individual participants registering are eligible for an end-of-event raffle offering prizes such as iPods, a Neuton® battery-powered mower, Burton snowboards, overnight stays, restaurant gift certificates, yoga passes, spa treatments, bike tune-ups, ski passes, and more.

Visit the website at www.waytogovt.org to register, learn more details, and look for future updates and announcements.

CVRPC Food Systems Planning

The Problem: The social and physical environment in which people are born, live, learn, work, and play significantly impact social and physical health. Poor, underserved communities are often plagued with an unhealthy food environment which can negatively impact the eating behavior of children, adolescents, and adults. Recent food access research suggests that community design, land use and zoning regulations influence the proximity of food outlets to schools and residential areas and the prevalence and types of food outlets available in neighborhoods; and consequently the availability of healthy and unhealthy food in a community. Since land use regulations directly control a community's built environment, changes in land use policy coupled with behavioral shifts can result in a healthier environment and people. The municipal plan directly influences a community's built form and land-use regulations, thereby dictating the location and prevalence of food outlets of all types. Collectively, these factors drive the availability of healthy and unhealthy food in a community.

Despite our reputation as one of the healthiest states in the nation, over half (59%) of Vermonter's are above a healthy weight and at risk for type II diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, heart disease and certain cancers.

** More than half (59%) of Vermont adults are overweight or obese.*

**The prevalence of obesity among Vermont adults has doubled between 1990 and 2007.*

** The estimated health care costs attributable to obesity in Vermont annually are \$141 million.*

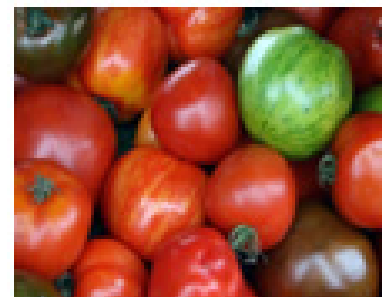
The Central Vermont Region is rural in nature with approximately 80% of inhabitants living outside of the core urban areas, and roughly 9% of the population living below the Federal poverty line. A percentage of Central Vermont residents may experience difficulty accessing food as local transit service routes fail to reach (or run less frequently) areas located away from major routes (RT 2, RT 100, I 89) and the urban cores of Montpelier and Barre City.

Within Washington and Orange Counties, the percentage of low income residents living greater than 1 mile from a grocery store is 17- 23 percent. The Region suffers from the highest price ratios of healthy food to "junk" food. In Vermont, 48% of renters and 39% of homeowners pay more than 30% of their incomes on

housing, which does not include the high cost of utilities during the cold winter season. Vermont has the 10th highest cost of living in the U.S. The high cost of living in rural Central Vermont, coupled with low wages, leaves little extra income to purchase locally grown fresh food.

The Plan: In order to increase the range of impact and improve health both now and in the future, complementary efforts aimed at changes that benefit the population as a whole are needed. Healthy community design is aimed at changing local policy and infrastructure to create long term sustainable changes. Food systems planning is one part of healthy community design and is an emerging area of interest about which local community groups and organizations are realizing the benefits. Few Vermont municipal plans and fewer regional plans address this issue.

While food systems planning is not a required element by State Statute for inclusion in municipal and regional plans, it is as integral to human, economic and environmental health, and as important as other systems we plan for and rely on, such as potable water, wastewater, solid waste, education, and transportation.



Current Work: The broad scope of CVRPC's work enables us to call upon many local interest organizations to collaborate with and create interdisciplinary projects, such as food systems planning. CVRPC received a Healthy Communities grant this past fall through the State Department of Health. We are beginning the

outreach and data collection process that will serve as a foundation for the creation of a regional food systems plan. A regional food systems plan will address food-related concerns, identify opportunities to: increase the efficiency of the transportation distribution system, strengthen the delivery of public health and human services, develop appropriate land use regulations, as well as identify opportunities for new economic markets.



While the current Regional Plan contains few policies specifically relating to food systems and the associated benefits of a healthy food system, there is evidence of expressed interest and support in undertaking such work across the Region. CVRPC understands that local groups have started work on gathering information about their food systems. The next step in the process is to bring this information together on a regional level along with baseline data that will establish the foundation of a Central Vermont food systems plan. The goal is to establish a comprehensive repository of information and develop a guidebook on the Central Vermont food system which local groups may then use to strengthen their efforts and contribute to regional initiatives.

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Future Work: CVRPC continues to seek additional funding in order to complete a comprehensive regional food systems plan. Undertaking such a plan will require extensive public outreach, baseline data collection and analysis, goal setting, and policy drafting processes. This plan will: identify goals and implementation strategies to enhance long term regional food security; function as a policy guide for the promotion of systems change that will cultivate community hunger resilience, promote health equity particularly among vulnerable populations, and encourage food sovereignty; and serve as a catalyst for local community engagement in food policy empowerment issues.

Central Vermont Regional
Planning Commission

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