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Quarterly Newsletter – Winter
2019

Floodplain Management & the NFIP's Community Rating System

Recent ice jams in the region caused localized flooding in some municipalities. In Brattleboro residents along the Whetstone Brook were evacuated due to rising flood waters. Flooding is one of the greatest natural hazards facing the State of Vermont. All Central Vermont towns are enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP.) Towns agree to regulate development in the floodplain and in return residents of the town are eligible to purchase flood insurance.

The City of Montpelier, Berlin and Waterbury have agreed to step up their role in working to decrease flood damages by voluntary participation in the NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS is an incentive based program which provides residents with a deduction on their flood insurance if the municipality agrees to undertake a floodplain management program. To assist municipalities with their efforts CVRPC recently organized a training specifically geared towards realtors. CRS municipalities may document these types of educational events for maintenance of their CRS credits.

Realtors who participated in the training learned about various flood hazards which affect properties in Vermont, the roles and responsibilities of property owners and local municipalities within the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and acceptable flood-proofing techniques generally used in residential and commercial buildings. Vermont's Regional Floodplain Managers Ned Swanberg and Rebecca Pfeiffer presented the program, and in addition to the 13 Realtors who participated, 8 local officials also attended. Participants provided excellent suggestions for future training, as well as feedback noting the CRS training provided great information and was a very useful session.

CVRPC will continue to work on additional educational and training opportunities





CVRPC Assists Municipalities with River Corridor Protections

Road damage from flooding and its impact on families, first responders, and budgets is a concern to all of us. To protect public safety, reduce erosive damage, and qualify for state funding after a disaster, your

community can **act now** to protect the function of River Corridors (the room needed by the channel to maintain its least erosive and damaging path). CVRPC currently has funding to meet, and to work with your community, through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Tactical Basin Plan fund. As part of this funding, CVRPC is helping municipalities to increase their Emergency Assistance Release Fund (ERAF) eligibility percentage through river corridor protections.

To more accurately identify those areas that are at risk from erosion during a flood event (fluvial erosion hazards), the Vermont River Corridor and Floodplain Protection Program has recently updated the digital Statewide River Corridor Map, which was previously released in 2015. On the ground field-determined data such as valley wall locations (steep areas within river valleys) from stream geomorphic assessments have been incorporated into the 2015 state map. The draft river corridor is currently available on the [Flood Ready Atlas](#). On this web based map, one is able to zoom into a specific area and see both sets of the river corridor data (2015 & 2019) for comparison (*see above photo of Draft River Corridor Map - Flood Ready Atlas*).

Model River Corridor Protection bylaws are also now available. Additional community case studies, protection tools, and data, are available at www.FloodTraining.vt.gov. The CVRPC can assist communities in developing river corridor bylaws to protect these areas from future damages, thereby providing future savings from damage related costs. Those communities that adopt river corridor bylaws are eligible for the maximum ERAF percentage rate of 17.5%, which can mean substantial savings for a community in the event of a disaster.

If interested in river corridor protection for your community, please contact Pam DeAndrea at deandrea@cvregion.com.

2019 MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANTS AWARDED

Congratulations to the following Central Vermont communities on their award of municipal planning grants for 2019

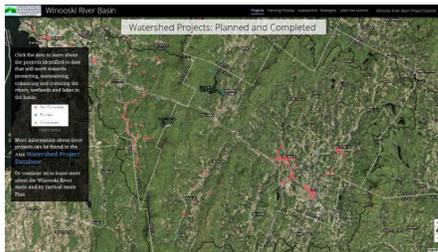
Cabot -- \$19,500 -- The town will



evaluate the constraints and opportunities of developing a non-motorized trail network to link designated village center to regional networks and/or local recreation amenities.

East Montpelier -- \$7,250 -- The town will hire a consultant to assist with public education and outreach for the draft zoning updates and make revisions, as necessary, in response to changes made during the adoption process.

Montpelier -- \$21,000 -- The city will use project funds to hire a consultant to develop a streetscape master plan for State Street from Main Street to Taylor Street.



CVRPC Implements Strategies in Tactical Basin Plans

Now that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has finalized the [Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan](#) and the [White River Tactical Basin Plan](#), the [Central Vermont](#)

[Regional Planning Commission](#) is launching into the project implementation phase. CVRPC staff have been busy working on grant applications for project funding and collaborating with partners on project development including municipalities, ANR, Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District, Friends of the Mad River, and Friends of the Winooski River.

When municipalities or other partners are ready to move forward with projects, CVRPC is available to assist in grant writing through the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP), Lake Champlain Basin Program, or Vermont Agency of Transportation funds to implement water quality improvement projects from Stormwater Master Plans or River Corridor Plans. The ANR has a list of these projects in the [ANR Watershed Project Database](#). As part of the Basin Plan a [Story Map](#) was developed that displays project locations and contains information on projects uploaded to this database (*see above photo*). Stormwater improvement projects identified in the soon to be completed Kingsbury Branch and Mad River Stormwater Master Plans will also be uploaded into the ANR database. This will allow CVRPC and other partners to pursue funding for further design and implementation for these projects. If interested in water quality project development, please contact Pam DeAndrea at deandrea@cvregion.com.

State Economic Initiatives with ACCD Secretary Shirling

CVRPC's Board of Commissioners welcomed Michael Shirling, Secretary of the Agency of Commerce & Community Development to its January 8, 2019 meeting. Secretary Shirling provided an overview of the Agency's work and outlined its core operating goals:

- Tell the story of Vermont

- Deploy a 21st Century workforce
- Ensure housing for all
- Create vibrant regional economies and ecosystems
- Accelerate business growth and recruitment

Secretary Shirling described the State's challenges and opportunities. He noted that over the last two years the number one challenge to growing the economy is population and having sufficient workforce to fill jobs. He stated this is not a Vermont specific trend, but is a non-urban commonality. Vermont is the second oldest state in the nation demographically, which creates challenges as retirees exit the workforce. Affordability is another challenge in both Vermont and other non-urban areas nationwide.

Shirling said from challenges come opportunities. Vermont's size creates a small-town feel attractive to many people. Vermont also has a 230-year history of innovation (from agricultural to commercial to technological) and has good recognition for quality of workforce and reputation.

Secretary Shirling rounded out the discussion with a Q&A addressing topics such as education consolidation, infrastructure, housing, transportation, technology, development, Air BNB's, marketing and workforce training.



Preferred Siting & Discussion with Utility Companies

Solar projects sited on in particular locations are eligible for financial incentives by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). The State incents systems sized between 15kW and 500 kW to be located on preferred sites. Qualifying systems earn higher net-metering rates. Sites may automatically qualify if they meet one of eight State-defined locations which include rooftops, parking lots, brownfields, landfills, gravels pits, quarries, other contaminated sites and already developed sites. Sites also may qualify if the location is designated in a duly adopted municipal plan or is identified in a letter of support from the municipal legislative body and the municipal and regional planning commissions in the community where the system will be located.

CVRPC's Project Review Committee has received 5 requests for a joint letter of support for solar projects in Central Vermont. The RPC's Regional Plan Committee has been grappling with developing criteria and/or guidance to assist the RPC and municipalities in the identification of local preferred sites.

To aid in the Committee's decision making process local utility companies were invited to talk about merchant generation facilities adding renewable energy plants where they are either needed or not needed or beyond the ability for the local grid. On Thursday, January 24, 2019 Green Mountain Power's Rob Horton, Northfield City Electric's Steve Fitzhugh, and Washington Electric Cooperative's William Powell shared utility information and considerations with those present.

Their presentations can be viewed at CVRPC's website ([WEC](#) & [GMT](#)). One of the questions which arose was "preferred according to whom?" Electrical Engineers, planners, land owners and neighbors may all have varying opinions. While there are no easy answers to help municipalities define a preferred site, staff at CVRPC are available to assist towns in their energy planning process.

Community Engagement Roundtable

Do you have trouble finding volunteers to serve on boards or assist with projects? Do you suffer from a lack of quorum? Are the same two people showing up to public hearings? *You are not alone.* On January 30th, attendees joined CVRPC and Rebecca Sanborn Stone of Community Workshop to learn about creative ways to increase more diverse and meaningful public engagement. Topics included:

Focus your available time more effectively to expand feedback.
Use gathering locations and social networks to magnify your time.
Tell stories to frame messages that are meaningful to your audience.
Think differently about what *success* means.

Shared were triumphs and challenges; as well as ideas to assist attendees to launch their work. A video of the training can be viewed [here](#).

Transit for All

CVRPC is wrapping up the first phase of their paratransit project: Transportation is Changing – Make it Work for You. The goal of this phase was to build a more knowledgeable and informed transit ridership in the Central Vermont Region by engaging directly with existing public transit users and potential users of our rural transit system.

Through the efforts of our Paratransit Planning Committee we engaged over 600 people. This engagement included presenting at community and small group meetings; surveying older adults, persons with disabilities and care givers; creating user–[story videos](#); and sharing information on Facebook, in newsprint, and via email.

Through this engagement process the following needs were identified for both a paratransit service and the existing public transit service:

- Outreach on qualification process
- Gaps in service assistance
- Scheduling service
- Ability to ride to social activities
- Guarantee that the rider will get picked up and dropped off on time
- Door to door service
- Seasonal variability in service
- Updated Bus Maps and Guide
- Education on transit code of conduct and rider bill or rights
- Standardized rider experience

The input we gathered for the paratransit service will help the operator and rider

better understand and use the service. The gaps in understanding with our existing service by the user tells us that there is still more that can be done to help older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers to improve their knowledge of service availability.

To accomplish bridging these gaps the Paratransit Planning Committee will be doing the following:

- Working with GMT to identify bus stop locations that need improvements
- Adding rural members to GMT ADA Committee
- Working with GMT on outreach during the two weeks before and two weeks after the start of the paratransit service
- Apply for a Phase 2 Round 2 Inclusive Coordinated Transportation Partnership Project Grant to help develop education and outreach materials to build a more knowledgeable and informed transit ridership in the Central Vermont Region.

We look forward to continuing our work to enhance paratransit and public transit services in the Central Vermont Region.

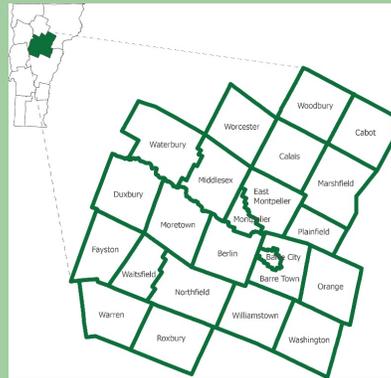
Welcoming New Staff

CVRPC is pleased to announce that Jonathan DeLaBruere has joined our team! Jonathan will staff the Commission's emergency management and hazard mitigation program and work with Senior Planner Clare Rock to provide land use assistance to municipalities. His diverse experiences are a wonderful fit with CVRPC's municipal assistance programs. A Northeast Kingdom native, he serves as a Lieutenant for the City of Winooski Fire Department and is an instructor for the Vermont Fire Academy. He worked to secure grant funding for multiple infrastructure improvement projects while working as the Town of Duxbury's Selectboard Assistant. Formerly Vice Chair of the Winooski Planning Commission, he witnessed how the rippling effect of diverse ideas and small changes can simultaneously improve a community's infrastructure and its overall well being. Jonathan holds Bachelor of Science degrees in Environmental Sciences and Business Administration from UVM and Champlain College respectively. He can be reached at delabruere@cvregion.com. Welcome Jonathan!



Barre City – Janet Shatney
Barre Town – Byron Atwood
Berlin – Robert Wernecke
Cabot – Amy Hornblas
Calais – John Brabant
Duxbury – Alan Quackenbush
East Montpelier – Julie Potter
Fayston – Karl Klein
Marshfield – Melissa Seifert
Middlesex – Ron Krauth
Montpelier – Kirby Keeton
Moretown – Dara Torre
Northfield – Laura Hill–Eubanks
Orange – Lee Cattaneo
Plainfield – Bram Towbin
Roxbury – Gerry D’Amico
Waitsfield – Don La Haye
Warren – Camilla Behn
Washington – Peter Carbee
Williamstown – Richard Turner
Woodbury – Michael Gray
Worcester – Bill Arrand

Bonnie Waninger
Executive Director
Nancy Chartrand
Office Manager
Dan Currier
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Pam DeAndrea
Senior Planner
Ashley Andrews
Planner
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Senior Planner
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Assistant Planner



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