



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 10, 2020 at 6:30 pm

Remote Participation via GoToMeetings¹

Join via computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/552444045>

Dial in via phone²: (872) 240-3212; Access Code: 552-444-045

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Page **AGENDA**

6:30³ Adjustments to the Agenda

Public Comments

6:35 Central VT Economic Development Corporation, Jamie Stewart, Executive Director

6:50 Regional Recreation Updates, Walter Opuszynski, State of Vermont, Kim McKee/Greg Western, Cross Vermont Trails Association, & Clare Rock, CVRPC
Updates on recreation projects and activities in the region

2 7:45 Municipal Plan Approval & Confirmation of Planning Process, Bill Arrand, Municipal Plan Review Committee Chair (enclosed)⁴
Report/recommended for Barre City Plan approval and planning process confirmation

6 8:00 Municipal Dues (enclosed)⁴
Adopt the FY22 municipal dues rate

9 8:15 Meeting Minutes – October 13, 2020 (enclosed)⁴

13 8:20 Reports (enclosed)
Update/questions on Staff and Committee Reports

8:30 Adjournment

Next Meeting: December 8, 2020

¹ Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in programs or activities are encouraged to contact Nancy Chartrand at 802-229-0389 or chartrand@cvregion.com at least 3 business days prior to the meeting for which services are requested.

² Dial-in numbers are toll numbers. Fees may be charged dependent on your phone service.

³ Times are approximate unless otherwise advertised.

⁴ Anticipated action item.



MEMO

Date: November 10, 2020

To: CVRPC Board of Commissioners

From: Bill Arrand, Chair of Municipal Plan Review Committee

Re: Municipal Plan Approval & Confirmation of Planning Process: Barre City

☒ ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Approve the *City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan* per 24 V.S.A. §4350(b).
2. Confirm the City of Barre planning process as per under 24 VSA §4350(a).
3. Authorize the Board Chair to sign the resolution related to these items.

Plan Approval & Planning Process Confirmation

The Municipal Plan Review Committee convened a hearing on November 2, 2020 via GoToMeeting, to hear public input on the *City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan*. Seven people attended, including 5 Municipal Plan Review Committee members, 2 CVRPC staff, and 2 Barre City Representatives (Janet Shatney, Director of Planning Permitting, and Assessing and Michael Hellein, Chair of the Barre City Planning Commission), and 1 member of the public (George Clain, Barre Town Planning Commissioner and Alternate CVRPC Commissioner for Barre Town)

At the meeting, CVRPC staff and Janet Shatney provided an overview of the updates in the *City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan*, and committee members discussed the Plan's content. Staff noted the integration of forest integrity elements, flood resilience elements, and focused on the details provided in the City's Strategic Plan section with relevant benchmarks. Shatney provided background on the planning process.

Committee members had a discussion on possible future enhanced energy planning in Barre City. Shatney provided information on the Barre City Energy Committee's work, and the possible land use constraints faced by the City in the future. Committee members also had a general discussion on the importance of childcare in the municipal planning process.

At the close of the hearing, the Committee recommended approval of the *City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan* and confirmation of the City of Barre's planning process.

Staff Review of the City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan

Staff provided the following recommendations

- **Consistency with the State goals established in section §4302**

Staff findings and recommendations: Staff finds the plan to be consistent with the State Goals, and provides the following recommendations for the next update:

- **State Goal 2:** To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.
 - Staff would like to recognize the effort put into this plan's economic sections, as well as the integration into land use and energy chapters. Barre City has been putting in a lot of effort to move the needle on local unemployment, as well as workforce development. This suggestion does not devalue the work already completed by the City, but offers a potential new inclusion into the future.

The only recommendation Staff would make at this time in relation to Goal 2 (Economy) is to include mention of remote work opportunities and needs, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic shifts the need for office space and promotes a transition to work-from-home opportunities for some occupations. Integrating these changes brought forth during the COVID-19 pandemic may make the city more responsive to the future recovery as businesses begin to downsize their physical operations, and employees spend more time at home.

- **State Goal 13:** To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.
 - Barre City's plan is consistent with the above childcare goal and while not obligated to provide child care, has an opportunity in the efforts already occurring in the Downtown area to explore childcare opportunities. As the Plan links childcare to the local economy, this would be an opportunity to link implementation of the two as well.

In Barre City, examples to address this need include: encouraging local businesses to offer assistance to childcare businesses and developing partnerships with large employers to identify workforce childcare needs and develop strategies to meet those needs. More information on meeting the State's Child Care goal may be found in [this document published by the Windham Regional Commission](#).

- **Compatibility with its regional plan**

Staff findings: Staff finds the plan to be compatible with the regional plan.

- **Compatibly with approved plans of other municipalities in the region**

Staff findings: Staff finds the plan to be compatible with approved plans of other municipalities.

- **Containing all the elements included in section § 4382**

Staff findings and recommendation: Staff finds the plan to contain all of the required elements and offers the following recommendation for future updates:

- **Required Element 9:** An energy plan, including an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, a statement of policy on the conservation of energy, including programs, such as thermal integrity standards for buildings, to implement that policy, a statement of policy on the development of renewable energy resources, a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy;
 - The Municipal Plan meets the above required element by providing an overview of local energy resources in Barre City. Staff understands that the City of Barre is not interested in receiving a determination of energy compliance at this time. However, Staff would like to recognize the City's inclusion of regional energy data and maps as an aid to current energy planning initiatives. The inclusion of this information will allow the City to track progress towards local and State energy goals.

In future updates, the City should integrate progress and campaigns undertaken by the active City Energy Committee in an effort to recognize their work and coordinate on progress made on achieving local goals.



RESOLUTION

Whereas Title 24, VSA, Section §4350 requires that regional planning commissions, after public notice, shall review the planning process of member municipalities and shall so confirm when a municipality:

1. is engaged in a continuing planning process that, within a reasonable time, will result in a plan that is consistent with the goals contained in 24 V.S.A. § 4302;
2. is engaged in a process to implement its municipal plan, consistent with the program for implementation required under 24 V.S.A. § 4382; and
3. is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning purposes;

Whereas as part of the consultation process, a regional planning commission shall consider whether a municipality has adopted a plan;

Whereas a regional planning commission shall review and approve plans of its member municipalities, when approval is requested and warranted, and a commission shall approve a plan if it finds that the plan:

1. is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. § 4302;
2. is compatible with its regional plan;
3. is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
4. contains all the elements included in 24 V.S.A. § 4382(a)(1)-(12);

Whereas the City of Barre prepared a municipal plan in accordance with 24 V.S.A Chapter 117;

Whereas the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission concluded that the *City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan* meets the requirements for approval; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission:

1. approves the *City of Barre, Vermont 2020 City Municipal Plan*, adopted September 15, 2020; and
2. consulted with and confirms the planning process of the City of Barre.

Under 24 V.S.A. § 4350, when an adopted municipal plan expires, its approval and confirmation of the municipality's planning process also expire. Recommendations made by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission are attached and should be considered when developing the next municipal plan.

A municipality that has adopted a plan may define and regulate land development in any manner that the municipality establishes in its bylaws, provided those bylaws are in conformance with the plan and are adopted for the purposes set forth in 24 V.S.A. § 4302.

ADOPTED by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission on November 10, 2020.

Laura Hill-Eubanks, Chair



MEMO

Date: November 3, 2020
To: Board of Commissioners
From: Bonnie Waninger, Executive Director
Re: FY21 Municipal Dues

✉ ACTION REQUESTED: Adopt a FY22 municipal dues assessment rate of \$1.28 per capita as recommended by the Executive Committee.

CVRPC has two flexible sources of funds: municipal assessments and regional planning funds provided by the Vermont Legislature. When viewed together, CVRPC's flexible funds have not kept pace with the rate of inflation over the past 10 years. This coincided with increased match requirements for grants and increased municipal service requests.

Raising dues helps maintain CVRPC's staff capacity so municipalities can rely on our services and reach into our staff pool for support. Municipalities invested \$79,875 for FY21 dues, and will leverage \$1.12 million in services from CVRPC.

How are municipal dues used?

Municipal dues are used to match grants, make up shortfalls or reductions in grants and contracts, and help support ongoing operations and maintenance of a professional staff. State officials and legislators look to municipal assessments (the rate and the overall participation by municipalities) as one indicator of a regional planning commission's success.

How was the recommended rate developed?

The Executive Director assesses potential budgetary needs for the upcoming fiscal year. Factors considered include overall budget, dues as a percentage of budget (buying power of municipal dues), cash and in-kind match needs, projected municipal service needs over the next 2-3 years, and potential future needs of the Commission. The Director provides alternatives and a recommendation to the Executive Committee, which recommends a rate to the Board.

How do dues fit within CVRPC other funding?

CVRPC is funded by municipal dues assessments, an annual allocation of regional planning funds from the Legislature, grants, and contracts for services. Of these, municipal assessments and regional planning funds are the only flexible funds. Municipal assessments are the most flexible.

How will the dues change for my municipality?

Table 1 reflects the recommended change in dues by municipality in actual dollars.

Table 1: Dues Change by Municipality

Municipality	POPULATION CHANGE			DUES CHANGE			
	2017 VT Dept of Health Est.	2019 VT Dept of Health Est. ¹	Population Change	Maintain FY 22 Dues at \$1.25	↓ RECOMMENDED	Increase 4% FY 23 Dues at \$1.30	← Options \$ Change
					Increase 2.4% FY 22 Dues at \$1.28		
Barre City	8,659	8,528	(131)	\$ 10,660.00	\$ 10,915.84	\$ 11,086.40	\$ 255.84
Barre Town	7,723	7,720	(3)	\$ 9,650.00	\$ 9,881.60	\$ 10,036.00	\$ 231.60
Berlin	2,807	2,781	(26)	\$ 3,476.25	\$ 3,559.68	\$ 3,615.30	\$ 83.43
Cabot	1,437	1,433	(4)	\$ 1,791.25	\$ 1,834.24	\$ 1,862.90	\$ 42.99
Calais	1,597	1,604	7	\$ 2,005.00	\$ 2,053.12	\$ 2,085.20	\$ 48.12
Duxbury	1,320	1,305	(15)	\$ 1,631.25	\$ 1,670.40	\$ 1,696.50	\$ 39.15
East Montpelier	2,576	2,551	(25)	\$ 3,188.75	\$ 3,265.28	\$ 3,316.30	\$ 76.53
Fayston	1,335	1,330	(5)	\$ 1,662.50	\$ 1,702.40	\$ 1,729.00	\$ 39.90
Marshfield	1,501	1,473	(28)	\$ 1,841.25	\$ 1,885.44	\$ 1,914.90	\$ 44.19
Middlesex	1,747	1,724	(23)	\$ 2,155.00	\$ 2,206.72	\$ 2,241.20	\$ 51.72
Montpelier	7,484	7,372	(112)	\$ 9,215.00	\$ 9,436.16	\$ 9,583.60	\$ 221.16
Moretown	1,667	1,665	(2)	\$ 2,081.25	\$ 2,131.20	\$ 2,164.50	\$ 49.95
Northfield	6,032	6,522	490	\$ 8,152.50	\$ 8,348.16	\$ 8,478.60	\$ 195.66
Orange	1,101	1,113	12	\$ 1,391.25	\$ 1,424.64	\$ 1,446.90	\$ 33.39
Plainfield	1,260	1,262	2	\$ 1,577.50	\$ 1,615.36	\$ 1,640.60	\$ 37.86
Roxbury	706	709	3	\$ 886.25	\$ 907.52	\$ 921.70	\$ 21.27
Waitsfield	1,708	1,693	(15)	\$ 2,116.25	\$ 2,167.04	\$ 2,200.90	\$ 50.79
Warren	1,682	1,671	(11)	\$ 2,088.75	\$ 2,138.88	\$ 2,172.30	\$ 50.13
Washington	1,018	1,010	(8)	\$ 1,262.50	\$ 1,292.80	\$ 1,313.00	\$ 30.30
Waterbury	5,142	5,155	13	\$ 6,443.75	\$ 6,598.40	\$ 6,701.50	\$ 154.65
Williamstown	3,491	3,530	39	\$ 4,412.50	\$ 4,518.40	\$ 4,589.00	\$ 105.90
Woodbury	888	883	(5)	\$ 1,103.75	\$ 1,130.24	\$ 1,147.90	\$ 26.49
Worcester	1,019	1,028	9	\$ 1,285.00	\$ 1,315.84	\$ 1,336.40	\$ 30.84
Region	63,900	64,062	162	\$ 80,077.50	\$ 81,999.36	\$ 83,280.60	\$ 1,921.86

¹Dues Calculations use the most recent US Census or estimated census (2019 Population Projection Estimates Bulletin, VT Dept. of Health, <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HS-STAT-2019-Population-Estimates-Bulletin.pdf>, November 2020)

Vermont RPC Municipal Dues Rates and Structures

The Executive Committee customarily requests information about how CVRPC's activities compare to its peers. The table below reflects how CVRPC's dues compare to other RPCs as of 09/09/19. The data is sorted by Per Capita Equivalent to assist with comparisons. Note: CVRPC's FY20 due rate was \$1.25.

RPC	Population	Population Data Source	Amount Raised by Dues	# of Municipalities	Dues as Percentage of Total Revenue	Calculation Method	Per Capita Equivalent ¹
Bennington	37,701	US Census	\$102,686	17	6%	Population: 0-250 = \$2,000; 251-500 = \$3,000; 501-1,000 = \$4,000; 1,001-2,000 = \$5,000; 2,001-3,000 = \$6,000; 3,001-4,000 = \$7,000; 4,001-5,000 = \$8,000; Over 5,000 = \$8,000 + (Population-5,000) * 3	\$2.72
Windham	45,562	US Census	\$106,931	27	5%	\$2.30 per capita - minimum \$250	\$2.35
Chittenden	156,545	US Census	\$250,400	19	5%	Pro-rated based on municipal share of the county Equalized Education Grand List (EEGL) value	\$1.60
Two Rivers	55,996	US Census	\$83,434	30	5%	\$1.49 per capita	\$1.49
Addison	33,517	VT Dept. of Health Estimates	\$43,237	21	6%	\$1.23 per capita, minus group quarters	\$1.29
South Windsor	24,711	US Census	\$30,889	10	4%	\$1.25 per capita	\$1.25
Central VT	65,034	US Census	\$78,040	23	5%	\$1.20 per capita	\$1.20
Northwest	54,715	US Census	\$60,576	22	4%	\$1.107 per capita; annual change based on employer cost price index	\$1.11
Lamoille	24,475	US Census	\$20,000	10	3%	Pro-rated 50/50, most recent Census population and equalized grand list value; towns only, not villages	\$0.82
Northeast Kingdom	62,438	US Census	\$50,215	50	3%	\$0.75 per capita - minimum dues of \$500 (few do pay \$100); \$3,500 cap	\$0.80
Rutland	61,642	US Census	\$24,050	27	2%	\$975/year per municipality	\$0.39

¹Amount Raised by Dues divided by Population

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Draft MINUTES
October 13, 2020

Commissioners:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barre City	Janet Shatney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moretown	Dara Torre, Secretary/Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/>		Heather Grandfield, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>		Joyce Manchester, Alt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barre Town	Byron Atwood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Northfield	Laura Hill-Eubanks, Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		George Clain, Alt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Orange	Lee Cattaneo
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Berlin	Robert Wernecke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plainfield	Paula Emery
<input type="checkbox"/>		Karla Nuissl, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>		Bob Atchinson, Alt.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cabot	Amy Hornblas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roxbury	Gerry D'Amico
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Calais	John Brabant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Waitsfield	Don La Haye
<input type="checkbox"/>		Jan Ohlsson, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>		Harrison Snapp, Alt.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Duxbury	Alan Quackenbush	<input type="checkbox"/>	Warren	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E. Montpelier	Julie Potter	<input type="checkbox"/>		J. Michael Bridgewater, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Clarice Cutler, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Washington	Peter Carbee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fayston		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Waterbury	Steve Lotspeich, Vice-Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marshfield	Robin Schunk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williamstown	Richard Turner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Middlesex	Ron Krauth	<input type="checkbox"/>		Jacqueline Higgins, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Montpelier	Marcella Dent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Woodbury	Michael Gray
<input type="checkbox"/>		Mike Miller, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Worcester	Bill Arrand

Staff: Bonnie Waninger, Nancy Chartrand, Clare Rock, Zachary Maia

Guests: Brandy Saxton, PlaceSense; Tom Badowski, Berlin Assistant Town Manager; Paul Simon, Landscape Architect

Call to Order

Chair L. Hill-Eubanks called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm, and conducted a roll call. Quorum was present.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None.

Public Comments

None.

Berlin New Town Center & Neighborhood Development Area

Clare Rock discussed the purpose and benefits of both New Town Center and Neighborhood Development Areas designations. A Town Center plan is at the heart of the Municipal Plan. To achieve the vision, it relies on a variety of components; private and public agreements, land use regulations, adoption of an official map, and adoption of a capital program plan and budget. It is a partnership of

1 state, local, regional and investor support. Planning beyond the Municipal Plan is required to create a
2 specific pathway to achieve the designation, which is a time consuming strategic planning process.

3
4 Brandy Saxton provided detail regarding the Berlin Town Center Plan. The boundary is anchored by the
5 Berlin Mall and the Central Vermont Medical Center. She provided background related to the choice of
6 location noting it is a regional service center with more than 50 businesses in the area and the hospital
7 being the second largest employer in the region. There has been a significant amount of investment in
8 transportation infrastructure in the area. Saxton advised that Berlin identified a Town Center as a
9 priority in the late 90's with various planning studies over the years. The Town has worked diligently
10 towards the implementation of that vision. The concept plan is intended to be a first step of many steps
11 to develop the area from an auto-oriented area to a more walkable area. Saxton discussed the street
12 concepts and pedestrian connections. She noted that a Town Center for the 21st century must plan
13 around personal vehicle transportation in a setting like this, but it can evolve over time as more
14 walkable and mixed-use. She noted that most development in the first phase will likely be residential,
15 currently there is not a high demand for commercial use, and retail space will likely decline over time.
16 She noted a potential for more than 300 units of housing to be added in the Town Center area.

17
18 Saxton introduced Paul Simon, Landscape Architect, who discussed the site plans included in the
19 meeting packet. He advised the plan is still evolving and detail was provided regarding potential
20 development: municipal building, housing units, senior housing, a day care facility, and other potential
21 buildings for various uses. Saxton noted that the daycare facility proposed by Downstreet Housing and
22 EverNorth is dependent on obtaining the Town Center designation. Simon noted they are trying to
23 make a strong connection between the mall and the new town center core, incorporating new
24 commercial and residential development tied into a community green. He provided detail on the
25 various proposed street concepts and pedestrian connections. He noted they were focused on
26 providing what new town centers need – mixed use and mixed income availability.

27
28 The floor was open to questions, and Saxton advised that Waninger had sent over questions in advance,
29 with one related to level of support from property owners. She advised that Berlin has had a great
30 working relationship with the property owners and that the school district, car dealership, senior
31 housing, mall and hospital have all been very supportive and engaged in the process.

32
33 Karla Nuissl, Berlin Planning Commission Chair, noted it is important to recognize it takes time to
34 achieve. South Burlington's new town center, a successful example, is more spread out and walkable,
35 but doesn't necessarily look like a downtown yet. She noted they encountered lots of obstacles and
36 have put together a great plan supported by those who would be relied upon to do the development.

37
38 Tom Badowski, Berlin Assistant Town Administrator, said Berlin has put extensive public utility resources
39 into the area with both municipal water system and sewer improvements to create a town center.

40
41 Following Berlin's presentation, Rock discussed the regional component of the proposed town center.
42 She shared slides that outlined how the town center relates to the Regional Plan. The proposed town
43 center is located within the regionally identified Town Center Future Land Use Planning Area. She used
44 the site plan prepared by Berlin to highlight and discuss how the proposal relates to Regional Plan
45 policies. At a regional level, CVRPC is recognizing the benefits to the town, understanding how state

1 designation benefits would apply to new development, and considering how this new development
2 complements existing use and what future impacts might be on regional transportation network.

3
4 The floor was opened to questions. There was question why the housing behind the hospital is not
5 included in the Town Center. Saxton advised Woodridge Nursing facility is not part of Town Center due
6 to the boundary being drawn along the power line.

7
8 There was a request to discuss the proposed municipal use building and what the Town is thinking about
9 doing with such a structure. Tom advised that the Berlin Town Administration currently shares space
10 with the Police Department and Town Highway Garage. He noted they have requested a planning grant
11 to look at potential needs. However, he envisions that the Police Department may go into a new
12 municipal facility first, with potential for Town Administration going into a facility the future.

13
14 It was questioned whether there would be restrictions on future development if the designation plan is
15 approved. Saxton advised a requirement of the Town Center designation process is to come up with a
16 conceptual Master Plan to demonstrate the area being proposed for designation could be developed in
17 a manner that meets the state's criteria. She noted they've worked closely with the mall and hospital
18 who also are engaged in their own master planning processes. There may be some regulatory
19 implications with regard to the plan as the Town needs to adopt an official map to show a basic road
20 network which will become a regulatory document so that when there is development it needs to be in
21 alignment with the official map or parties would need to come to a mutually beneficial arrangement.

22
23 A question was raised as to why the hospital was included in the plan rather than the school and other
24 adjoining property. Saxton advised the hospital was included as a result of Town's conversations with
25 the state. Since the hospital is a major anchor of the area, it was felt walkability to the hospital side of
26 Fisher Road was important. She noted the hospital is very interested in seeing housing come to this area
27 to help it attract and retain staff. They did not go towards school and other lands on Paine Turnpike due
28 to natural resources constraints, which would have impacted necessary connectivity.

29
30 Hill-Eubanks thanked Berlin and advised Commissioners to send additional comments to Waninger.

31 32 **Legislative Update**

33 Waninger advised that the Act 250 bill, which was much reduced from original form, was vetoed by
34 Governor. He carried forward a piece of the bill related to trails by executive order.

35 36 **Regional Plan Amendment**

37 Hill-Eubanks advised this was the second of two public hearings to consider public comments on the
38 proposed amendments to the 2016 Central Vermont Regional Plan, 2020 Draft Amendment.

39
40 *R. Wernecke moved to open the public hearing; D. La Haye seconded. Motion carried.*

41
42 Opened to comments from public and/or the Board. No comments received.

43
44 *R. Wernecke moved to close the public hearing; R. Turner seconded. Motion carried.*

1 *R. Wernecke moved to approve the amendments; seconded by J. Potter. Waninger asked for clarification*
2 *if the motion was to adopt; which Wernecke confirmed. Motion carried.*

3
4 **Meeting Minutes – September 8, 2020**

5 *R. Wernecke moved to approve the minutes of September 8; R. Krauth seconded. Motion carried.*
6

7 **Reports**

8 Waninger advised there is a proposal to modify public transit in the Montpelier area from fixed route
9 service to micro-transit, which is an on-demand service. She noted the final public hearing is tomorrow
10 at 4:00 pm should any members wish to participate. She advised that Northfield has a new Economic
11 Development Director, who recently participated in a training hosted by CVRPC staff. There is also a
12 new Economic Development Director at Barre Area Development Corporation who CVRPC will be
13 meeting with soon. Kudos was provided to Ashley Andrews who has been, in addition to other work,
14 completing field work with three planning technicians. This field work has consisted of bridge and
15 culvert inventories, road erosion inventories, Wi-Fi assessments, bus stop inventories, and an ash tree
16 inventory. She advised the Board that Ashley is also our contact for transportation should communities
17 need any assistance, and that she has been doing a wonderful job.
18

19 A question was raised on micro-transit regarding what would happen if someone from out of town came
20 into town on a bus thinking they could take a connecting bus to the hospital, how would they know they
21 needed to use the micro-transit instead. Waninger advised the bus shelters will still be available and
22 have notices with information on the number to call or application to download in order to use on-
23 demand service; and/or they may keep the hospital as a fixed route.
24

25 There was also question as to where to access information on the WiFi Hotspots. Waninger advised that
26 map is available on the Public Service Department (PSD) website and that our Planning Technician has
27 been testing those spots in each town to provide information on how effective the access is; which will
28 be added to the map on the PSD website.
29

30 There was an inquiry as to if there was more to the legislative update. Waninger noted S-235, which
31 started as a housing bill, passed in a much more restricted form. It allows towns to regulate short-term
32 rentals, and also includes pieces about mobile home park infrastructure.
33

34 She also noted that from a budget perspective, the appropriations bill for RPC's was level funded, which
35 we consider a positive in the tight fiscal environment. The Legislature saw the value of what RPCs do
36 and the assistance they can provide municipalities during COVID, such as our involvement with the Local
37 Governmental Expense Reimbursement program.
38

39 **Adjournment**

40 *D. La Haye moved to adjourn at 8:07 pm; R. Wernecke seconded. Motion carried.*
41

42 Respectfully submitted,
43

44 Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

P: 802-229-0389

Staff Report, October 2020

F: 802-223-1977

All CVRPC staff continue to work remotely per the Governor's order to continue procedures to support work from home and telecommuting for all workers to the extent possible. (Addendum 12 to Executive Order 01-20)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Contact Clare Rock, rock@cvregion.com, or Zach Maia, maia@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Municipal Planning & Plan Implementation:

- Completed draft Town Plan maps for Worcester.
- Reviewed Barre City Plan for approval and planning process confirmation.
- Continued development of municipal energy data template utilizing Efficiency Vermont reports.
- Coordinated Town Plan public engagement activities, process, and schedule with Woodbury Planning Commission.
- Review Roxbury's Draft Municipal Plan and discussed comments at Planning Commission meeting.
- Researched Berlin's New Town Center and conducted conformance review ahead of Board of Commissioners presentation to provide regional perspective.
- Discussed Berlin New Town Center designation plans with multiple parties to understand perspectives on strengths and apprehensions. Held post-Commission meeting debrief with Assistant Town Administrator.
- Prepared draft scope of work for Middlesex zoning update, discussed with Planning Commission Chair, and met with Planning Commission.
- Assisted Cabot with an EPA/USDA Local Food Local Places grant application. If awarded, Cabot will develop strategies to promote local food and revitalization of its Designated Village Center.

Training & Education:

- Presented a regional "Step Up to Button Up" event with Efficiency Vermont's Button Up Campaign.

Regional Planning and Implementation:

- Reviewed Act 250 application for regional impact to Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor and convened Project Review Committee meeting.
- Kick off for 4-region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy scheduled. Initiated discussions with economic partners regarding project.
- Submitted 2020 EPA brownfields grant application.

Partnerships for Progress:

Working Communities Challenge: Facilitated team meeting to prepare for the implementation grant interview. Participated in the interview. Interviewed by Vermont Business Magazine about effort and referred writer to partners for follow up interviews.

Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC): Participated in Board meeting.

THRIVE – Assisted THRIVE working group to develop leadership partner survey; facilitated workgroup meeting. Invited to participate as leadership partner.

Capstone Community Action: Discussed transportation grant with Capstone Community Action Director. Capstone is pursuing purchase of electric vehicles as a car share fleet for low income residents.

Washington County Hunger Council: Chaired Council meetings. Met with the State Hunger Council to talk about child nutrition and food access.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HAZARD MITIGATION

Contact Grace Vinson, vinson@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Local/Regional Planning:

- Attended monthly VEM/RPC meeting.
- Attended State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) meeting on Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) consolidation and realignment.
- Held call with Innovative Emergency Management (IEM), which is a State consultant performing a gap and needs assessment as part of transitioning from regional LEPCs to one statewide LEPC.
- Participated in Water Wise Woodland Phase II kickoff meeting. Supported by the High Meadows Fund, CVRPC initiated this 3-town effort to develop connections between woodland management in the upper Winooski watershed and flood resilience in 2017. The Friends of the Winooski River are continuing the effort, with CVRPC now acting as a project participant.
- Consulted with Plainfield about potential grant application for Brook Road bridge replacement.
- Provided information to Cabot Emergency Management Director about town office closure best practice language.
- Participated in Lake Champlain Basin Program webinar about US Army Corps of Engineers technical assistance program. Reached out to municipalities that may benefit from the program.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP): Staff supported communities in the development, review, and adoption of local hazard mitigation plans.

Calais – Hosted kick off meeting, planning meeting #2 for November.

Montpelier – Planning Committee adopted by City Council.

Plainfield – Received final FEMA approval. Congratulations!

Washington – Developed timeline to finalize plan; moving forward with final changes and updates to municipal actions.

Williamstown – VEM issued Approval Pending Adoption. Adoption by the Selectboard in progress.

COVID-19 Response & Recovery:

- Participated in State Emergency Operation Center and Health Operation Center meetings to maintain situational awareness regarding response and recovery needs/actions:
- Acted as statewide RPC lead for Local Government Expense Reimbursement (LGER) program assistance to municipalities. Held bi-weekly telephone consultations with the Dept. of Taxes. Hosted RPC monthly meeting, including training RPCs on storytelling in advance of fulfilling reporting requirements to convey the program's value. Researched and responded to questions from RPCs and Central VT applicants. Provided LGER services to Central Vermont units of local government. Contacted multiple municipalities about funding new public WiFi hotspots via LGER.
- Participated in Montpelier Homelessness Task Force meeting to discuss hygienic facilities inventory.

TRANSPORTATION

Contact Ashley Andrews, andrews@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Field Services: Contact Ashley Andrews, Andrews@cvregion.com, for 2020 counts and inventories.

- Completed road erosion inventory field work in Duxbury and drafted a report for the Town.
- Continuing road erosion inventory field work for Moretown and Plainfield.
- Completed the October park and ride survey for VTrans.
- Continued bridge and culvert assessment in Roxbury.
- Continued inventory of Central Vermont transit bus stop facilities.

Transportation Studies:

Transportation Resilience Planning Tool: Met with VTrans to discuss upcoming effort to implement the tool statewide. VTrans requested CVRPC act as statewide RPC lead for the effort. Kudos to former staff member Dan Carrier, and current Senior Planner Pam DeAndrea for their work! Dan participated on the VTrans advisory committee when the tool was developed and piloted. Pam implemented TRPT in the Stevens Branch watershed. VTrans cited her skills and knowledge as one of the primary reasons CVRPC was asked to serve as statewide lead.

State Freight and Rail Plans: Participated in public meeting.

Public Transit: CVRPC represents Central Vermont on the Green Mountain Transit (GMT) Board of Commissioners. Staff participated in the following GMT meetings:

Board of Commissioners – See Committee updates.

Leadership Committee – Approved Board agenda. Discussed bus advertising policy update; GMT received complaints related to political ads. Ads were in compliance with GMT policy, but may not have complied with State law. Complainants were directed to the appropriate party to register complaints.

Operations Committee – Reviewed performance dashboard and trend analysis. Provided comment on proposed time off policy revisions. Policy will eliminate current Combined Time Off and return to Paid Time Off (sick, personal, and vacation time buckets). Policy will adjust to “use or lose” to encourage employees to refresh. Heard overview of Public Transit Agency Safety Plan requirements. The plan approaches safety proactively and provides employees more of a voice in occupational safety.

GMT Board of Commissioners Chair Role Activities:

- Participated in briefing meetings with the General Manager about a variety of topics and events. GMT is experiencing an increase in grievances, which is usual in the year prior to negotiation of Collective Bargaining Agreements.
- Held orientation with new Burlington Alternate Commissioner.

Municipal Assistance:

- Summarized community survey results for the Plainfield Route 2/Main Street intersection project and discussed them with the Selectboard. Based on resident feedback, the Selectboard voted to endorse the design to substantially reconstruct the intersection.
- Discussed Calais and Woodbury potential pop up bicycle and pedestrian projects with Local Motion.
- Participated in VTrans Transportation Alternatives grant workshop to prepare for municipal assistance.
- Responded to questions from multiple municipalities about the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Met with Berlin Selectboard to discuss road erosion inventory report and the Grants in Aid program.

- Provided information to Warren about laws pertaining to road ownership.
- Provided hydrologically connect road segment map to East Montpelier.
- Participated in Northfield Ridge and River Routes project meeting.

Grants In Aid:

- Reviewed invoices and for answered questions from multiple towns about Grants in Aid program.
- Completed post-construction site visits in Calais, East Montpelier, Marshfield, Montpelier, Moretown, Northfield, Roxbury, and Waterbury.
- Completed pre-construction site visits in Waterbury.
- Sent FY21 equipment grant letters to municipalities.
- Updated select municipalities about overdue MRGP fees and reports, which will prevent the municipalities from being reimbursed for Grants in Aid work.

Regional Activities:

- Participated in the Mad River Transportation Advisory Committee meeting.
- Participated in the TPI monthly meeting
- Participated in the Northfield RRR Steering Committee Meeting with SE Group
- Participated in the VTrans Rail and Freight Plan Public Hearing
- Participated in VTrans VPSP2 implementation briefing for RPCs. VPSP2 is VTrans' Project Selection & Prioritization Processes update. The new process is designed to be asset-centric using different criteria and different weights for similar criteria to focus on making the right investment at the right time. It also provided municipalities with opportunities to move a project on to the Capital Program.
- Reviewed VTrans New Project Summary for Barre Town - Orange STP PS23(1).
- Participated in three GMT public hearings related to transition of fixed route service in the greater Montpelier area to on demand service. ~5-8 participants per hearing expressed support for the concept and asked questions about transitions and operation.
- Participated in GMT annual funding meeting with Warren and Northfield Selectboards.
- Facilitated quarterly meeting of the Regional Elders and Persons with Disability Advisory Committee (REDPAC). REDPAC distributes and monitors regional E&D funding. For FFY21, VTrans requested these statewide regional committees engage a broader audience to focus on regional mobility needs. Developed draft Quick Guide to the REDPAC for use in recruiting new participants and a draft Ride Guide for potential E&D services users.
- Initiated work on a Central Vermont mobility study to support the REDPAC's work. Phase I of the project examines data related to transit-dependent populations, provides maps to visualize mobility information, and gathers information about existing mobility actions and needs.
- Initiated research on school participation for Way To Go activities (<https://www.waytogovt.org/>).
- Held call with VTrans about major collectors classification.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Contact Pam DeAndrea, deandrea@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Tactical Basin Planning Assistance:

- Continued project development with Winooski Basin Planner, Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District, Friends of the Winooski River, and the Friends of the Mad River for Winooski River Basin projects.

- Coordinated with CCRPC and drafted scope of work and budget for Tactical Basin Planning for FY21.
- Submitted grant application to Lake Champlain Basin Program for a 30% stormwater design at the Vermont Shopping Center in Berlin (Big Lots mall) to address 3-acre general stormwater permit requirements.

Design Implementation Block Grant Program (DIBG, formerly Clean Water Block Grant Program):

Woodbury Stormwater Mitigation Final Designs – D&K continued necessary field work and data collection to complete the hydrologic modeling for the engineering designs. D&K continued to work on alternative treatment options for the Church Street and Post Office sites given design constraints; Church St site has shallow bedrock and alternative site may be needed. Final designs anticipated by spring 2021.

Calais Stormwater Mitigation Final Designs – Milone and MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) continued necessary field work and data collection to complete the hydrologic modeling for the engineering designs. The designs will entail an underground infiltration system at the East Calais Post Office, an infiltration basin along Moscow Woods Rd., and the stabilization of the gully. Designs to be complete by the fall 2021.

Berlin Town Office Stormwater Implementation – Executive Committee approved signature of contracts between CVRPC and Berlin and CVRPC and SWCRPC. Engineer provided Berlin with contracting materials for the construction company Dale Percy, Inc. Construction will commence in spring/summer 2021 and project completion is November 2021.

Moretown Elementary School Stormwater Final Design: This project will develop a final design for stormwater treatment at the Moretown Elementary School and Town Office. Watershed Consulting Associates (WCA) began the 60% designs based on data collected during site characterizations. The main treatment proposed is a gravel wetland along with improvements around the school to move stormwater away from the school. Stormwater contributes to flooding in classrooms. Final design is expected to be complete in June 2021.

Act 76 Advisory Committee: Participated in 1+ Act 76 Advisory Committee meetings. Prospective CWSPs met to review pre-final draft Rule and develop comments. Addressing conflict of interest continued to be a challenge as the Legislature assigned Basin Water Quality Council seats to parties that will also propose projects (have a financial interest). The final outcome of the Rule may necessitate a change to CVRPC's conflict of interest policy. Discussed the proposed draft Rule with the Clean Water Advisory Committee and carried CWAC comments to the next Advisory Committee meeting.

OFFICE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Contact Nancy Chartrand, chartrand@cvregion.com.

Office:

- Hosted Cody Morrison, new Barre Area Development Corporation Executive Director, at a staff meeting to hear about their initiatives and discuss how CVRPC could assist.
- Conducted research into health plan coverage as it relates to the State of Vermont, municipalities in the region, and area non-profits.
- Initiated the Health Plan renewal process for CY21.
- Provided Windham Regional Commission new finance staff with a "tour" of CVRPC's financial system and exchanged information about system set up.
- Continued preparing for annual audit. For FY20, documentation of COVID-related events that affected the organization's policies and practices is highly encouraged.
- Compiled RPC fringe benefit survey.

Professional Development/Leadership:

- Clare and Zach attended a two-day AARP Winter Placemaking workshop focused on how to engage community members during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pam reviewed FEMA interpreting FEMA flood maps for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements for communities as part of her Certified Floodplain Manager continuing education.
- Bonnie participated in the National Association of Development Organization's annual training. Sessions on workforce development and JDEI (Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) engaging. Implementing changes to hiring practices to focus on assessing core competencies rather than skills/experiences. Will be initiating conversation with Executive Committee about how CVRPC might approach increasing its JDEI literacy.
- Grace, Pam, and Bonnie participated in WebEOC training. WebEOC is the State of Vermont's new disaster management software. All staff who provide staffing to the State Emergency Operations Center are required to be trained on the new software.
- Ashley participated in the Vermont Community Leadership Network Building and Supporting Local Food Solutions webinar.

Upcoming Meetings:

All CVRPC meetings currently are being held as virtual meetings. Meeting access information is provided on agendas at www.centralvtplanning.org. For non-CVRPC meetings, please visit websites for host organizations.

November

Nov 10	6:30 pm	Board of Commissioners
Nov 11		<i>Veterans Day Holiday, CVRPC Office closed</i>
Nov 12	4 pm	Clean Water Advisory Committee
Nov 16	6:30 pm	Local Emergency Planning Committee 5
TBD	4 pm	Project Review Committee
Nov 24	6:30 pm	Transportation Advisory Committee
Nov 26 & 27		<i>Thanksgiving Holiday, CVRPC Office closed</i>

December

Dec 7	4 pm	Executive Committee
Dec 10	4 pm	Clean Water Advisory Committee
Dec 15	6:30 pm	Board of Commissioners
TBD	4 pm	Project Review Committee
Dec 22	6:30 pm	Transportation Advisory Committee
Dec 25		<i>Christmas Holiday, CVRPC Office closed</i>

Visit CVRPC's web site at www.centralvtplanning.org to view our blog and for the latest planning publications and news.

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
Committee & Appointed Representative Reports
October 2020

Meeting minutes for CVRPC Committees are available at www.centralvtplanning.org.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Monday of week prior to Commission meeting; 4pm)

- Authorized signature of Department of Public Safety Emergency Management Performance Grant Advance Notice to Proceed and Emergency Management Performance Grant 2020 agreement.
- Discussed Vermont Mask Survey presented by Amy Hornblas and agreed to include presentation and discussion on December Board agenda.
- Recommended approval of the Rules of Procedure for Clean Water Advisory Committee as edited and for Transportation Advisory Committee as edited to the Board.
- Discussed potential need to set up subcommittee for Bylaws review and revision to be discussed at next Executive Committee meeting.
- Discussed health insurance recommendations and approved to maintain employer health insurance contribution as 100% of the cost of the MVP Gold HDHP Health Plan for employees and family members; maintain employee choice of available plans to include all BCBSVT and MVP health care plans; and maintain 50% payment in lieu of benefit for employees who opt out of CVRPC coverage and provide proof of coverage from another provider.
- Recommended an FY22 municipal dues assessment rate of \$1.28 per capita to the Board.
- Discussed an Act 250 minor application in Waterbury for a nine lot residential subdivision that may impact the Shutesville Wildlife Corridor. The Project Review Committee requested an extension from the District Commission as the project may have substantial regional impact.

PERSONNEL POLICY COMMITTEE (A sub-committee of the Executive Committee)

Meetings on hold due to COVID.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (February and March; scheduled by Committee)

Did not meet.

PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE (4th Thursday, 4pm)

Reviewed Act 250 Application 5W1206-5. The proposed project is a 9-lot subdivision in northeast Waterbury. It consists of construction on 6 lots for residential development. The Committee believes this development may constitute a Significant Regional Impact based on impact to a regional resource, the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor. It direct staff to request an extension of the comment deadline to allow for the project applicants to meet with the Committee so the Committee could make a determination on Significant Regional Impact. The next Committee meeting is November 19th at 4:00 pm.

REGIONAL PLAN COMMITTEE (as needed; scheduled by Committee)

Did not meet.

MUNICIPAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE (as needed; scheduled by Committee)

Held hearing for the Barre City Municipal Plan. Recommended Board approval of the Municipal Plan and confirmation of the City's planning process.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (4th Tuesday; 6:30 pm)

- Approved updated Committee Rules of Procedure to bring them into conformance with new bylaws.
- Recommended the Board revise the bylaws to remove the language that allows the TAC to approve outside groups as voting members. If bylaws are not updated, requested the Board develop criteria TAC can use to decide which groups should become TAC members.
- Heard staff and municipal presentation on the Plainfield Route 2/Main Street intersection project.

CLEAN WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2nd Thursday, 4pm)

- Discussed the Agency of Natural Resources' draft Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) and provided comments. CVRPC is proposed to be the CWSP for the Winooski Basin.
- Approved updates to the Committee Rules of Procedure that move watershed organizations and ANR representative from members to an advisory capacity.

VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Next meeting is November 5th.

VERMONT ECONOMIC PROGRESS COUNCIL

No activities from Central Vermont.

GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT

- Adjusted membership of the Retirement Committee to add additional rural steward.
- Awarded a 5-year architectural and engineering services contract to Wiemann-Lamphere with a maximum contract value of \$250,000.
- Approved proceeding with the current service design for microtransit (on demand) service in the Montpelier area based on public feedback.
- Heard presentation about changes to the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) contract. Vermont Public Transit Association is the contractor. VPTA sub-contracts to local public transit agencies. VPTA members agreed on a reimbursement model that minimizes risk for all sub-contractors. Prior to this model, there could be "winners" (costs covered) and "losers" (costs not covered) based on NEMT use within a region because the State reimburses on a Per Member Per Week model. The State NEMT payments are equal regardless of the number of times a member uses transit services. "Superusers", such as individuals in dialysis, cancer, or methadone treatment, ride multiple times per week.
- Held Executive Session regarding possible arbitration/mediation.

MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT

- Extensive discussion of Act 164, Retail Cannabis.

- Reviewed draft FY22 budget and workplan. The District's fiscal year begins March 1, and it is preparing its municipal dues request.
- Finalized plans for 2020 Town Leadership meeting. Working through clarify regarding role of the public and opportunity for participation in leadership discussions. Anticipating in-person participation by towns and staff and virtual participation by other Steering Committee members and the public.
- Discussed potential of Uber/Lyft or similar service to replace Valley Evening Service. Valley Evening Service is operated by GMT and service may be suspended in for the 2021 ski season due to COVID>
- Receive update on MRV Community Dashboard project. Project shifting from setting specific indicator goals to a focus on a shared data platform and communication.
- Sugarbush Update: Alterra is developing a COVID Winter Guide Book for resort to follow in addition to state guidelines. Statewide ski area winter plan guidance should be released shortly. Lincoln Peak to open November 21. Mt. Ellen will open December 18 (weather dependent).

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

FY 2020 Annual Report

Founded in 1967, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) leverages the power of people working together to assist its 23 member municipalities in providing effective local government and to work cooperatively to address regional issues. CVRPC is governed by representatives from the 20 municipalities of Washington County and Orange, Washington, and Williamstown in Orange County. Each legislative body selects a representative to the Commission.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont's municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education, enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Assisted East Montpelier and Middlesex to secure Village Center Designations, providing property owners with access to resources and incentives for building investments.
- Hosted 3 municipal trainings on community engagement during COVID-19, Zoning Administrator Best Practices, COVID Conundrums, Statute Updates, and State Permit Review.
- Supported Town Plan updates for Plainfield, Barre Town, Barre City, Northfield, Fayston, and Washington through feedback on draft documents, information on flood resiliency, energy planning, forest integrity, and/or mapping to support forest integrity.
- Provided substantial grant writing assistance to Middlesex and Woodbury and coached Berlin, Montpelier, and Worcester on grant applications. The applications supported local actions ranging from municipal plan development, to New Town Center planning and regional collaboration on trail development and maintenance.
- Evaluated constraints and opportunities for developing a non-motorized trail network linking Cabot's State-designated village center to regional trail networks and recreation amenities.
- Assisted Waterbury to develop National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System trainings and updated its river corridor map.
- Coordinated a committee of forestry and natural resource professionals to guide the creation of a Forest Economy Survey. The results are being used to develop a municipal guide outlining strategies for supporting the wood products industry.

REGIONAL PLANNING

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

In FY20, CVRPC initiated a Regional Plan update, focusing on the Plan's Safe and Affordable Housing element. CVRPC presented data it gathered for the Plan to a Regional Housing Summit Planning Committee, which CVRPC facilitated at the request of the Montpelier Housing Task Force. CVRPC also conducted a survey of Regional Housing Partners to update the Central Vermont Housing Resource Guide. Planning for the Summit has paused due to COVID-19.

CVRPC also focused on plan implementation. A sampling of activities includes:

- Fostering regional activities, such as identifying collaborate overlap for childcare advancement with Let's Grow Kids and the Mayor of Montpelier.
- Engaging the development community in discussions of in-development projects prior to Act 250 application submission. These exchanges offer the development community early insights into CVRPC's project review comments and areas of support.
- Conducting a collaborative transportation planning project with municipalities in the Stevens Branch Watershed. This project collected past transportation infrastructure damage data and used VTrans' GIS-based Transportation Resilience Planning Tool to identify flood vulnerabilities and risks. Municipalities use resulting information to plan upgrades that make roads and structures more resilient.
- Supporting the Friends of Winooski to secure funding to continue *Water Wise Woodlands*. This effort among Cabot, Marshfield, and Plainfield was initiated by CVRPC in 2017. It links forest integrity, private forest stewardship, and watershed resilience. Building flood resilience through a forested upper watershed requires incentives, supportive programs, and fostering informal, neighbor-to-neighbor learning among woodland owners and technical experts.

BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic 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.

In FY20, CVRPC did not have an active brownfields assessment grant. However, it continued to invest staff resources to work with owners and prospective developers:

- **Granite Works, Montpelier:** Hosted a meeting for parties to discuss Corrective Action planning and remediation.
- **East Calais General Store, Calais:** Consulted with a newly established, volunteer non-profit organization - East Calais Community Trust - on the brownfields assessment process in preparation for property acquisition to ensure continued operation.
- **Union Elementary School, Montpelier:** Attended the playground ribbon cutting, celebrating a successful brownfield redevelopment effort that fosters healthy play for children.
- **Granite Shed, Barre:** Consulted with Barre Area Development Corporation (BADC) regarding assistance to a business that experienced a devastating fire. BADC requested CVRPC organize a resource provider meeting to strengthen the business owner's understanding of post-fire requirements and prospective support available for business recovery.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long term economic gain.

- Facilitated Route 12 wastewater extension prospective funders meeting to identify and coordinate resources among State agencies, the Town of Berlin and City of Montpelier, Green Mountain Transit, Weston Mobile Home Park, and private properties.
- Provided grant writing coaching and application comments for Duxbury's broadband innovation grant application.
- Successfully coordinated with RPCs and RDCs in three other regions to win a US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to create Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the West-Central Vermont region. CEDS development unlocks federal EDA investments for infrastructure development, job creation, and revolving loan funds.
- Assisted the nascent East Calais Community Trust to navigate the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant application process successfully. The Trust will purchase the East Calais Community Store to ensure its continued operation.
- Completed a mobile cellular service inventory by service carrier for all drivable roads in Central Vermont. Detailed coverage maps will aid municipalities in making informed planning decisions, particularly regarding communications-dependent projects or initiatives.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contract with the VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont's transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state's transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement.

Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

- Held 10 Transportation Advisory Committee meetings.
- Actively engaged 5 non-municipal TAC members in transportation planning.
- Actively engaged 23 municipalities in transportation planning.
- Coordinated 6 activities with municipalities and VTrans.

Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Maintained a current regional transportation plans (within 8 years).
- Reviewed Act 250 applications; no comments required relating to transportation.
- Reviewed Section 248 applications; no comments required relating to transportation.
- Coordinated 9 activities in support of regional public transit providers.
- Participated in 3 VTrans committees.
- Participated in State Project Prioritization.

Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- Assisted 10 municipalities with transportation related grants.
- Invested 32% of transportation budget on municipal technical assistance.
- Conducted 10 municipal transportation inventories.
- Completed 1 municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition study.
- Assisted 1 municipality with the transportation element of its municipal plan.
- Completed 11 road erosion inventories in support of the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Partnered with the Cabot Trail Committee to develop a Trails Master Plan and Implementation Program.

Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long Range Transportation Plans

- Conducted 43 data collection activities specifically for VTrans (traffic counts, park and ride surveys, pedestrian counts, etc.).

Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

- Facilitated the Local Action for Transportation Transformation roundtable for local energy committees with VECAN and VCRD to capitalize on interest in transforming Vermont's transportation energy profile. Fostered actions community volunteers could take to change transportation energy use. Created a brochure entitled *Green(er) Transportation: Energy-Lowering Opportunities and Incentives in Central Vermont*.
- Facilitated the Regional Elderly and Disabled Persons Advisory Committee meetings to project transportation use and needs and discuss service and rider engagement strategies; addressed COVID response and planning and surveyed older adults and people with disabilities about transit ridership satisfaction.

Highlights

- Supported COVID-19 safety for individuals experiencing homelessness by identifying transportation resources that could be used to transition homeless shelter residents to hotel facilities and transportation resources the shelter could use during the pandemic. Coordination with Green Mountain Transit was critical to success.
- Supported expansion of The Hitching Post, a volunteer rideshare effort, throughout Central Vermont. Coached its creator about working with municipalities and identified grant sources to develop a "User's Guide to the Hitching Post" and for system expansion activities.
- Supported 20 municipalities with implementation of Best Management Practices for the Municipal Grant in Aid program.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCY

RPCs play key roles in the preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, Department of Public Safety, VTrans, the Agency of Natural Resources, and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the LEPCs and coordination among responders, municipal officials, and planners throughout the State's four Public Safety Districts. RPCs also help update floodplain bylaws, river corridor regulations, and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans. RPCs coordinate

updates to municipal emergency plans and assist as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other federally and non-federally declared disasters. The RPCs are a source of technical support and information and provide coordination and collaboration for trainings, workshops and seminars, often in conjunction with partners.

- Hosted an Emergency Management Director (EMD) roundtable to foster understanding of resource coordination and promote collaboration and coordination.
- Assisted 23 municipalities with development of Local Emergency Management Plans.
- Assisted 6 towns with Local Hazard Mitigation Plan development or approval, providing substantial assistance to 5 towns. 20 of the region's 23 municipalities (87%) have a FEMA-approved plan.
- Provided administrative assistance and fiscal agent services to LEPC 5.
- Assisted EPA in advertising and hosting a Tier II EPCRA workshop, resulting in 89 registrants.
- Developed a Local Emergency Management Plan sharing agreement to facilitate information sharing among municipalities.
- Represented RPCs on the VT Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application review committee.
- Provided State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) support by contacting towns to ascertain damages and by acting as supplemental staff to the SEOC Situational Awareness Unit.
- Participated in the Twin Cities (Barre-Montpelier) public safety communication funding crosswalk meetings to advise the team on grants and creating a competitive application.
- Supported municipal COVID-19 situational awareness by creating regular digests of local, state, and federal information and resources and a CVRPC COVID-19 webpage.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC's work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of its projects.

- Produced custom maps for Berlin, East Montpelier, Fayston, Montpelier, and Orange.
- Updated municipal plan maps in Barre Town, Duxbury, Plainfield, Washington, and Worcester and zoning maps in East Montpelier and Montpelier.
- Updated web maps for Middlesex and Orange to facilitate information access by the public.
- Assisted 2 nonprofit partners with custom maps or GIS services (creating a region-wide conservation map and creating an online web map).
- Trained Cabot in QGIS to help it manage GIS parcel data.
- Provided childcare maps for school district utilization.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation, and natural resources efforts. RPCs also work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- Supported local energy committees implementing events related to Efficiency Vermont's Button-Up campaign, including a regional presentation.

- Finalized draft Enhanced Energy Plans for Middlesex, Moretown, Plainfield, Waitsfield, and Woodbury. Once adopted, the municipalities can obtain substantial deference in the Certificate of Public Good process and define preferred sites.
- Facilitated quarterly Energy Committee Roundtables to provide networking and professional development opportunities.
- Commented on municipal enhanced energy planning drafts for Barre City, Barre Town, and Plainfield to strengthen compliance with the State's energy planning standards.
- Convened local public transit champions, transit agencies, and other stakeholders to plan a weeklong campaign promoting public transit in the region (postponed due to COVID-19).

WATERSHED PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to design and implement stormwater mitigation projects and implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Advanced Vermont's effort to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Champlain via the Winooski River Basin by:
 - Completing stormwater mitigation final designs for three sites in Berlin and one in Plainfield.
 - Initiating final stormwater designs for four sites in Woodbury and two in Calais.
 - Completing stormwater mitigation construction projects in Barre City and Northfield. Both projects substantially decreased sediment and phosphorus loading.
 - Engaging municipalities in public-private partnership work for complying with the new 3-acre stormwater regulation.
- Facilitated monthly Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) meetings to provide an educational forum and a working group for basin planning and other water quality initiatives.
- Developed an online web map to depict stream monitoring locations and water quality results for Friends of the Winooski River. The tool is enhancing public knowledge of water quality in the Winooski watershed.
- Engaged municipalities in the development of the Stevens-Wells-Waits-Ompompanoosuc (Basin 14) Tactical Basin Plan.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Food Access Map: The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Food Access Map was awarded a 2020 Special Achievement in GIS (SAG). The SAG award is given annually to a limited number of ESRI's GIS clients around the world to recognize outstanding work with Geography Systems Technology (GIS) technology in a field of over 100,000 organizations. The map helped the Hunger Council of Washington County visualize food access in relation to various factors like bus routes, locations of jobs, and types of food available in various stores. The interactive map tool allows the Council to layer these variables in different groupings to help it strategize solutions for increasing access to healthy foods. The map is available at <http://map.ccrpcvt.org/foodretailaccess/>.

Workforce Development System Change: CVRPC facilitated a multi-sector initiative among social service organizations, economic development entities, education representatives, and businesses. The team is developing an action plan that transitions Central Vermont's workforce development system into a nimble system that works seamlessly to achieve economic stability and improved quality of life for single moms for the mutual benefit of businesses, communities, and future generations. The team's goal is to have 15% fewer single moms living below the federal poverty level by 2030.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The FY20 CVRPC budget was approximately \$1.5 million. Revenue sources included state and federal performance contracts, grants, and local assessments. Virtually all of the CVRPC's revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines, and/or performance measures. This means CVRPC has limited flexibility in how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through municipal assessments is the exception, which makes this funding stream particularly important. It gives us the greatest latitude to respond to the region's needs. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires non-federal matching funds ranging from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant). Municipal assessments and regional planning funds passed through to CVRPC under a performance grant with the Department of Housing and Community Development provide matching funds.

CVRPC maintained its line of credit in 2020 due to a prevalence of product-based and construction contracts. It maintains a Board-designated reserve fund, and a four-year plan for equipment and software upgrades and replacement.

CVRPC's annual audit will be completed in fall 2020. CVRPC has had no audit findings in recent years. It is considered a 'low risk' grantee by federal agencies. Staffing in 2020 included 8 employees: Executive Director, Program Manager, Senior Planners (2), Planners (2), Assistant Planner, and an Office Manager. CVRPC supported workforce development through use of a Planning Technician for transportation and planning services. It hosted an AmeriCorps VISTA member focused on poverty alleviation activities. CVRPC contracts for accounting services.

In 2020, CVRPC adopted Rules of Procedure for its Executive Committee, substantially updated its Bylaws, and updated its Internal Controls and Administrative and Financial Procedures.




'AT WORK' MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the CVRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.



Projects

-  Brownfield Assistance
-  Clean Water Activities
-  Enhanced Energy Planning
-  Emergency Planning
-  Grant Writing
-  Economic Development
-  Mapping
-  Planning and Zoning Assistance
-  Road Erosion Inventory
-  Transportation Planning Assistance/
Traffic Count

Designation


-  Designated Downtown
-  Designated Village
-  Growth Center

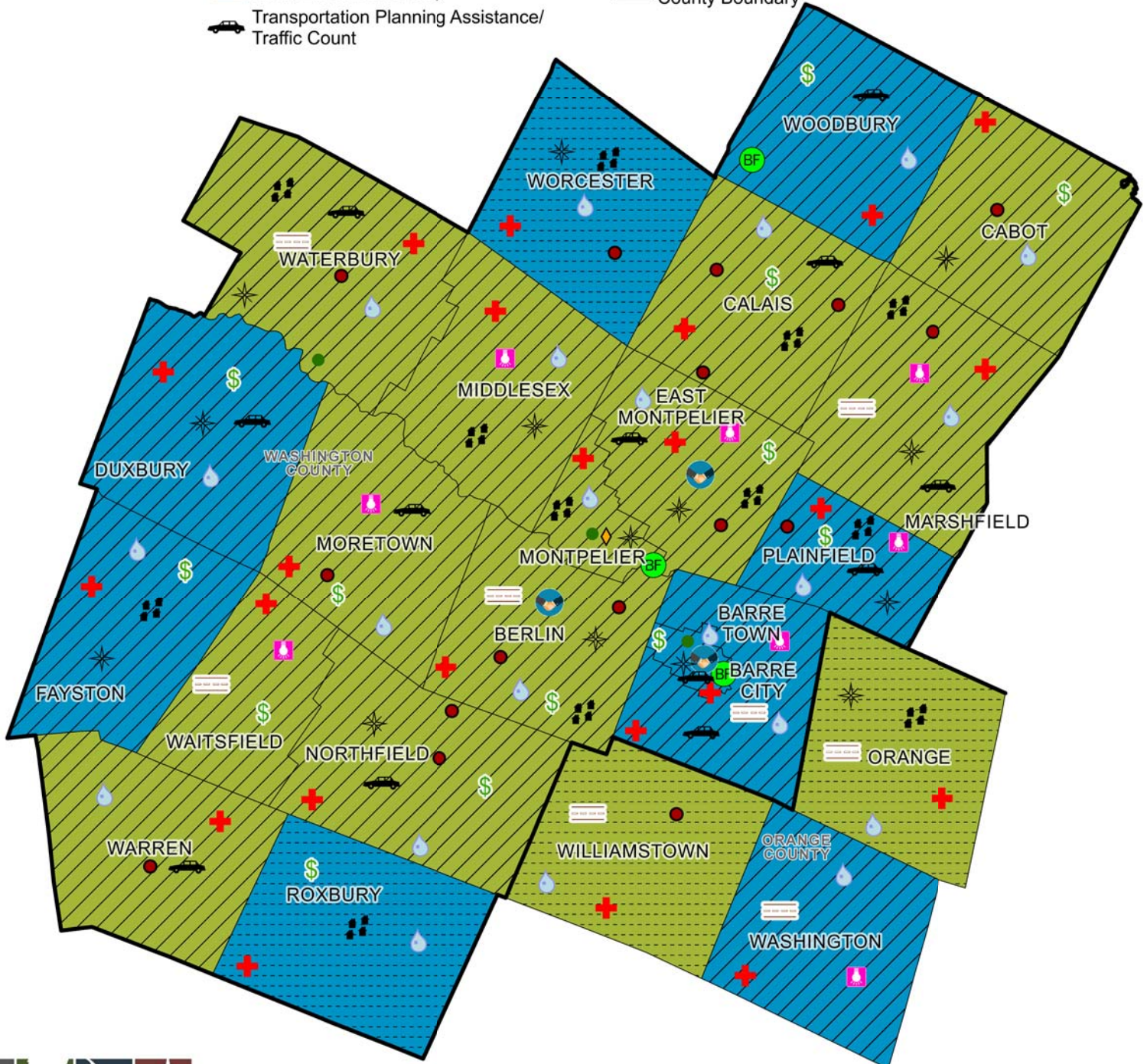
Town Bylaw Status

-  Adopted
-  Flood Only

Town Plan Status

-  Current
-  Expired

 County Boundary



Bonnie Waninger

From: Vermont Planners Association <VPA@list.uvm.edu> on behalf of Alex Weinhausen
<aweinhagen@HINESBURG.ORG>
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2020 4:23 PM
To: VPA@LIST.UVM.EDU
Subject: [VPA] **VPA Legislative Update** - grand finale - 10/15/20

VPA Members,

The Legislature's extended session closed on September 25, and Governor Scott finished up his review of bills on October 12. Law making in 2020 has finally come to a close! Here's what happened on the three planning-related bills that made it to the Governor this fall. Following that, I've updated and revised information from my July 2, 2020 update on the outcome of other bills with a planning nexus – so that you've got it all in one message. The 2019-2020 biennium is over! Any bills that didn't make it across the finish line are dead. Resurrection is possible for some of them, but they will have to be re-introduced and start over in the next session.

For additional perspective, and information on a host of other bills related to municipalities, check out the legislative summaries done by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). They produced two summaries this session. One in July after the Legislature recessed for the summer - <https://www.vlct.org/news/2020-legislative-wrap>. One in on October 9 after the Legislature adjourned - <https://www.vlct.org/news/2020-supplemental-legislative-wrap>.

For more perspective on bills related to planning, check out the upcoming VT Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) legislative summary - <https://acd.vermont.gov/community-development/resources-rules/planning>. This one is isn't ready yet, but will be posted in the coming weeks. DHCD staff are highly involved in the legislative action, and often report on bills with a planning connection that VPA didn't focus on. In other words, I highly recommend checking out their summary when it becomes available.

The Big Three:

H.926 – Act 250 Reform – Vetoed by the Governor on October 5

The House-passed version of this bill was a comprehensive reform package. The Senate stripped this down to a tiny nub that only dealt with a temporary solution for trails jurisdiction and a new review criteria to minimize forest fragmentation. The House agreed to the Senate's stripped down version, but the Governor did not. Looks like Act 250 reform will get a "do over" in the 2021 session. All legislative leaders say this will be a priority, but we won't really know about that until after the Legislature convenes in January. Unclear if the comprehensive version of H.926 will be resurrected, or if there will be a fresh start.

S.237 (Act 179) – Housing Bill – Signed by the Governor on October 12

As passed by the Senate, this bill had some very problematic provisions, including dictates on minimum lot sizes for areas served by municipal water and sewer. These provisions were stripped out of the bill in the House. The Senate agreed to the House version, as did the Governor. The new law (Act 179) took effect when the Governor signed it on October 12. Here's what the law stipulates:

- Accessory dwelling unit allowances expanded. Required provisions for municipal bylaws:
 - Size expansion – must allow ADUs of at least 30% the size of the single-family dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is greater.
 - Review options – must use same review that applies to single-family dwellings – i.e., no more conditional use review in districts where single-family dwellings are a permitted use.
 - Short-term rental differentiation – can regulate short-term rentals distinctly from longer-term residential rentals.

- Existing small lot development expanded. Currently, municipalities can prohibit development on extremely small, existing lots that are less than one-eighth acre or have a lot width or depth dimension less than 40 feet. The bill modifies this provision so that it does not apply to small lots that are served by and able to connect to municipal sewer and water service.
- Conditional use character of the area standard limited for multiunit dwellings of four or less units. Such multiunit dwellings may reviewed as a conditional use, but may not be denied solely due to an undue adverse effect on the character of the area.
- Municipalities granted authority to regulate short-term rentals by means of an ordinance or bylaw. Definition of short-term rental includes, "... rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year."
- Invalidates deed restrictions, covenants, or similar HOA-style restrictions created after January 1, 2021 that prohibit land development allowed under a municipality's bylaws. In other words, for new developments, no more restrictions on accessory apartments, home occupations, and other types of land development that a municipality's zoning bylaws allow. Such restrictions in existing developments will remain unaffected.
- Loan restructuring, forgiveness, and assistance from the Department of Environmental Conservation for the Town of Brattleboro and the Tri-Park Cooperative mobile home park. Also, authorizes the State Treasurer to provide financing for mobile home park infrastructure projects.

Municipal planners and regulators should take notice of the first three items – e.g., accessory dwelling units, existing small lot development, conditional use review for multiunit dwellings. These new State provisions take precedence over any contradictory provisions in municipal zoning bylaws. As of October 12 – i.e., no phase in period. Undoubtedly, this will impact allowances for accessory dwelling units (aka accessory apartments) in many municipalities. Next time you update your zoning, you'll want to make sure it complies with these statutory provisions. Until then, you'll need to go by the State statutory provisions.

S.54 (Act 164) – Cannabis Tax & Regulate – Became law on October 7 without the Governor's signature

Medical use of cannabis (aka marijuana) was legalized in Vermont in 2004. Possession of one ounce or less was decriminalized in 2013. Recreational use of cannabis was legalized in Vermont in 2018. The circle is now complete with the legalization of production, testing, distribution, and retail sales. The Senate passed the bill in the 2019 session, and the House early in the 2020 session. Ultimately, the House/Senate conference committee was able to hammer out a compromise that both chambers approved. The Governor saw the writing on the wall, and allowed the bill to become law on October 7 without his signature. The law does not become fully effective until 2022. The new tax and regulate system is still very much a work in progress, with responsibility for some details left to the new Cannabis Control Board, which will be formed in 2021. Some interesting facets (especially for municipal planners):

- Retail sales will only be allowed in communities that vote to opt-in. No deadline for that, but even so, prepare for some interesting community conversations, petitions, and votes in 2021 and early 2022!
- Cultivation, testing, warehousing, and distribution are NOT subject to any municipal opt-in – i.e., they can happen whether you like it or not.
- Municipalities cannot issue blanket prohibitions of cannabis establishments via ordinance or zoning. However, the bill empowers communities to create local cannabis control commissions, and for such commissions to condition issuance of a local license on any zoning bylaw adopted pursuant to 24 V.S.A, section 4414.
- My reading is that municipalities can make cannabis establishments subject to conditional use review/approval, and perhaps even craft new conditional use review standards pursuant to 24 VSA, section 4414(3)(B)(v). Essentially,

municipalities can use all of the tools in section 4414 – e.g., zoning districts, conditional use review, performance standards, perhaps even overlay districts.

- Cannabis shall not be regulated as “farming”, and cultivated cannabis shall not be considered an agricultural product or agricultural crop under relevant State laws. It appears that municipalities will have the power to regulate cannabis cultivation through zoning, unlike traditional agricultural practices and agricultural structures.

Other legislation:

H.681 (Act 92) – Covid-19 Flexibility Government Operations – Signed by the Governor 3/30/20

A variety of accommodations for government operations during the covid-19 state of emergency – elections, open meetings protocol, and water/wastewater system disconnection moratorium.

- Open meeting law accommodations during the state of emergency:
 - Allows boards to meet electronically in lieu of a meeting at a physical location.
 - Requires that information be posted on how to access electronic meetings, with the same access information included in the meeting agenda.
 - Requires that such electronic meetings be recorded, unless unusual circumstances make it impossible.
 - Allows for meeting minutes to be posted in 10 days instead of the usual 5 days – in the event of staffing shortages.
- Extension of deadlines:
 - State licenses, permits, programs, plans issued to municipalities and RPCs – extended by 90 days after the end of the state of emergency.
 - Municipal licenses, permits, programs, plans – shall remain valid for 90 days after the end of the state of emergency.
 - Municipalities also given the authority to extend or waive deadlines.

S.345 (Act 113) – Covid-19 Municipal Provisions – Signed by the Governor 6/15/20

More accommodations for municipalities during the covid-19 state of emergency – i.e., open meeting posting, borrowing funds.

- Allows municipalities to post meeting agendas and notices in two designated electronic locations in lieu of the normal requirement for posting in two designated physical locations.
- Requires that agendas and notices be posted in/near the municipal clerk’s office, and that a copy of each agenda or notice be provided to the newspapers of general circulation for the municipality. **Not sure they understood that last provision that requires agendas and notices be forwarded to newspapers, since that is rather onerous.

H.948 (Act 106) – Covid-19 Municipal Meetings – Signed by the Governor 6/15/20

Additional accommodations for municipalities during the covid-19 state of emergency.

- Allows quasi-judicial proceedings to be conducted via electronic means without designating a physical location.
- Allows Boards of Civil Authority to forgo physical inspection of properties that are the subject of an appeal (e.g., property valuation/assessment).

H.966 (Act 137) – Covid-19 Funding & Economic Relief – Signed by the Governor 7/2/20

One of the big covid-19 relief bills to spend a portion of the over \$1.25 Billion the State received as part of the federal CARES act. For details and funding amounts, see the summary of the bill by section. Provides funding for:

- Direct grants to businesses and individuals
- Local government grants – for covid-19 reimbursable expenses (municipalities, RPCs, solid waste districts)
- Digitizing municipal land records
- Housing assistance:
 - Legal and counseling services for those at risk of homelessness, and for landlord / tenant assistance
 - VHCb for new housing facilities
 - VHFA for foreclosure protection to low- and moderate-income homeowners
 - VT State Housing Authority for rental assistance and eviction protection

- DHCD for a re-housing recovery program to renovate properties that are vacant, blighted, or in violation of housing laws for persons with COVID-related needs
- Various programs for homelessness assistance (rental subsidies, motel vouchers, housing navigation / case management, direct financial assistance, and incentives for landlords)
- Broadband expansion and emergency services

S.301 (Act 125) – Telecom PUC Review Authority – Signed by the Governor 7/1/20

Extends the authority of the Public Utility Commission to review telecom facilities until July 1, 2023. This authority was supposed to sunset and revert back to municipalities several times. Another in a long list of extensions to this sunset provision.

H.656 (Act 129) – Miscellaneous Agricultural Subjects (definition of “local”) – Signed by the Governor 7/1/20

Only one small section with a planning nexus – sort of... agricultural planning, or if you like to eat local. Section 17 (pages 18-22) provides definitions of “local”, “local to Vermont”, “locally grown or made in Vermont”, “raw agricultural product”, and more.

H.688 (Act 153) – Global Warming Solutions Act – Became law on 9/23/20 pursuant to an override of the Governor’s veto

The much talked about law to require reductions in Vermont’s greenhouse gas emissions. Essentially putting some teeth into implementation of the State’s Comprehensive Energy Plan goals. The law creates a Vermont Climate Council, and requires the council to adopt a Climate Action Plan by 12/1/2021 (to be updated every four years) that will set forth specific programs and strategies. It requires that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources adopt rules by 12/1/2022 to implement the plan. Allows any person to take the State to court if the ANR rules aren’t adopted or if the rules are insufficient to meet the required emission reductions in the plan.

H.611 (Act 156) – Older Vermonters Act – Signed by the Governor 10/5/20

I found this new law interesting, even though it isn’t directly related to the types of planning most VPA members are engaged in. It includes principles for a comprehensive and coordinated system of services and supports for older Vermonters and addresses the role and duties of the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL). It requires DAIL to adopt a State Plan on Aging at least once every four years.

H.967 (Act 161) – Family Child Care Homes – Signed by the Governor 10/5/20

A minor and temporary revision to allowances for the number of children at family child care homes. Until September 2021, such homes will be allowed to expand service for part-time, school-age children from four hours per day to full day.

H.673 (Act 171) – Tree Wardens – Signed by the Governor 10/8/20

A bunch of positive changes to clarify the powers and responsibilities of Municipal Tree Wardens.

S.220 (Act 178) – Professional Regulation & State Energy Goal Education – Signed by the Governor 10/12/20

A variety of changes to the regulation of various professionals. For our purposes, the interesting part is in sections 33-37 of the new law, which requires certain that certain professionals obtain continuing education (two hours) on the State’s energy goals. Specified professions include: architects, landscape architects, pollution abatement facility operators, potable water supply and wastewater system designers, professional engineers, property inspectors, real estate appraisers, real estate brokers and salespersons, gas appliance installers, oil burning equipment installers, limited oil burning equipment installers, boiler inspectors, electricians, and plumbers.

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