



Regional Plan Committee
December 5, 2023 at 4:00 - 5:30 pm

To join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87815276521?pwd=Mmw5U080SGpCTUFNVHZFSEhRQUl0dz09>

Meeting ID: 878 1527 6521, Passcode: 783374

One tap mobile 1(929)436-2866 or 1(301)715-8592

Persons with disabilities who require assistance or alternate 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.

AGENDA

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 4:00 pm² | Adjustments to the Agenda |
| | Public Comment |
| 4:05 pm | Approval of Minutes - (Action - enclosed)³ |
| | Approval of the November 7 minutes |
| 4:10pm | Meeting Date for January |
| 4:15pm | Flood Recover & Mitigation Priorities (enclosed) |
| | Review and comment on priority list |
| 4:35 | Regional Plan Update |
| 5:00 pm | Adjourn |

Next meeting: TBD
(Due to holiday)

¹ Dial-in telephone numbers are "Toll" numbers. Fees may be charged to the person calling in dependent on their phone service.

² All times are approximate unless otherwise advertised

³ Anticipated action item.

DRAFT Flood recovery and mitigation priorities

11/30/23

High Priority

- Dams: Funding to expedite the removal of high priority dams throughout the watershed - especially publicly owned or orphaned/abandoned dams. Dam removal has been hindered due to a lack of funding. This is primarily due to how we fund the disposal of the sediment that is trapped behind dams. Removing dams is critical to lowering base flood elevation of the river corridor and allows enhanced passage of aquatic organisms.

In addition to removing defunct dams, a review of the current dam inspection regime may be necessary. Residents in the Central Vermont region were both negatively affected by the failure of minor dams during the July event (Cabot - Saw Mill Road Dam on the Winooski, Washington - Hands Mill Dam on the Jail Branch) as well as deeply concerned about the safety of larger hydro-electric dams. Analysis of the current inspection system and how it could be improved to address failing dams in a timely manner and restore public faith in the system.

Lead Actor: VNRC VT Dam Task Force; FWR, VRC, CVRPC BWQC, CVRPC CWAC

Time frame: 4-6 years

Cost: ~\$10 million for removal of 4 dams in Montpelier and dams on the Stevens Branch

Benefits: Flood risk mitigation; River health, Phosphorous reduction, clean water

- Housing: The Summer's flooding has exacerbated the housing shortage in Central Vermont. The recovery in Central Vermont will benefit from funding to accelerate the development of all types of housing. Expansion of a program such as VHIP would directly encourage private developers and non-profits to build more housing..

Lead Actor: Support programs already in progress with new or expanded funding.

Time frame: Immediate to begin and 2-3 years to begin seeing impacts.

Cost:

Benefits: Improved housing market. Expanding workforce housing will directly benefit the labor market

- Hydrologic model of the Winooski River Basin to better understand flood risk, including rain on snow events, and nutrient transport potential under alternative flow scenarios. Use results to prioritize implementation of Best Management Practices. Ideally the model would be able to consider site-level BMP implementation. Both basin scale and local detailed models should be developed and time and funding permits.

Lead Actor: UVM (modeling) / CVRPC (planning response, scenario development) /New FEMA Hydrologic mapping

Time frame: 1.5 – 2 years

Cost: ~\$1 million

Benefits: Improved project identification toward flood hazard mitigation.

- Best Management Practices document for rebuilding in the river corridor. Resources should focus in historic structures. This document would touch on many of the concerns we are hearing about in the flood affected areas such as filling basements, use of impervious material, adding check valves on wastewater and stormwater lines, and incorporating Low Impact Design and Green Stormwater Infrastructure.

Lead Actor: VEM, RPC Project Management, UVM Service Learning Course, VT River Corridor Program, DEC (No Adverse Impact Model Bylaws), VPIC (Green Infrastructure Toolkit)

Time frame: 1-1.5 years

Cost: \$25K - 35K

Benefits: Flood hazard mitigation for individuals

- Reverse E911 policy- for use in extreme weather situations. Flooding is a slow-moving disaster and should be anticipated. However, hundreds of cars were flooded this last summer. That number should have been zero. Other disasters can move much faster, such as wild fires, which Vermonters will probably confront in the coming years. VT Alert is a great tool for sending out updates and notifications of small highway and weather risks. There is demand for a more powerful communication tool that could target all cell phones within a certain geography during life or death events, such as the July 23 flooding.

Lead Actor: State VEM lead agency and funder; Local Emergency Managers

Time frame: Immediate

Cost: Staff time of planning and creating policies for usage + annual subscription costs

Benefits: Reduced property damage; Public Safety

Medium Priority

- Full time regional Emergency Management Planners. Statewide, RPCs receive federal funding for about 0.5 FTE for an emergency management planner. Funding a full-time planner in this position will allow for regions to offer much needed capacity to municipalities, enabling more hazard mitigation projects to be completed. This would be an expansion on the work the EM planner is already doing to assist municipalities meet planning requirements, ensure hazard mitigation documents are up to date, write grants, and serve as a municipal project manager during design and implementation.

Lead Actor: VEM

Time frame: ~1 year to implement and hire/train staff

Cost: ~ \$58,000 increase per RPC

Benefits: Highly leveraged investment through access to additional federal funding and grants.

- New GIS/mapping position at VEM or a liaison position housed at the Vermont Center for Geographic Information. This position would be responsible for creating dashboards for serving information throughout the lifespan of an emergency event, including coordination with an early warning system (mentioned above). They would also create tools to help with event planning (e.g. evacuation routes, closest facility when factoring in real-time road closures)

Lead Actor: VCGI

Time Frame: Immediate

Cost: \$150,000

Benefit: Improved response and communication during an event Yes

Regional Plan ?

- Establish a state goal of planting 50' riparian buffers along 100% of river banks outside of established settlements. Include funding for ongoing operations, maintenance and verification program to ensure long-term success and viability of projects. Establishing such a riparian buffer along our river's banks will slow the velocities of flood waters and allow for bank stabilization. . Dedicated state funding for easements with specific incentives for berm removal or the creation of flood benches. Co-benefits could include riverside parks and recreation opportunities similar to the North Branch Cascades Trail

Lead Actor: State ANR, The Vermont River Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land; CVRPC, Municipalities.

Time frame: Immediate

Cost:

Benefits: Flood hazard mitigation; River health, wildlife connectivity and aquatic organism passage, riverside parks and recreation opportunities.

- Include identifying shelters based on population size and access during expected disasters in the VEM Best Management Practices for Local Emergency Management Plans. During the July event, rivers obstructed access to many shelters by the region's residents.

Lead Actor: VEM; FEMA

Time Frame: Immediate

Cost: \$0

Benefits: Public Safety

- Review and update Emergency Action Plans and inundation maps for all high hazard potential dams every 10 years or after 100-year flood event, whichever comes sooner.

Lead Actor: State – Dam Safety

Time frame: Immediate

Cost: Best model for implementation and costs are unknown.

Benefits: Public Safety

- Funding for floodproofing wastewater plants. Wastewater treatment system buildings that are key to system operation must be protected from water entry before, during and after a flood. Flooding can damage the buildings and destroy process equipment, communications controls, field equipment, and important data records while blocking access to the plant. Improvements could include: elevating or relocate equipment, protecting infrastructure and diverting and storing waste water during a flooding event, install barriers and backflow prevention infrastructure.

Lead Actor: State and municipalities.

Time frame: Immediate

Cost: For larger plants like Montpelier and Barre City \$300,00-500,000. FEMA HMGP may be available for the next year.

Benefits: Flood hazard mitigation; Public health.

- Expand or create sub-category under Better Roads Program expressly for culvert upsizing to meet current recurring rain events.

Lead Actor: VTrans, municipalities.

Time frame: Immediate

Cost: The FY24 State portion of the Better Roads Program budget was \$1.7 million. We recommend a sustained commitment to increase this funding, recognizing that if we try to completed this work in a short time, towns will be competing for scarce labor and supplies.

Benefit: Flood hazard mitigation

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Regional Plan Committee
Draft Minutes

November 7, 2023 4:00 – 5:30 pm

Via Zoom; physical location: Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
 29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

Committee Members:

X	Alice Peal, Waitsfield Alternate Rep
x	Rich Turner, Williamstown Rep
	John Brabant, Calais Rep
x	Mike Miller, Montpelier Alternate Rep
	Vacant

Staff (in person): Brian Voigt, Christian Meyer, Lincoln Frasca, and Sam Lash (remote)

Adjustment to the Agenda

No adjustments

Public Comment

No public present

Approval of the minutes

Not everyone read last month's minutes so approval was delayed until next meeting.

Winooski Basin Tactical Basin Plan

B. Voigt and L. Frasca shared the status of the Draft Tactical Basin Plan's conformance status with the 2016 CVRPC Regional Plan. The comment period for the Tactical Basin Plan ends 10 November 2023. Individual comments should be submitted to the Basin Planner Keith Fritschie. The Regional Plan Committee is tasked with making recommendations to the board on conformance and additional comments they feel should be submitted to the Agency of Natural Resources.

B. Voigt and L. Frasca reviewed their comments on the June draft of the Tactical Basin Plan and summarized which of their comments were and were not integrated into the current October draft plan (see Appendix A of meeting materials). A. Peal asked about certain comments that were not integrated into the current draft. Specifically, the reclassification of surface waters recommended in the Tactical Basin Plan vs. on a case by case basis. A. Peal emphasized the importance of having more information on wetlands and changes over time in the plan.

M. Miller overall does not like the structure of the Tactical Basin Plan. Goals, specifically around wetlands, should be quantified with an evaluation of where we are at. This will help define more strategic actions. Energy plans are a good example of plans that lay out what the goals are and what we need to do to achieve them. We can't evaluate the wetlands program because we don't know where we are at. In the Total Maximum Daily Load chapter there is not a clear sense of where we are at in achieving the goals set out.

1 B. Voigt described the purpose of the conformance matrix (see Appendix B of meeting materials)
2 created by staff between the Tactical Basin Plan and the 2016 CVRPC regional plan. He explained the
3 conformance review process beginning with the Regional Plan Committee, the Clean Water Advisory
4 Committee and then to the Board for a final vote.

5
6 A. Peal asked what staff thought overall about conformance with regional plan, and how the Tactical
7 Basin Plan may inform the upcoming new regional plan. B. Voigt demonstrated how the matrix shows
8 conformance with our plan. CVRPC's new regional plan could be written with more aggressive goals and
9 strategies that raise the bar for future Tactical Basin Plans. M. Miller spoke to the legal definition of
10 conformance that states the two plans cannot prevent either from achieving its goals. L. Frasca
11 expressed the importance of submitting comments along with a conformance recommendation to the
12 Department of Environmental of Conservation for the benefit of longer-term planning beyond this year's
13 Tactical Basin Plan update

14
15 M. Miller made a motion recommending to the Board of Commissioners that the 2023 Draft Tactical
16 Basin Plan conforms with the 2016 CVRPC Regional Plan. R. Turner seconded. All were in favor and none
17 opposed.

18 19 **Future Land Use Report**

20 C. Meyer presented on the status of the Draft Regional Planning Report (see meeting materials) and
21 explained the background for creating consistency across future land use maps and policies statewide.
22 The report is due back to the Legislature on 15 December 2023 and there will be no formal motion to
23 endorse or adopt the language. However, strong comments or resistance should be noted.

24
25 A. Peal spoke to the desire of developers who are really pushing for Act 250 to change and make
26 development more cost effective. She described a local example of a rural builder trying to avoid the Act
27 250 review process in the Mad River Valley. She noted the tension between developing and
28 environmental protection including flood mitigation. M. Miller expressed concern about forcing all
29 regions to do things the same way. We could lose the cross checking between Regional Planning
30 Commission's and the potential for new and diverse planning strategies. The title Planned Growth Area
31 could be better defined as an Urban Area. When planning it is important to ask the questions, "Do we
32 want to change, evolve, or maintain an area." If we have historic designations within urban areas we can
33 get those incentives and the growth areas will get other incentives. We DON'T want growth incentives
34 or tax benefits in the historic areas that we are trying to maintain. Planning is about looking at a future
35 state, and what we need to do to get there. Existing land use plans are often looking in the rear-view
36 mirror. The uniformity of the planning process might suppress innovation and lead to mediocre plans.
37 He suggested that instead of sticking to one way of doing things, they should consider successful models
38 from other states. An idea should be built, and tested, before applying to all regions.

39
40 C. Meyers asked, "Does this draft give us the flexibility to write the plan we want to write?" He is looking
41 for comments to bring to the team of regional planners that is drafting this policy. M. Miller expressed
42 his disagreement with the 60-day review for river corridors, floodplains, historic preservation, and
43 transportation proposed by the state. He argued that their process in Montpelier is more efficient, as
44 they issue administrative permits within 24 to 48 hours and streamline various processes. In the city we
45 regulate to the map rather than the Act 250 process which requires a site visit to determine if there is a
46 wetland or not. The maps should be updated and accurate so we can issue permits faster and more
47 efficiently. The draft designations seem to be selected through an Act 250 lens and not from a future
48 land use planning perspective.

1 A. Peal spoke about Waitsfield's zoning and the complicated nature of housing in industrial zones and
2 mix uses. You really can't say anymore where it does and where it doesn't flood. There are new places
3 that never flooded before and need evaluations and mitigation strategies implemented. We need to
4 understand how the water flows through the whole watershed. She understands M. Miller's point but is
5 not ready to throw out Act 250.

6
7 A. Peal tasked the committee with sending comments to C. Meyer for dissemination at the Board
8 meeting next week.

9
10 **Regional Plan Update**

11 Progress was discussed on a regional plan update, with a goal of starting to distribute chapters for
12 review in December.

13
14 A. Peal made a motion to adjourn, seconded by R Turner. All in favor, motion carried.