



## FY 18 Annual Report

Founded in 1967, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) leverages the value 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 and 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:



*Planning & Zoning Roundtable*

- Assisted with two successful municipal planning grant applications - East Montpelier's zoning bylaw rewrite and Northfield's Town Plan update.
- Consulted with Barre City, Barre Town, Duxbury, Fayston, Northfield, Plainfield, and Roxbury on local planning and confirmed their planning efforts to retain eligibility for municipal planning grants. Used the consultation results to target FY19 planning assistance.
- Assisted Orange with a Town Plan update. Community engagement was identified as a critical action item to address the community's development and conservation future.
- Supported Town Plan updates for Berlin, East Montpelier, Marshfield, Waitsfield, Waterbury, Woodbury, and Worcester by providing feedback on draft documents, providing information on flood resiliency and forest integrity, and/or mapping forest blocks and wildlife corridors.
- Substantially assisted East Montpelier's efforts to develop a Village Master Plan.
- Provided feedback to Duxbury, Fayston, and Plainfield on proposed bylaw changes. Towns are modernizing 1980s bylaws to strengthen consistency with municipal plans.

- Hosted municipal trainings, including Essentials of Land Use Planning and Regulation, Municipal Housing Policies, three planning and zoning roundtables, and energy standards.

## Regional Planning

RPC's 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 2018, CVRPC completed an enhanced regional energy plan to meet Act 174 Standards. Seventeen (17) individuals, representing utilities, private business, municipalities, state agencies, public transit, and regional non-profits, worked cooperatively to develop draft policies and actions. The plan includes a conflict resolution process in recognition that municipal and regional enhanced energy planning is relatively new, an evolving process, and has not been completed by all municipalities. The Department of Public Service identified this aspect of CVRPC's plan as a unique regional approach.

CVRPC amended the 2016 Central Vermont Regional Plan to incorporate the regional energy plan and address forest integrity. In addition, Commissioners set priorities for implementation actions which direct CVRPC's annual work plan and budget.

As part of *Plan Central Vermont*, a substantial rewrite of the Central Vermont Regional Plan currently in progress, CVRPC completed a draft update to its Substantial Regional Impact definition and criteria and its project review process. These items guide CVRPC's participation in Act 250 and Section 248.



*Water Wise Woodlands Team*

CVRPC fostered regional and intermunicipal activities, a high priority implementation action of the Regional Plan. CVRPC invested more than \$76,000 to support joint stormwater planning for eight towns in the Mad River and Kingsbury Branch watersheds and Barre City, Barre Town, and Plainfield. It also initiated *Water Wise Woodlands*, a joint effort among Cabot, Marshfield, and Plainfield linking forest integrity, private forest stewardship, and watershed resilience. CVRPC assisted the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District with financial management and strengthening internal controls, and acted as payroll administrator for the Cross Vermont Trail Association.

CVRPC reviews state permit applications to ensure proposed projects conform with the Regional Plan. The Project Review Committee reviewed one major Act 250 application and determined it conformed to the plan. The Committee also reviewed three, pre-Section 248 application requests for preferred site designation under Public Utility Commission Rule 5.1 pertaining to construction and operation of net-metering systems. The Commission supported designation for two sites.

CVRPC surveyed regional partners and municipalities about Act 250 to strengthen its understanding of local and regional concerns and to frame discussion for the Board of Commissioners. Staff facilitated sessions at the Vermont Planners Association workshop on Act 250.



## 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.

CVRPC has an active brownfields assessment grant. In 2018, the Commission worked with owners and prospective developers at eight (8) properties to sample sites or plan for contaminant remediation.



*Former Woodbury Country Store*

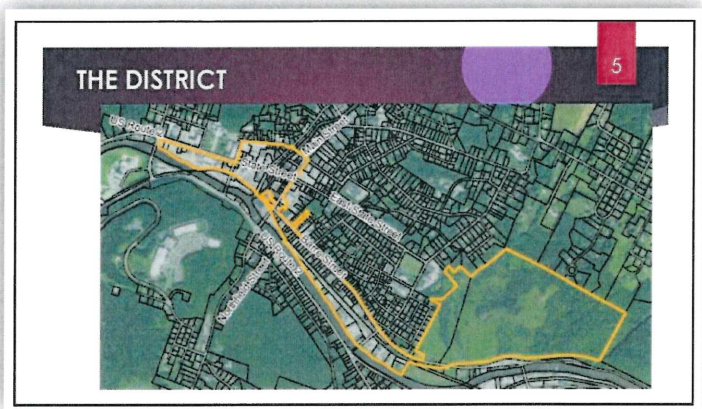
- *Bonacorsi-Capital Candy, Barre City:* CVRPC invested in a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment to assist Capital Candy understand its environmental obligations prior to acquiring the Bonacorsi property, which it leases. Impacts from historic dry cleaning operations will require installation of an air quality system in the building, similar to a radon mitigation system. The project facilitates Capital Candy's business expansion, allowing it to add jobs.
- *Woodbury Country Store, Woodbury:* CVRPC assisted Woodbury to guide a multiagency effort to buy out a former general store and gas station in the village center. When completed, the project will reduce flooding and flood damages to other properties. CVRPC completed Phase II assessment activities and invested staff time to help ensure multiple funding sources are coordinated and used efficiently. VEM, DEC, and VTrans have partnered with the Town.
- *12 Keith Avenue, Barre City:* To implement its North Main to Summer Street Master Plan, the City of Barre committed to building a parking area to support Downstreet's redevelopment of 22 Keith Avenue into housing and office space. CVRPC completed a Partial Corrective Action Plan for the parking area to help insure sealing the site with pavement does not exacerbate contaminant movement to other properties.
- *Former Ernie's Garage, Barre City:* Ayer's Autobody previously participated in CVRPC's program to develop a brownfield property. Based on that success, the company purchased a second property to expand its operations. CVRPC invested \$34,600 in Phase II assessment work and Corrective Action Planning to investigate potential challenges at the new site.
- *Fire and Recycling Station, Whiting:* The statutory relationship of Vermont's regional planning commissions allows RPCs to maximize federal brownfield investments by sharing resources across boundaries. CVRPC supported a Phase II assessment at a Town-owned property in Whiting (Addison County) to leverage the property's redevelopment into a municipal facility.
- *Former Clark's Feed, Barre City:* CVRPC supported Barre City's Merchants Row redevelopment through site characterization at the former Clark's Feed Store property. The site has been redeveloped as parking, which allows for full use of the Blanchard Block, a former brownfield property where use by large tenants was hindered by a lack of dedicated parking.
- *Union Elementary School, Montpelier:* Modernization of the playground at the school was challenged by urban soils. CVRPC invested \$66,800 to determine the breadth and depth of the issue and to develop a Corrective Action Plan. Construction of the new playground is underway.

- *Former Granite Works, Montpelier:* When historic manufacturing processes threatened to halt this property's sale, CVRPC completed a Phase II assessment and an Evaluation of Corrective Action Alternatives to help insure redevelopment could occur. CVRPC's investment of \$74,500 supports conversion of this large granite shed site into housing, a critical need in Montpelier.

## 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.

- Provided maps for Montpelier's successful application for Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District designation. Granite Works, a CVRPC brownfield program property, is included in the district.
- Supported the Cabot Community Association with its efforts to develop and begin implementing a revitalization plan for the Village of Cabot.
- Assisted Washington with closeout of the Calef Memorial Library's Access Modification Grant.
- Coached the East Montpelier Revolving Loan Fund Advisory Committee on strategies to meet closeout agreement terms for the Fund's Community Development Block Grant.
- Assisted Cabot to resolve an undischarged mortgage lien related to a 1986 Community Development Block Grant for a housing rehabilitation loan fund.
- Assisted Warren to update its capital budget.
- Finished a flood study of several streams in the Mad River watershed and the Thatcher Brook/Graves Brook watershed and began project implementation.
- Assisted the Mad River Valley Planning District with strategic planning by compiling priority projects identified in various MRVPD documents and summarizing implementation activities.
- Trained Vermont Housing and Conservation Board staff on Vermont's permit process.



## 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.



<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>CVRPC</b>
<b>Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities</b>	
# of TAC meetings held	10
# of non-municipal TAC members actively engaged in transportation planning	14
# of municipalities actively engaged in transportation planning	23
# of RPC coordination activities with municipalities and VTrans	8
<b>Objective 2</b>	
<b>Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning</b>	
# of regional transportation plans that are current (within 8 years)	1
# of Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation	0
# of Section 248 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation	0
# of coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers	9
# of VTrans committees that involves RPC staff participation	4
# of regions participating in Project Prioritization	1
<b>Objective 3</b>	
<b>Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities</b>	
# of municipalities participating in road foreman meetings annually	12
# of municipalities assisted with transportation related grants	10
% of budget spent on municipal technical assistance	46%
# of municipal transportation inventories conducted	6
# of municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken	2
# of municipalities assisted with transportation element of municipal/town plan	2
# of road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and using other funding sources	6
<b>Objective 4</b>	
<b>Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long Range Transportation Plans</b>	
# of data collection activities conducted specifically for VTrans	29
<b>Objective 5</b>	
<b>Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education</b>	
Hosted and facilitated two public meetings on the expansion of the existing Berlin Exit 7 Park and Ride facility. This expansion was opposed by the adjacent landowner due to concerns over invasion of privacy and light pollution. CVRPC worked with VTrans and the landowner on a compromise all parties could support.	
<b>Outcomes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed studies for the Gallison Hill/Brazier/Towne Hill Roads intersection in East Montpelier and the Reservoir and Lords Roads intersection in Orange.</li> <li>The Transportation Advisory Committee ranked 7 State roadway projects, recommended functional reclassification of 19 roadways by VTrans, reviewed 2 park and ride facility designs to improve capacity, and toured construction projects in East Montpelier.</li> </ul>	

- Convened four public meetings as part of Green Mountain Transit's Comprehensive System Analysis, the NetGen Plan. Project will enhance service through route adjustments or reconfigurations and elimination or addition of service. Regional partners requested CVRPC lead a grant to foster paratransit rider engagement in Barre-Montpelier service transitions.
- Participated in the development of the VT 100/108 Corridor Plan Meeting.
- Collected data to support local and state transportation decision making, including 5 local bridge and culvert inventories, 23 traffic counts, 3 park and ride surveys, 6 road erosion inventories, and 3 pedestrian counts.
- Participated in 3 accelerated bridge meetings and 1 park and ride meeting.
- Participated in redesign of VTrans' project prioritization process.
- Managed the Vermont Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool for RPCs and towns, participated in its upgrade, and coached users on the tool's use.
- Worked with Warren, Middlesex, Duxbury, and Moretown to identify and prioritize road erosion locations for inclusion in capital plans.
- Worked with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to identify towns for Class IV road inventories and installation of best management practices to address gully erosion.
- Wrote or provided significant assistance for 10 transportation-related grant applications, including Better Roads, Municipal Roads Stormwater Mitigation, and Bicycle and Pedestrian.

### 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.

- Assisted 23 municipalities with development of 2018 Local Emergency Operation Plan (LEOP). 100% of the region's municipalities have adopted 2018 LEOPs. Supported Annex developments for Animal Disaster Response Plans, Debris Management Plans, Emergency Contact by support functions, mutual aid lists, Delegation of Authority lists, and maps.
- Assisted 16 towns with aspects of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) development. 16 of the region's 23 municipalities (70%) have a FEMA-approved LHMP.
- Assisted 7 municipalities with mitigation grant applications for a bridge replacement, a home buyout, critical facility generators, slope stabilization, and LHMP development.
- Supported LEPC 5 through administrative assistance, fiscal agent services, fostering a Memorandum of Understanding for four grants, and developing a draft Emergency Management Plan.
- Assisted with planning and/or coordination of 3 Table Top Exercises to test emergency plans.



- Collaborated with State and Federal agencies to bring 10 preparedness trainings to Central Vermont. Acted as pilot RPC for new Emergency Management Director course.
- Facilitated a 3-town meeting with Green Mountain Power to continue the dialogue about local concerns for the safety of Marshfield Dam #6 (Molly's Falls dam).
- Supported the State Emergency Operation Center for two events by gathering local damage information and providing staff for SEOC operations.
- Participated in State Hazard Mitigation Plan development through input meetings, providing local and regional data and information, and offering Commission comments.
- Represented regional planning commissions on the State Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application review team.



*CVRPC Board Engages in State Hazard Mitigation Plan*

## 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.

- Assisted Waterbury with a Story Map related to road construction and improvements.
- Prepared maps for Northfield Falls village center designation application.
- Updated zoning maps for Marshfield and Duxbury.
- Provided assistance to Worcester for parcel map amendments and printed parcel maps.
- Completed sewer manhole mapping and provided assistance for road erosion and culvert inventories for Barre Town.
- Created floodplain and road right of way maps for Cabot's zoning regulations.
- Developed a regional trail connections and recreation map.
- Completed road maps for all 23 municipalities in the region.
- Developed a watershed wide map of the Winooski River for educational outreach for the Friends of the Winooski River.
- Created Winooski River floodplain maps for a Vermont Emergency Management exercise.
- Worked with Montpelier to establish mapping of slopes for city parcels.
- Created flood vulnerability maps for Plainfield for rainstorms and dam releases.
- Mapped Tier II facilities by town to assist municipalities with planning and response.

## Energy Conservation and Development

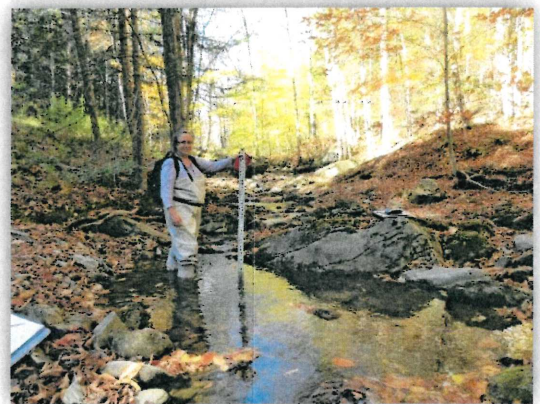
A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation, and natural resources efforts. RPCs also work with municipalities to assist with project implementation.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

- Participated in Green Mountain Transit's Comprehensive System Analysis, the NextGen Transit Plan, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the region's transit services.
- Developed a regional energy plan to position the region for its energy future and support the State's goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050. The project included energy demand and generation modeling, maps depicting renewable generation potential, and regional strategies.
- Conducted three municipal trainings about Act 174's requirements and presented the regional energy planning effort at a community sponsored workshop in Northfield.
- Assisted Barre City, Calais, Marshfield, and Warren with local energy planning and worked with Waterbury to finalize its energy planning consistent with Act 174.
- Initiated development of criteria to evaluate requests for "preferred siting" under the Public Utility Commission's Net Metering Rules.

## 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 implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Worked with ANR, partners, and municipalities to develop the Draft Winooski River and White River Tactical Basin Plans. Provided substantial assistance with municipal engagement and project development for the Winooski River basin.
- Completed a GIS analysis of gaps in riparian buffer along the Mad River and tributaries. The Friends of the Mad River will use the analysis to target outreach for buffer plantings and conservation easements.
- Completed a Stream Geomorphic Assessment for the Mad River in Moretown. The assessment found that Jones Brook is unstable and undergoing major geomorphic changes.
- Managed joint stormwater master plans for 8 towns in the Kingsbury Branch and Mad River watersheds.
- Completed two stormwater master plan projects, a 3-town effort for Barre City, Barre Town, and Plainfield and a local effort in Berlin. The plans position projects for implementation.
- Initiated planning for Northfield's Water Street stormwater mitigation project. The project will improve water quality by treating runoff from 48 acres of residential development.
- Administered Clean Water Block Grants for stormwater mitigation projects in Barre City and Berlin.
- Continued work with Waterbury on administrative changes to its river corridor, positioning the Town to implement a future river corridor bylaw.
- Supported 20 municipalities with implementation of the Municipal Grant in Aid Pilot Program.
- Assisted 4 municipalities with road erosion inventories and capital plans.
- Worked with VT DEC to develop a data standard and update the inventory tool used



*Mad River Geomorphic Assessment in Moretown*



by towns to comply with Municipal Roads General Permit requirements and organized a training.

- Fostered *Water Wise Woodlands*, an intermunicipal project among Cabot, Marshfield, and Plainfield to explore how forest integrity can support watershed resiliency. Friends of the Winooski River and Vermont Woodlands Association are co-leaders with CVRPC.
- Assisted the Departments of Forests, Parks and Recreation and Fish and Wildlife to develop web-based tools to help municipalities and regions meet Act 171 forest integrity requirements.

## Special Projects

*Class IV Roads Demonstration Project* - CVRPC lead a demonstration project with Calais, Worcester, and Moretown to remediate gully erosion on Class 4 roads. Gully erosion is erosion measuring 12 inches or more deep. The towns reduced sediment and phosphorus runoff by implementing Best Management Practices (BMP) on 26 hydrologically-connected municipal road segments. Hydrologically-connected road segments are sections of road at high risk to impact adjacent surface waters, lakes, ponds, perennial and intermittent streams, and wetlands.



*Class IV Road BMP Demonstration Workshop*

BMPs implemented included drainage culvert upgrades, turn out installations, culvert outlet stabilizations, culvert headwall stabilizations, grass and stone-lined drainage ditch installations, roadside berm removal, and road resurfacing. These practices promote road stormwater disconnection, infiltration, and conveyance stability. Secondary benefits are improved flood resiliency and road safety. The project exposed the hidden cost of tree removal when implementing road BMPs. Calais reported that work completed on Apple Hill has reduced maintenance costs caused by road washouts significantly. The project was funded by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the Lake Champlain Basin Program, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

*Increasing Data Accessibility* - Data helps municipalities, private property owners, and organizations make better decisions faster. Increasing data accessibility saves resources. CVRPC fostered data accessibility with three projects in 2018.

- Initiated development of an online data library. The library will host common municipal plan data sets in an easy-to-use format. Data for 10 municipalities is complete.
- Uploaded zoning data for all member municipalities into the Vermont Center for Geographic Information's (VCGI) website to make it available statewide.
- Created web maps for Calais and Berlin to enhance public accessibility to parcel, zoning, flooding, and natural resource data. The project builds on web maps previously developed for East Montpelier and Middlesex. East Montpelier's Zoning Administrator commented that the web map provides easy-to-access visuals for development conversations with landowners.

## Administration and Funding

The FY 18 CVRPC budget was approximately \$1.7 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 town 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, brownfields redevelopment, 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). Town assessments and regional planning funds passed through to CVRPC under a performance contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development provide matching funds.

CVRPC maintained a line of credit in 2018 due to a prevalence of product-based and construction contracts. CVRPC maintains Board designated reserve funds to cover operating shortfalls, accrued leave time, and equipment replacement. The Commission maintains a four-year plan for equipment and software upgrades and replacement.

CVRPC's annual audit will be completed in October 2018. CVRPC has had no audit findings in recent years. It is considered a 'low risk' grantee by federal agencies. Staffing in 2018 included 8 employees: Executive Director, Program Manager, Senior Planners (3), Planners (2), and an Office Manager. CVRPC supports workforce development through use of planning technicians for transportation and planning services.

In 2018, CVRPC developed Rules of Procedure for many of its committees, initiated updates to its Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy, and drafted a Commissioner Handbook to orient Board members to the Commission and its work.