



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 8, 2024 at 6:30 pm

29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier Vermont

Hybrid Meeting with Remote Participation via Zoom¹

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81136818419?pwd=dDFDbDhrTm56TUNQUlp3WEorYzRZZz09>

One tap mobile: +19294362866,,81136818419#,,,,*722490# US (New York)

Dial in via phone: 1-929-436-2866 • Meeting ID: 811 3681 8419 • Passcode: 722490

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Download the app at least 5 minutes before the meeting starts: <https://zoom.us/download>

Page **AGENDA**

	6:30²	Introductions
		Adjustments to the Agenda
		Public Comments
	6:35	Central Vermont Economic Development Corp Update – Melissa Bounty
2	6:50	Municipal Dues (Action - enclosed) ³
6	7:05	Mutual Aid Agreement Presentation (enclosed)
23	7:20	Regional Plan Chapter Review – Natural Systems (enclosed)
55	7:50	Update on Regional Flood Coordination (enclosed)
56	7:55	Minutes 09/10/2024 (Action - enclosed) ³
60	8:05	Reports (Action - enclosed) ³
		Update/questions on Staff and Committee Reports
	8:15	Adjourn

Next Meeting: November 12, 2024

¹ 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.

² Times are approximate unless otherwise advertised.

³ Anticipated action item.



MEMO

Date: October 2, 2024
To: Board of Commissioners
From: Christian Meyer, Executive Director
Re: FY26 Municipal Dues

☒ ACTION REQUESTED: Move to accept the Executive Committee recommendation and increase CVRPC's municipal dues assessment rate from \$1.33 per capita to \$1.38 per capita for Fiscal Year 2026.

At their September 3, 2024, meeting, the Executive Committee move to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that CVRPC increase its municipal dues assessment rate from \$1.33 per capita to \$1.38 per capita for Fiscal Year 2026. This represents the first increase to dues in three years.

The CVRPC Board of Commissioners is responsible for setting CVRPC's annual municipal dues.

BACKGROUND

Municipal dues are a critical part of how CVRPC funds its operations, matches other grants, provides professional staff development, and maintains its offices space. As such, dues are essential to ensuring municipalities can rely on our services and reach into our staff pool for support. Municipalities invested \$86,985 for FY25 dues, to leverage over \$3-million in services from CVRPC. Municipal dues are one of only two flexible sources of funds that the CVRPC receives, the other being the regional planning funds provided by the Vermont Legislature.

The current assessment rate of \$1.33 was set in FY23. In FY24 and FY25 staff recommended holding rates steady despite rising wages, benefit costs, and the costs of supplies and subscriptions. This was possible as the organization went through staff transitions and had available one-time state funds to absorb these increased costs. CVRPC is now fully staffed and investing in training new staff and updating needed equipment. Staff believe this 3.9% increase in dues will be necessary to again fully leverage funding opportunities, meet the goals for contributing to the agencies reserves, and cover all increases to costs that cannot be assigned to other state or federal funding sources.

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 office and 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. 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.

Wages and benefits are CVRPC's primary cost followed by consultant costs. The cost of each of these three categories has increased in recent years. Additionally, major pieces of our IT platform have been replaced and made more secure and additional investments are being made in our office space to accommodate a larger staff. Many of CVRPC's subscriptions and memberships can only be paid from municipal dues – the costs of which have all increased with inflation.

Low, medium, and high increases to the base rate were calculated for the Executive Committee and the Commission to consider. Staff is recommending a medium increase of 3.9%. Since the fall of 2022, when the current rate was set, inflation has been 14% (Bureau of Labor statistics). The CVRPC annual budget has also increased severalfold.

How will the dues change for my municipality?

Municipality	2020 US Census	FY 25 Dues at \$1.33	Maintain	Increase 1.6%	RECOMMENDED	Increase 5%	\$ Change \$1.33→\$1.38
			FY 26	FY 26	FY 26	FY 26	
			Dues at	Dues at	Dues at	Dues at	
Barre City	8,491	\$11,293.03	\$11,293.03	\$ 11,462.85	\$11,717.58	\$11,887.40	\$424.55
Barre Town	7,923	\$10,537.59	\$10,537.59	\$ 10,696.05	\$10,933.74	\$11,092.20	\$396.15
Berlin	2,849	\$3,789.17	\$3,789.17	\$ 3,846.15	\$3,931.62	\$3,988.60	\$142.45
Cabot	1,443	\$1,919.19	\$1,919.19	\$ 1,948.05	\$1,991.34	\$2,020.20	\$72.15
Calais	1,661	\$2,209.13	\$2,209.13	\$ 2,242.35	\$2,292.18	\$2,325.40	\$83.05
Duxbury	1,413	\$1,879.29	\$1,879.29	\$ 1,907.55	\$1,949.94	\$1,978.20	\$70.65
East Montpelier	2,598	\$3,455.34	\$3,455.34	\$ 3,507.30	\$3,585.24	\$3,637.20	\$129.90
Fayston	1,364	\$1,814.12	\$1,814.12	\$ 1,841.40	\$1,882.32	\$1,909.60	\$68.20
Marshfield	1,583	\$2,105.39	\$2,105.39	\$ 2,137.05	\$2,184.54	\$2,216.20	\$79.15
Middlesex	1,779	\$2,366.07	\$2,366.07	\$ 2,401.65	\$2,455.02	\$2,490.60	\$88.95
Montpelier	8,074	\$10,738.42	\$10,738.42	\$ 10,899.90	\$11,142.12	\$11,303.60	\$403.70
Moretown	1,753	\$2,331.49	\$2,331.49	\$ 2,366.55	\$2,419.14	\$2,454.20	\$87.65
Northfield	5,918	\$7,870.94	\$7,870.94	\$ 7,989.30	\$8,166.84	\$8,285.20	\$295.90
Orange	1,048	\$1,393.84	\$1,393.84	\$ 1,414.80	\$1,446.24	\$1,467.20	\$52.40
Plainfield	1,236	\$1,643.88	\$1,643.88	\$ 1,668.60	\$1,705.68	\$1,730.40	\$61.80
Roxbury	678	\$901.74	\$901.74	\$ 915.30	\$935.64	\$949.20	\$33.90
Waitsfield	1,844	\$2,452.52	\$2,452.52	\$ 2,489.40	\$2,544.72	\$2,581.60	\$92.20
Warren	1,977	\$2,629.41	\$2,629.41	\$ 2,668.95	\$2,728.26	\$2,767.80	\$98.85
Washington	1,032	\$1,372.56	\$1,372.56	\$ 1,393.20	\$1,424.16	\$1,444.80	\$51.60
Waterbury	5,331	\$7,090.23	\$7,090.23	\$ 7,196.85	\$7,356.78	\$7,463.40	\$266.55
Williamstown	3,515	\$4,674.95	\$4,674.95	\$ 4,745.25	\$4,850.70	\$4,921.00	\$175.75
Woodbury	928	\$1,234.24	\$1,234.24	\$ 1,252.80	\$1,280.64	\$1,299.20	\$46.40
Worcester	964	\$1,282.12	\$1,282.12	\$ 1,301.40	\$1,330.32	\$1,349.60	\$48.20
Region	65,402	\$86,984.66	\$86,984.66	\$ 88,292.70	\$90,254.76	\$91,562.80	\$90,254.76

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 **current** dues compare to other RPCs. The data is sorted by Per Capita Equivalent to assist with comparisons.

RPC	Population	Data Source	\$ Raised from Dues	# of Municipalities	Dues as % of Total Revenue	Calculation Method	Per Capita Equivalent ¹	Notes
Bennington	35,337	US Census	\$104,383	17	6.6%	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	\$2.95	FY24 rate
Windham	45,044	US Census	\$123,365	27	5%	\$2.74 per capita - minimum \$250 (5% increase in FY24)	\$2.74	FY24 rate
TRORC	57,116	US Census	\$90,243	30	<3%	\$1.70 per capita	\$1.70	FY24 rate
Chittenden	168,323	US Census	\$263,070	18	<3%	Pro-rated based on municipal share of the county Equalized Education Grand List (EEGL) value	\$1.57	FY25 rate
Mt Ascutney	24,711	US Census	\$34,804	10	<2%	\$1.40 per capita	\$1.40	FY25 rate
Addison	33,517	US Census	\$45,000	21	<2%	\$1.35 per capita, minus group quarters	\$1.34	FY25 rate
Central	65,402	US Census	\$86,985	23	3%	\$1.33 per capita	\$1.33	FY25 rate
Northwest	57,239	US Census	\$68,389	22	<2%	\$1.19 per capita; annual change based on employer cost price index	\$1.19	FY24 rate
Lamoille	24,475	US Census	\$20,000 - \$30,000 over 4 years	10	~3%	Pro-rated 60/40, most recent Census population and equalized grand list value; towns only, not villages	\$0.82 - \$1.22 over 4 years	FY24 rate - FY28
NVDA	62,438	US Census	\$52,270	50	<3%	minimum dues of \$500 (few do pay \$100); \$3,500 cap	\$0.84	FY25 rate
Rutland	61,642	US Census	\$27,000	27	<2%	\$1,000/year per municipality	\$0.44	FY25 rate

¹Amount Raised by Dues divided by Population



MEMO

Date: October 2, 2024
To: Board of Commissioners
From: Keith Cubbon, Emergency Management/Transportation Planner
Re: Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement

☒ **ACTION REQUESTED:** Discussion and input on the Executive Committee action on the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement

The purpose of this agenda item is to build awareness around the opportunities presented by a public works mutual aid agreement and to get input from the Board of Commissioner for consideration by the Executive Committee before executing such an agreement.

Proposal

Central Vermont municipalities have recognized that they are vulnerable to a variety of natural hazards that can impact roads, drainage and other aspects of public works' resources and cause severe disruption to essential services, local residents, utilities, and public works. Hazards include severe winter conditions, flooding, wind, and ice. Further, it is often prohibitively expensive for any one municipality to acquire and maintain all equipment needed to address each of the unique emergency conditions that may arise. Through the Central Vermont Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC), member municipalities have recognized that there are economic and logistical benefits to entering into mutual aid agreements to support resource needs and capabilities.

A regional emergency mutual aid agreement is meant to create a means for individual municipal public works departments within the CVRPC planning areas to request assistance from other participating municipalities in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other services that may be needed related to an event.

Enabling legislation

Under 24 VSA § 4345b the Vermont Legislature has granted authority for regional planning commissions to "promote cooperative agreements and coordinate, implement, and administer service agreements among municipalities, including arrangements and action with respect to planning, community development, joint purchasing, intermunicipal services, infrastructure, and related activities...." Correspondingly, CVRPC had adopted language into its bylaws allowing intermunicipal service agreements under 24 VSA § 4345b.

Process

Once the CVRPC has ratified this agreement, member municipalities may also ratify this agreement to participate in this emergency mutual aid agreement. The agreement is with and among each of CVRPC member municipalities to voluntarily share equipment, provide mutual assistance, and execute collective purchasing agreements.

Under this agreement, CVRPC will be responsible for:

- Maintaining the agreement and facilitating communications among participating municipalities;
- Maintaining a contact list of participating municipalities;
- Receiving copies of aid requests;
- Distributing a list of the NIMS typed public works resources;
- Hosting a biennial meeting with all participants to review the terms of this agreement.

Attachments

Attached please find the draft FY 25 Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement for your review.

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION EMERGENCY MUTUAL AID
AGREEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS
DEPARTMENTS OF ITS MEMBER
MUNICIPALITIES**

This Mutual Aid Agreement (the “Agreement”) is entered into between the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (“CVRPC”) and by and among each member municipality that voluntarily executes and adopts the terms and conditions contained herein.

WHEREAS, the Vermont Supreme Court has held and adopted the position that “‘It is a general and undisputed proposition of law that a municipal corporation possesses and can exercise the following powers, and no others: First, those granted in express words; second, those necessarily or fairly implied in or incident to the powers expressly granted; third, those essential to the accomplishment of the declared objects and purposes of the corporation—–not simply convenient, but indispensable.’” Valcour v. Vill. of Morrisville, 104 Vt. 119, 158 A. 83, 85 (1932), *citing* Dillon, John, The Law of Municipal Corporations (5th Ed.) par. 237; and

WHEREAS, that upon the adoption of bylaws specifying the process for entering into, method of withdrawal from, and method of terminating service agreements with municipalities, the Vermont Legislature has granted express authority for regional planning commissions to “promote cooperative agreements and coordinate, implement, and administer service agreements among municipalities, including arrangements and action with respect to planning, community development, joint purchasing, intermunicipal services, infrastructure, and related activities....” 24 V.S.A. § 4345b(c); and

WHEREAS, the member municipalities of the CVRPC (collectively the “Parties”) may voluntarily agree to participate in mutual aid and public works assistance activities conducted pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4345b(d)(2); and

WHEREAS, the CVRPC has duly adopted bylaws pertaining to the creation of intermunicipal service agreements pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4345b(a) and (b); and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize that they are vulnerable to a variety of potential, natural and man-made disasters that impact vital public works resources including hurricanes, flooding and extreme winter conditions that in the past have caused severe disruption of essential public works services and severe property damage to public roads, utilities and other public works property; and

WHEREAS, owning and maintaining all the resources needed to respond to extreme, unexpected and high-demand incidents is cost-prohibitive for most municipalities and entering into a mutual aid agreement provides economic and logistical efficiencies to support any gaps in resources and capabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Parties to this Agreement recognize the benefits of mutual aid in protecting the public, health, safety and welfare and fostering a sense of goodwill and community within a specific geographic region and therefore desire to provide mutual aid and assistance to one another during times of disaster and other types of public works emergencies; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize that having this mutual aid agreement and related guidelines is essential to ensuring a consistent, coordinated, and timely response in providing mutual aid; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties hereto agree as follows:

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The Agreement set forth below, is established to provide a means for public works related entities that are controlled by the CVRPC member municipalities, that are in need of mutual aid assistance, to be able to request and receive such aid and assistance in a timely manner from the participating member municipalities including but not limited to personnel, equipment, materials and any other services that may be reasonably necessary to respond to an emergency. The purpose of this Agreement is to formalize the regional mutual aid program. This Agreement to render aid is expressly not contingent upon a declaration of a major disaster or emergency by the federal government or upon receiving federal funds.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

- A. Aid and Assistance** – includes, but is not limited to, personnel, equipment, administrative services, infrastructure, supplies and materials necessary to respond to a request for mutual aid.
- B. Aiding Official** – means a person who is designated by the Aiding Party to determine whether and to what extent the Aiding Party should provide Public Works Assistance to a Requesting Party.
- C. Aiding Party** – means a Constituent Municipal entity that furnishes, equipment, services, personnel or any other Public Works assistance to a Requesting Party.
- D. Agreement** – refers to this Agreement for public works emergency services. The Central Vermont Region municipalities may become a party to this Agreement upon ratification of this Agreement by the CVRPC and ratification by the legislative body of the Constituent Municipality that is a party to this Agreement. Each Constituent Municipality that ratifies this Agreement, understands that the Agreement contains all Constituent Municipal entities at the time of ratification, and any other eligible municipality in the future.

- E. Constituent Municipality** – Any municipality located in the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission service area in Vermont that is a party to this Agreement.
- F. Disaster** – any natural, mechanical, human-made, technological, or civil emergency that threatens to cause damages of a severity and scale that exceeds the maximum capabilities of a Constituent Municipality.
- G. Emergency** – an event or imminent potential for such an event, either natural or human caused, that results in or may result in, injury or harm to the residences of the Constituent Municipality, or damage to or loss of property.
- H. Mutual Aid Resource List** – A list maintained by each Constituent Municipality of the public works equipment, personnel and any other resources available for the provision of aid and assistance if needed by another Constituent Municipality.
- I. Period of Assistance** – the period of time beginning when the Aiding Party assists the Requesting party by providing equipment, personnel, supplies or any other Public Works Assistance and ending when all Public Works Assistance returns to the regular duties of the Aiding Party.
- J. Public Works Assistance** – means equipment and personnel including, but not limited to; professional engineers, licensed staff, non-licensed personnel who are employed by a Constituent Municipality and used for activities in response to a disaster or emergency, related to roadways, water, stormwater, wastewater and any other public works program.
- K. Requesting Official** - means any person who is designated by the Requesting Party to request Public Works Assistance from a participating Aiding Party.
- L. Requesting Party** - means a Constituent Municipal entity that requests, equipment, services, personnel or any other Public Works assistance from an Aiding Party.

SECTION 3: PROCEDURES

- A. Operations Oversight** – The CVRPC shall be responsible for overseeing this Agreement and help to facilitate communications between the Constituent Municipalities. The CVRPC will also help to facilitate policies and procedures to guide requests for aid and assistance as set forth below.
- B. Request for Aid** – When a Requesting Party has been impacted by or is in imminent danger of a disaster or emergency, it may request Aid and Assistance from an Aiding Party, by making a verbal request, followed by a written request, to the Aiding Party, within three business days after aid is

needed or contemplated to be needed. An Aid Request Form shall be an addendum, but not an amendment to or modification of this Agreement. Requests should be made by and to the Aiding Party's authorized Aiding Official. A potentially Aiding Party, should not provide aid on its own without first confirming the need for assistance through the communication of the Aiding Official and Requesting Official to ensure that the type of aid being provided is necessary and needed. The provision of aid by an Aiding Party is entirely discretionary under this Agreement and the ultimate decision as to whether to render aid to a Requesting party shall be at the discretion of the Aiding Official in consultation with the legislative body of the Constituent Municipality if possible.

C. Designation of Officials – Each Constituent Municipality shall designate an Aiding Official and Requesting Official and at least one alternate Aiding Official and Requesting Official. Each Constituent Municipality shall be responsible for maintaining its own contact list of all Aiding and Requesting Officials and alternate Officials, along with all means of contact including, but not limited to cell phones, telephones, electronic mail and physical addresses and take reasonable steps to ensure that all Constituent Municipalities have the most current list. The CVRPC shall help develop the template of the contact list and annually aid in its distribution after having been provided by the Constituent Municipalities. Said list shall be an addendum, but not an amendment to or modification of this Agreement. The Requesting Officials and the Aiding Officials may be the same person in each municipality (i.e. a director of public works or Road Commissioner).

D. Information Needed - Request for Aid and Assistance – The Requesting Official shall provide, at minimum, to the Aiding Official and CVRPC (for informational purposes only): 1) a description of the disaster or emergency prompting the request; 2) what type of specific assistance is needed; 3) a description of the infrastructure impacted and the specific work needed to repair the infrastructure; and 4) an estimate of the type of public works assistance needed and the period of time it will be needed for. It is further recommended that the Requesting Official propose a plan for meeting with the Aiding Official to discuss the scope of the aid and for the Requesting Official to familiarize him or herself with the personnel and equipment of the Aiding Party (similar in nature to a pre-construction meeting). The Aiding Party shall then provide an estimate to the Requesting Party of expected costs for the scope of work requested and needed.

E. Supervision and Control – It is the intention of this Agreement that supervision and control of personnel will be structured in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Incident Command System (ICS) of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and that if the emergency/disaster is multi-jurisdictional, a Unified Command will be employed when practical.

1. When any personnel or equipment is deployed under the terms of this agreement, the Aiding Official shall meet with the Requesting Official. Orders by the Requesting Official will be given to the Aiding Official who will then give orders or direction to their personnel. The Aiding Official shall maintain reasonable contact with the Requesting Official as long as the Aiding Party is providing Public Works Assistance. The personnel of the Aiding Party may only be under the direct control of the Requesting party by a written mutual agreement.
2. In all instances and at all times, the Requesting Official or a designee thereof, shall have the right and responsibility to ensure that all personnel from the Aiding Party are asked to perform only those tasks or operations that are consistent with their training and are in accordance with their home protocols and accepted safe practices.
3. Personnel from the Aiding Party shall continue with the assigned tasks until the Requesting Party releases said personnel and equipment or until the Aiding Party recalls said personnel and equipment. No recall by an Aiding Party shall occur until, if reasonable given the facts and circumstances, the Aiding Official discusses the need for recall with the Requesting Official.
4. Each Aiding Party shall operate in accordance with the protocols of its Constituent Municipality, and all Aiding Party personnel shall act within the scope of his or her own training and certification or under the supervision of a person with the appropriate training and certification. Aiding Party personnel shall not be required to perform in a way that is inconsistent with the practices of their Constituent Municipality protocols or inconsistent with safe practices.
5. The Aiding Official shall be responsible for maintaining all records for time, materials and equipment provided to the Requesting Party; be responsible for the operation and maintenance of equipment provided by the Aiding Party; and report work process to the Requesting Party.

F. Mutual Aid Resource List – NIMS typed public works resources are included in the annual local emergency plan for each Constituent Municipality. The CVRPC shall annually distribute a list of the NIMS typed public works resources for all Constituent Municipalities. All original and updated NIMS typed public works resource lists shall be considered an addendum to, but not a modification of this Agreement.

G. Funds Payable By Each Municipality – the Constituent Municipalities agree that the funds, coming in the form of the amount of services provided by each Constituent Municipality shall be based on the resources available to them at the time aid and assistance is made by a Requesting Party in accordance with Section 4 Part A.

SECTION 4: REQUESTS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

- A. Procedures for Reimbursement** – Unless the Aiding Party and the Requesting Party agree to a different structure in writing, the Requesting Party shall be ultimately responsible for the reimbursement of the Aiding Party's costs incurred under this Agreement.
1. Within 30 days of the return of all personnel and equipment of the Aiding Party to the Constituent Municipality's homework station, the Aiding Municipality may submit to the Requesting Party, an invoice of all charges related to the aid provided pursuant to this Agreement. The invoice provided by the Aiding Party shall be paid within 30 days of receipt.
 2. All invoices generated by the Aiding Party shall be provided to the Requesting Party.
 3. Invoices by the Aiding Party shall follow the following standards.
 - a. Personnel. Charges for personnel shall be in accordance with the standard practices of the Aiding Party, including wages, salaries, contributions for insurance and retirement and personnel from the Aiding Party shall continue to accumulate seniority at the rate of the Aiding Party.
 - b. Equipment. Charges for equipment supplied by the Assisting Party, shall be reimbursed at the rental rate established for the same or substantially similar equipment by the regulations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (i.e., current FEMA Schedule of Equipment Rates), or at any other rate agreed to by the Aiding Party and Requesting Party in writing. Rent for equipment includes the cost of fuel and other consumable supplies, maintenance, service, repairs and ordinary wear and tear.
 - c. Transportation. The Aiding Party shall transport needed personnel and equipment by reasonable and customary means and in accordance with the Aiding Party's usual transportation and travel payment schedule. If such a schedule is unavailable, transportation charges shall be the reasonable and customary rates for such transportation.
 - d. Materials and Ancillary Expenses. Charges for materials and ancillary expenses such as consumable supplies, related to the provision of aid pursuant to this agreement shall be the reasonable and actual costs incurred by the Aiding Municipality.

4. The Aiding Party may invoice the Requesting Party for all expenses incurred during the Period of Assistance. All invoices shall be submitted by the Aiding Official to the Requesting Official. The invoices shall clearly delineate the time and expenses associated with personnel, equipment, transportation and any materials or ancillary expenses. Any question or dispute about an invoice from an Aiding Party shall first be discussed between the Requesting Official and the Aiding Official. If the Parties are still unable to reconcile an invoice, then they shall follow the next sequential procedures of the Dispute Resolution section of this Agreement.

SECTION 5: INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

- A. Insurance** – Each Constituent Municipality shall bear the risk of its own actions, as it does with its day-to-day operations. The Aiding Party shall be responsible for providing insurance to the fullest extent possible, including but not limited to workman’s compensation insurance, general liability insurance, excess liability insurance, and any other types of insurance coverage in amounts recommended by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund (VLCT-PACIF). Such insurance shall cover damage or injury to person, property or equipment owned or provided by an Aiding Party to the extent the damage or injury may have occurred while rendering aid to a Requesting Party.
- B. Indemnification** - To the extent allowed by law, each Requesting Party agrees to indemnify and hold harmless any Aiding Party and its employees, officers, administrators, elected officials and agents from any claim relating to cost, damage or injury of any description to any person or property caused by or through the action of any Aiding Municipality while rendering aid pursuant to his Agreement. Acts of gross negligence, willful misconduct, malfeasance, and/or criminal/illegal behavior are exempt from indemnification.
- C. Liability** – No Constituent Municipality shall have any liability to any other Constituent Municipality by reason of their inability or lack of desire to respond to a request for aid.

SECTION 6: TERM, MODIFICATION AND PERIODIC REVIEW

- A. Term** – This Agreement shall be in effect for one (1) year from the date signed by the initial Constituent Municipality. Thereafter, this Agreement shall be renewed for additional one year terms on an annual basis in conjunction with the local emergency plan.
- B. Termination** – Any Constituent Municipality may voluntarily terminate and withdraw from its participation in this Agreement at any time by a Requesting or Aiding Official giving written notification to the designated Requesting or Aiding

Officials of all other Constituent Municipalities to this Agreement. Electronic mail communications shall be considered written notification for purposes of this Agreement. Termination and withdrawal shall not be effective until sixty (60) days after written notification has been sent. Withdrawal by a Constituent Municipality shall not impact the liability or obligation incurred by the Constituent Municipality under this Agreement prior to the date of termination.

- C. Modification** – Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4345b(d)(4) any modification or amendment to this Agreement shall not become effective unless approved by the CVRPC and the legislative body of all the municipalities who are a party to this Agreement. The CVRPC shall assist in coordinating any modifications or amendments to this Agreement.
- D. Periodic Review** – On a biennial basis, the designated Aiding and Requesting Officials shall meet to review the terms of this Agreement and make any suggestions as to alterations or modifications if needed base on past performance. The CVRPC shall coordinate all meetings under this section.

SECTION 7: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- A. Dispute Resolution** – In respect to any dispute that arises pursuant to this agreement the Parties shall first make a good faith effort to work out differences among themselves. Should informal discussions between the Parties fail, then the Parties shall engage the services of a mutually agreed upon third party mediator. The costs of this third party mediator shall be split evenly between the Parties. Should attempts at mediation through a third party mediator fail, then any Party may seek redress in any Vermont Court of competent jurisdiction.
- B. Severability** – Should any clause, portion, section, provision or any other part of this Agreement be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate any other portion of the Agreement. The remaining portions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect without regard to the provisions that have been invalidated.
- C. Execution of Counterparts** – This agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts with the same effect as if the signatures thereto and hereto were upon the same instrument.

NOW THEREFORE, both the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission through its duly authorized representative has executed this agreement and all counterparts thereto.

Photographic copies shall be considered valid counterparts. Each of the Constituent Municipalities so desiring, have caused this Agreement to be executed by a duly authorized representative, after a vote allowing that duly authorized representative to execute this Agreement by the Constituent Municipality’s governing legislative body.

.....-

The following municipalities have elected to participate in the Central Vermont Regional Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement for 2024. Copies of signature pages are on file at the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

2024 Central Vermont Regional Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement Participating Municipalities:

Municipality

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC WORKS MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT AID REQUEST FORM

To be completed by the Requesting Official.

Requesting Municipality: Town/City of _____

Incident Name: Briefly describe the nature of the disaster or emergency prompting the aid request.

Damages and Needed Repairs: Briefly describe the infrastructure impacted and the specific work needed to repair the infrastructure.

Specific Assistance Needed: Briefly describe what type of assistance (personnel, equipment, materials) is needed.

Cost Estimate and Schedule: Provide an estimate for the needed assistance and period of time it will be needed for (start and end dates).

Plan for Meeting with Aiding Official to Review Project Scope (Optional): Briefly describe, if needed, the Requesting Official’s plan for meeting with the Aiding Official to review the scope of work and for the Requesting Official to familiarize him/herself with the personnel and equipment of the Aiding Party.

Requesting Official Signature: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

To be completed by the Aiding Official.

Request: Approved _____ Denied (Reason) _____

Resource Deployed: Date: _____ Time: _____

Cost Estimate:

Aiding Official Signature: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Municipality	Name	Phone - Primary	Phone - Alternate	Email
Barre City				
Requesting Official – Primary				
Requesting Official – Alternate				
Aiding Official – Primary				
Aiding Official - Alternate				
Barre Town				
Berlin				
Cabot				
Calais				
Duxbury				
East Montpelier				

Fayston				
Marshfield				
Middlesex				
Montpelier				
Moretown				
Northfield				
Orange				

Plainfield				
Roxbury				
Waitsfield				
Warren				
Washington				
Williamstown				
Woodbury				

Worcester				

	Town 1																			
Marine Vessel																				
Firefighting, Brush Patrol Engine																				
Fire Engine (Pumper)																				
Firefighting Crew Transport																				
Hand Crew																				
Water Tender (Tanker)																				
Air Compressor																				
Generator																				
Grader																				
Hydraulic Excavator, Medium Mass Excavation																				
Street Sweeper																				
Snow Blower (Track Mounted)																				
Track Skid Steer																				
Track Loader																				
Trailer, Equipment Tag Trailer																				
Truck, On-Road Dump																				
Truck, Plow																				
Water Pumps, De-Watering																				
Water Truck																				
Wheel Loader, Backhoe																				
Wheel Loader, Small																				
Wheel Loader, Medium																				
Wheel Loader, Large																				
Wood Chipper																				

2025 Regional Plan Natural Systems Chapter

Board of Commissioners

8 October 2024

Protect ecologically functioning natural systems and sustainably manage natural resources including wildlife, habitat, and water resources.

Goals

- ◆ **Goal 1: Conservation and preservation of diverse natural areas and wildlife habitats.**
- ◆ **Goal 2: Protection and restoration of surface water quality.**
- ◆ **Goal 3: Protection of ground water quality and an adequate, safe drinking water supply.**
- ◆ **Goal 4: Improve the identification and mapping of surface and groundwater resources.**
- ◆ **Goal 5: Enhance the capacity of the Region's Conservation Commissions.**
- ◆ **Goal 6: Prevent the spread of invasive species and forest pests.**

(See Crosswalk for comparison with 2016 Regional Plan Goals)

Outline

◇ **Terrestrial Resources & Natural Communities**

- ◇ Forest Trends
- ◇ Forest Blocks & Vermont Conservation Design
- ◇ Act 171: The Forest Integrity Act
- ◇ Habitat Connectors/Connectivity Blocks
- ◇ Grasslands
- ◇ Elevation and Slope

◇ **Aquatic Resources**

- ◇ Act 76: Clean Water Service Delivery Act
- ◇ Watershed
- ◇ Surface & Ground Water
- ◇ Lakes & Ponds
- ◇ Rivers & Streams
- ◇ Wetlands

◇ **Wildlife & Habitat**

- ◇ Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- ◇ Invasive Species
- ◇ Wildlife Road Crossings
- ◇ Act 59: Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act

◇ **Conclusion**

◇ **Goals and Strategies**

◇ **State Requirements**

◇ **References**

Primary Sources

- ◆ **Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation**
 - ◆ 2024 Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan
- ◆ **Vermont Fish & Wildlife**
 - ◆ Vermont Conservation Design
 - ◆ Conserving Vermont's Natural History
 - ◆ Wildlife Consideration in Local Planning
 - ◆ Staying Connected Initiative
- ◆ **Vermont Natural Resource Council**
 - ◆ 2020 Parcelization data
- ◆ **Municipal Plans**
 - ◆ Goals & Strategies of all 23 member municipalities

(See References for a complete list of sources)

Next steps

◆ **Commissioner Discussion:**

- ◆ Missing topics / map layers?
- ◆ Unnecessary sections?
- ◆ Balance between inventory and assessment data?

◆ **Stakeholder Outreach:**

- ◆ Key partners?
- ◆ Outreach strategies?

◆ **Design Natural Resources map:**

- ◆ Priority forest blocks / connectivity blocks
- ◆ Wildlife road crossings
- ◆ Significant natural communities
- ◆ Rare, threatened & endangered species
- ◆ Priority grasslands
- ◆ Surface waters
- ◆ Class I and II Wetlands
- ◆ Impaired waters & wetlands
- ◆ Elevation & slope

Crosswalk: 2016 Land Use Chapter and 2025 Natural Systems Chapter

2016 Land Use Chapter: Goals, Policies, and Strategies	Location of 2016 Land Use Goals in 2025 Natural Systems Goals	2025 Natural Systems Chapter: Goals and Strategies
Goal 1: To promote sound management, conservation and use of the Region's natural resources.	Goal 1	Goal 1: Conservation and preservation of diverse natural areas and wildlife habitats.
Policy 1. Municipalities are encouraged to establish conservation commissions (under V.S.A.24, Chapter 118) to assist in the identification, study, maintenance and protection of important natural resources.	Goal 5	Strategy 1: Provide technical assistance to municipalities in identifying and mapping critical resource areas, contiguous wildlife habitat and corridors.
Policy 2. Encourage the improved identification and mapping of surface and groundwater resources	Goal 4	Strategy 1A. Provide technical assistance to municipalities through training and workshops incorporating the Vermont Conservation Design and mapping tools such as the ANR Atlas and BioFinder into local planning efforts.
Strategy 2a. Work with State and Federal partners, such as U.S. Geological Survey, VT Geological Survey, and the Agency of Natural Resources in delineating ground watersupply, aquifers, and groundwater protection areas.	Goal 4. Municipal technical assistance	Strategy 1B. Collaborate with municipalities to identify locally significant sites that may not be captured by state level databases and designations.
Strategy 2b. Support towns in identifying wetlands and vernal pools that are not already mapped by the State of Vermont.	Goal 4, Strategy 2.	Strategy 2: Development and associated infrastructure (roads, driveways, utilities, etc.) shall be designed and sited in a manner to preserve contiguous areas of active or potential wildlife habitat.
Policy 3. Support the betterment of surface water quality in the Region.	Goal 2	Strategy 3: Provide technical assistance to communities interested in mandatory clustering, planned unit development, variable lot sizing and/or conservation subdivision design to conserve identified wildlife corridors.
Strategy 3a. Storage and utilization of fertilizers, pesticides, petro-chemicals, herbicides, sludge, or other potentially harmful industrial, agricultural, commercial or residential materials, must be accomplished in a manner compatible with existing regulations	Goal 3, Strategy 3.	Strategy 4: Collaborate with communities in working with interested landowners to foster participation in State and Federal programs such as Forest Legacy, Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlands, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.
Strategy 3b. CVRPC opposes the downgrading of surface water classifications unless such action is required to accommodate treated effluent from new or expanded municipal sewage treatment facilities. The Commission also opposes the upgrading of surface water classifications where such upgrading might be misleading or dangerous to users	Goal 3, Strategy 2 and 4. Promote best management practices	Strategy 5: Participate in stakeholder meetings with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Housing and Conservation during the inventory and implementation phases of the Conservation Strategy Initiative.
Strategy 3c. Where a proposed project involves a discharge into, or withdrawal from, any of the Region's surface waters, consideration should be given to the short and long term impact on such waters and to applicable health and water regulations. The potential degradation of water quality, the impact on wildlife, the assimilative capacity of waters, and the effect on the Region's ability to support future growth should be evaluated. Protection of the public health, safety, and welfare shall be the primary objectives.	Goal 3, Strategy 3 & Land Use Chapter	Goal 2. Protection and restoration of surface water quality.
Strategy 3d. Native vegetated buffer strips in riparian zones and shoreland areas should be protected or maintained according to Best Management Practices outlined in the Vermont Handbook for Shoreland Development and VT ANR Guidance Regarding Riparian Buffers to protect functional habitat and improve water quality.	Goal 2, Strategy 4. Grant assistance for municipalities	Strategy 1: As the Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider, work with the State Agencies and Watershed Organizations to identify, design, and implement priority cost-efficient Phosphorus reduction projects to meet the targets outlined in the Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load.
Strategy 3e. Encourage and assist with the acquisition of conservation easements along waterways according to priorities identified in River Corridor Plans	Goal 2, Strategy 2.	Strategy 2: Encourage and help acquire conservation easements along waterways according to priorities identified in River Corridor Plans.
Strategy 3f. Assist with and support efforts to remove dams that are not serving a useful purpose and other artificial barriers from rivers and streams. Help identify dams that are not serving a useful purposes and that should be listed for removal in conformance with state and federal rules and regulations.	Goal 2, Strategy 6.	Strategy 3: Promote the DEC Lake Wise Program and provide technical assistance for development of Lake Watershed Action Plans
Strategy 3g. Assist landowners in identifying funding opportunities to support buffer-plantings on their properties that would support stream bank and shoreland restoration.	Goal 2, Strategy 4. Grant assistance for municipalities	Strategy 4: Provide grant assistance to municipalities for the protection and maintenance of native vegetated buffer strips in riparian zones and shoreland areas.
Strategy 3h. High density development in proximity to surface waters should consider community septic systems to permit adequate setback of the leaching area, or connections to public systems, if possible	Goal 3, Strategy 1. Assist with municipal bylaw updates	Strategy 5: Participate in the preservation of functional and productive wetlands. Site design decisions by any Act 250 applicant shall be made to mitigate against possible encroachment on the Region's wetlands.
Policy 4. Encourage enhanced educational opportunities on watershed functions, protection and restoration, particularly those targeted to youth.	Goal 2, Strategy 7. Promotion of Watershed Organizations already doing this work	Strategy 6: Provide technical and grant assistance to towns and partners such as the VT Dam Taskforce in the removal of dams not serving a useful purpose.

Strategy 4a. Develop a clearinghouse of resources that could be used by teachers and other groups working with youth to provide education on these topics.	Goal 2, Strategy 7. Promotion of Watershed Organizations already doing this work	Strategy 7: Promote the work of partners such as Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District, Friends of the Winooski River, Friends of the Mad River, and Vermont River Conservancy by encouraging voluntary participation in conservation programs and identifying conservation priorities in the Region.
Policy 5. Avoid or limit development and investment in identified flood hazard areas. Where established economic and institutional centers exist, development in these centers shall adhere to strict floodplain management standards to minimize flood damage and public safety risk	See Land Use Chapter	Goal 3. Protection of ground water quality and an adequate, safe drinking water supply.
Strategy 5a. Continue to conduct outreach to municipalities regarding the most recent state River Corridor maps as delineated by the VT Agency of Natural Resources and their implications	See Climate and Flooding Chapter	Strategy 1: Provide technical assistance to towns in maintaining or creating regulations to ensure that land use near ground water sources will not contaminate public water supplies or wells.
Strategy 5b. Encourage and provide technical assistance to municipalities in enhancing the regulatory standards in their municipal flood hazard regulations, including the incorporation of River Corridor regulations.	See Climate and Flooding Chapter	Strategy 2: Disseminate information regarding guidelines for failed septic systems put forth by the Agency of Natural Resources and financial resources for repair or replacement.
Strategy 5c. Fill and new structures within mapped floodways as identified on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps shall be prohibited, except where a substantial public benefit is provided.	See Land Use Chapter	Strategy 3: Through participation in state permitting processes, help ensure hazardous waste is disposed of properly (in accordance with State and Federal regulations, etc.) to prevent any degradation of groundwater.
Strategy 5d. Wetlands that provide a flood storage function as determined by the VT Wetlands Program should be left undisturbed or development should be required to provide compensatory storage or restoration on-site or in the immediate vicinity, if disturbed.	Goal 2, Strategy 5. Restricts Act 250 applicants	Strategy 4: Promote the application and implementation of wastewater treatment technologies that will help protect and improve water quality and address wastewater PFAS effluent results of the Department of Environmental Conservation 2022 PFAS Monitoring Report.
Strategy 5e. Assist municipalities in identifying and limiting development on lands adjacent to waterways that provide flood storage or other beneficial function through acquisition, easement, deed restriction or zoning that encourages cluster design, particularly for those upstream floodplains that provide flood protection functions for the Region's downtowns and village centers.	Goal 2, Strategy 2. Implementation of River Corridor Plans	Strategy 5: Provide education and training to municipalities to advance the Department of Environmental Conservation 2023 PFAS Road Map[1]
Strategy 5f. CVRPC will have a FEMA Certified Floodplain Manager on Commission staff.	See Climate and Flooding Chapter	Strategy 6: Support towns in applying for funding sources to better their groundwater quality.
Policy 6. Improve flood resilience planning, education and outreach activities to create a citizenry aware of flood risks, potential costs, and actions that can serve to reduce risk and future property loss.	See Climate and Flooding Chapter	Goal 4. Improve the identification and mapping of surface and groundwater resources.
Policy 7. Minimize fragmentation of forest blocks and habitat connectors	Goal 1, Strategy 2. Development restrictions	Strategy 1: Provide technical assistance in delineating groundwater supply, aquifers, and groundwater protection areas for incorporation in municipal plans.
Strategy 7a. Promote the Use Value Appraisal (Current Use Program) and other non-regulatory approaches to forest conservation and management, including support of forest products and conservation easements.	See Economy Chapter	Strategy 2: Support towns in identifying wetlands and vernal pools that are not already mapped by the State of Vermont.
Strategy 7b. Encourage municipalities to identify forest blocks and habitat connectors and plan for the minimization of forest fragmentation.	Goal 1, Strategy 2. Development restrictions	Goal 5. Enhance the capacity of the Region's Conservation Commissions.
Strategy 7c. Work with municipalities to incorporate development review standards in zoning and subdivision regulations that address forest and wildlife resources.	Goal 1, Strategy 3. Technical Assistance	Strategy 1: Educate municipalities on the value of establishing and maintaining Conservation Commissions (under V.S.A.24, Chapter 118)
Goal 2: To enhance and support the viability of the Region's resource based industries. Policies:	See Economy Chapter	Strategy 1A. Provide training and workshops on the importance of landscape and community scale resource protection.
Goal 3: To encourage the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside while promoting development in economically viable locations.	See Land Use Chapter	Strategy 1B. Participate in and promote trainings, workshops, and stakeholder meetings with partner organizations such as the VT Fish & Wildlife Department, and the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions.
Goal 4: To protect environmentally sensitive or unique areas.	Goal 1	Strategy 1C. Target outreach, consultation, and technical assistance to Town's without a functioning Conservation Commission.
Policy 1. Natural and fragile areas identified in this Plan should receive protection from harmful uses.	Goal 1, Strategy 1B. Identification	Strategy 2: Develop a forum for the Region's Conservation Commissions to meet and discuss trends, current projects, and gaps in management.
Policy 2. Where natural and fragile areas occur on developable private lands and where their adequate protection would preclude any other reasonable use of those properties, acquisition in fee simple or less than fee simple is recommended.	Goal 5, Strategy 3.	Strategy 3: Provide technical and grant assistance to municipalities interested in purchasing development rights, conservation easements, or fee simple acquisition to protect contiguous areas of active or potential wildlife habitat.
Policy 3. Where a potentially harmful development or activity is proposed in proximity to a natural or fragile area, measures should be taken to ensure adequate protection.	Goal 1, Strategy 2. Development restrictions	Goal 6. Prevent the spread of invasive species and forest pests.

Policy 4. CVRPC encourages the inclusion of natural and fragile areas information and mapping in local plans. (Municipalities should not be limited by the definitions and designations included here, as it is recognized that this Plan may not include all locally significant sites.)	Goal 1, Strategy 1. Mapping Critical Resources	Strategy 1: Educate local partners on the value of coordinated invasive species and forest pest detection, prevention and control measures.
Policy 5. It is the policy of CVRPC to encourage the maintenance of existing wildlife habitats and habitat connectors. Municipalities are encouraged to identify those of local importance.	Goal 1, Strategy 1. Mapping Critical Resources	Strategy 2: Promote such programs as the DEC Vermont Invasive Patrollers and Public Access Greeters Program through municipal workshops.
Strategy 5a. Work closely with partners such as The Nature Conservancy, the Staying Connected Initiative and Vermont Fish and Wildlife to identify areas within the Region that are sensitive to development, which contains the most recorded species, the most diverse communities, etc., and have this data available for incorporation in member town plans.	Goal 5, Strategy 1A-B. Education, trainings, and technical assistance for local Conservation Commissions.	Strategy 3: Assist municipalities in integrating invasive species management into town planning such as adopting an Ash Tree Management Plan.
Policy 6. 6. Any activity that would degrade important groundwater supplies is discouraged. Specifically, development activities in designated WHPA's shall be carefully reviewed for groundwater impacts	Goal 3, Strategy 1. Assist with municipal bylaw updates.	Strategy 4: Provide grant assist towns in applying for grants, such as the Vermont Aquatic Nuisance Species Grant-in-Aid program, to combat aquatic invasive species.
Policy 7. Hazardous wastes shall be disposed of properly to prevent any degradation of groundwater.	Goal 3, Strategy 3.	
Policy 8. It is the policy of CVRPC to encourage the preservation of wetlands so as to protect their function and productivity. Efforts (including consideration of site design options) should be made to mitigate against the possible adverse impacts of development on the Region's wetlands.	Goal 2, Strategy 5.	
Policy 9. Prevent the spread of terrestrial invasive species and forest pests.	Goal 6	
Strategy 9a. Work with partners to implement coordinated invasive species and forest pest education, detection, prevention and control measures.	Goal 6, Strategy 2. Municipal workshops	
Strategy 9b. Encourage landscaping with native species over the use of non-native species, particularly in non-urban environments. Work with UVM Extension Master Gardeners on educating homeowners on the use of native trees and plants.	Removed - Goal 6, Strategy 3. Town Planning	
Goal 5: To preserve the aesthetic quality of the Region	See Economy & Land Use Chapters	
Goal 6: To ensure that new development in the vicinity of the Region's interstate interchanges is appropriate to the setting and considers the impact of such development on adjacent village and urban centers.	See Infrastructure & Transportation Chapters	
Goal 7: To manage the quality and quantity of storm water runoff in order to avoid property damage and negative impacts on surface and groundwater.	Goal 2, Strategy 1. Clean Water Service Provider program.	
Policy 1. New development should, through design and maintenance, attempt to minimize changes in the volume and chemical composition of runoff. Methods recommended to achieve this objective include: -Avoiding construction on steep or unstable slopes and in high elevations (Slopes in excess of 25% and elevations above 2,500 feet are generally thought to be prohibitive for most kinds of development.); -Stabilizing entrances to construction areas to eliminate tracking of sediment onto paved public roads; -Employing cluster/open space design techniques; -Minimizing development road and sidewalk widths to those which are necessary for safety and access; -Avoiding the use of wide radius, paved cul-de-sacs, where appropriate ("Hammerhead" turns, smaller radius turns, and landscaped cul-de-sac islands are some other options.); -Minimizing the removal of native vegetation to the extent practical; -Phasing new construction to minimize the amount of disturbed soil at any given time where practical; and -Providing vegetated buffers between roof lines and paved areas and between sidewalks	See Land Use Chapter & Climate and Flooding Chapter	

<p>to control storm water on new development sites before, during and after construction (including plans for long term maintenance and operations). Objectives and applications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Storm water retention: wet ponds, artificial wetlands -Storm water detention: dry basins -Storm water filtering: bio-retention, sand filters, compost filters -Storm water velocity control: filter strips, grassed swales, rock swales -Erosion control: construction schedule, seeding/mulching, check dams, run- off diversions -Sediment control: sediment basins/traps, filter fabric/silt fences, hay bales, inlet protection -Infiltration: infiltration basins, trenches, dry well, leaching catch basins, in- filtration islands, pervious surfaces 	<p>See Climate and Flooding Chapter</p>
<p>Policy 3. Acceptable Management Practices (AMP's, as defined by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources) should be employed on all agricultural, silvicultural and earth extraction operations</p>	<p>See Economy Chapter</p>
<p>Policy 4. Efforts should be made to minimize the extent of impervious surfaces and surface runoff associated with parking facilities. The following methods are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Constructing structured parking facilities (i.e. multi-level garages) where practical and appropriate in order to provide a higher ratio of parking spaces to impervious surface area; -Using pervious materials in "spillover" parking areas; -Integrating the use of landscaped areas as "bio-retention" filters; and -Providing smaller spaces for compact cars. 	<p>See Climate and Flooding Chapter</p>
<p>Policy 5. Municipalities should consider adopting policies and practices to reduce the volume and impacts of storm water runoff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encouraging storm water management through the use of BMP's (as outlined in policy 2) in local plans, zoning bylaws, and building permits; -Minimizing zoning setbacks to allow for shorter driveways, and allowing shared driveways; -Instituting maximum, as well as minimum, parking ratio requirements in local bylaws to prevent "overbuilt" parking lots; -Allowing for shared parking facilities in local bylaws; -Adopting "pooper scooper" ordinances to prevent the pollution of surface waters with pathogens and nutrients; -Protecting high elevations and steep slopes from intensive development in local bylaws; -Properly sizing and maintaining culverts; -Properly maintaining ditches on dirt roads to slow runoff and filter sediments as per the "Road Design and Maintenance Handbook" published by the Vermont Local Roads Program; -Separating combined storm water/sewer systems (CSO's) which can dis- charge raw sewage to surface waters during big storms; and -Making sure road salt storage areas are covered. -Consulting the "Erosion Control Prevention Manual" published by the Vermont Geological Survey. 	<p>Goal 3, Strategy 1. Assisat with Municipal bylaw update. See Climate & Flooding Chapter</p>

Natural Systems

Aspiration

Protect ecologically functioning natural systems and sustainably manage natural resources including wildlife, habitat, and water resources.

Introduction

The Region's natural systems are part of an interconnected ecologically functioning landscape. Critical ecological functions that natural systems provide include clean water, flood control, air purification, and carbon sequestration. The Region's large intact forests also provide scenic resources, recreational opportunities, economic sustainability, and intrinsic values. Local planning efforts represent how municipalities in the Region are working to protect and restore valuable natural resources. Desired outcomes include improving the health of our forests, waterways, and atmosphere. Adjacent regional and state goals include increasing equitable access to the many benefits of Vermont's functioning natural systems. These goals are reflected in Vermont's landmark Act 59: Community Resilience and Biodiversity Act, which addresses the intersectionality of conservation, environmental justice, and the statewide housing crisis.

The following pages outline the multiple layers that make up the Region's unique natural systems. Terrestrial and Aquatic resources consist of ecological layers that range from natural communities to individual species. An ecologically functioning landscape relies on the natural interactions of species with the landscape. Each layer of the landscape faces unique threats to natural processes such as forest fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, invasive species, and increase of flooding events. Conservation at the broadest scales will ensure that critical species and their habitats are maintained for future generations. Locally, the identification and mapping of valued natural resources is critical in developing protective measures and implementing innovative conservation strategies.

The goals and strategies that follow focus on planning for the future of the Region's natural systems. Achieving these goals will require balancing conservation with preservation and leveraging opportunities where regional targets align with community values.

Goals

[Goal 1: Conservation and preservation of diverse natural areas and wildlife habitats.](#)

[Goal 2: Protection and restoration of surface water quality.](#)

[Goal 3: Protection of ground water quality and an adequate, safe drinking water supply.](#)

[Goal 4: Improve the identification and mapping of surface and groundwater resources.](#)

[Goal 5: Enhance the capacity of the Region's Conservation Commissions.](#)

[Goal 6: Prevent the spread of invasive species and forest pests.](#)

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Terrestrial Resources & Natural Communities

The Region is transected by several north-south running mountain chains including the Green Mountains to the west, the Northfield Range to the south, the Worcester Range to the north central, Irish Hills to the south central, Woodbury Mountain to the north and the Groton Range to the east. The Winooski River Valley is an exception to this pattern, cutting across the mountains as it flows west to Lake Champlain. Large blocks of connected forest remain in the foothills and along the spine of the mountain chains; however, the river valleys are some of the most developed areas of the Region and are the most prone to habitat fragmentation.

Town-wide natural community inventories are an extremely useful planning tool for community-led natural resources prioritization. Since natural communities do not follow political boundaries and professional consultants can be costly, collaborating with neighboring towns is a practical way of making these inventories more accessible. Several towns have hired consultants to complete natural community inventories. In 2008, the Mad River Valley Planning District, consisting of Fayston, Waitsfield, and Warren, hired Arrowwood Environmental to complete an inventory of natural communities in all three towns. This report allowed each town to implement conservation measures addressing wildlife connectivity, upland natural communities, and rare and uncommon species on the local and regional scale. The following towns include conducting natural community inventories as a priority goal in their town plans: Calais, Duxbury, Fayston, Marshfield, Northfield, Plainfield, Williamstown. For more information on natural community mapping the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has published a guide to community-based planning for conservation, *Conserving Vermont's Natural History*¹.

A natural community is an interacting assemblage of plants and animals, their physical environment, and the natural processes that affect them (*Conserving Vermont's Natural Heritage* 2013). The Region's diverse landscapes and elevations contribute to varied natural communities including but not limited to: Rich Northern Hardwood Forests, Montane Spruce-Fir Forest, Hemlock Forests, and a variety of productive wetland communities such as Northern White Cedar Swamps. Significant natural communities, as ranked by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, cover over 53,000 acres, approximately 10% of the Region. These forested areas contain habitat essential to various wildlife species and help protect and replenish surface and groundwater supplies. They also perform an important atmospheric cleansing function protecting the quality of the air we breathe. Many recreational pursuits are dependent on, or enhanced by, forestland, as is the aesthetic quality of the Region. The table below breaks down forested areas by tree types. The majority of forestland in the Region is dominated by beech, maple and birch, with spruce-fir found at higher elevations.

¹ Conserving Vermont's Natural Heritage:
https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Get%20Involved/Partner%20in%20Conservation/Conserving_Vermont's_Natural_Heritage.pdf

Forest Types by percentage in Central Vermont (USDA Forest Service, 2012)
(Insert current data)

	Washington County	Orange County	Vermont
White/Red/Jack Pine	12.1	25.8	9.2
Spruce/Fir	5.4	8.5	7.3
Exotic Softwoods	0.3	1.7	0.3
Oak/Pine	2.8	0.5	2.0
Oak/Hickory	0.0	3.1	3.1
Elm/Ash/Cottonwood	0.0	0.0	1.7
Maple/Beech/Birch	71.6	57.0	71.2
Aspen/Birch	7.7	3.4	5.2

Forest Trends

According to the USDA Forest Inventory and Analysis² Vermont has lost approximately 4,191 acres of forestland between the years of 2005 and 2019. Only 3 to 5 percent of all development projects in Vermont are regulated by Act 250 (*Fish and Wildlife Budget 2022*). This trend has serious implications for the growing number of plants and wildlife migrating north through Vermont in response to climate change. Non-regulatory strategies are necessary to reduce forest fragmentation and minimize habitat loss. Key municipal strategies include conducting natural community inventories, securing conservation easements, and promoting the Use Value Appraisal Program. Private landowners can contribute by taking actions to keep forests intact. Through working with a consulting forester private landowners can consider their regional context, create a customized management plan, and engage in estate planning. Several towns have set the goal of providing landowner education on the importance of contiguous forests and connecting habitat to promote voluntary methods to protect these resources. Organizations like Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife³, the Forest Legacy Program⁴, as well as local land trusts can work with interested landowners to prevent fragmentation and teach responsible forest stewardship.

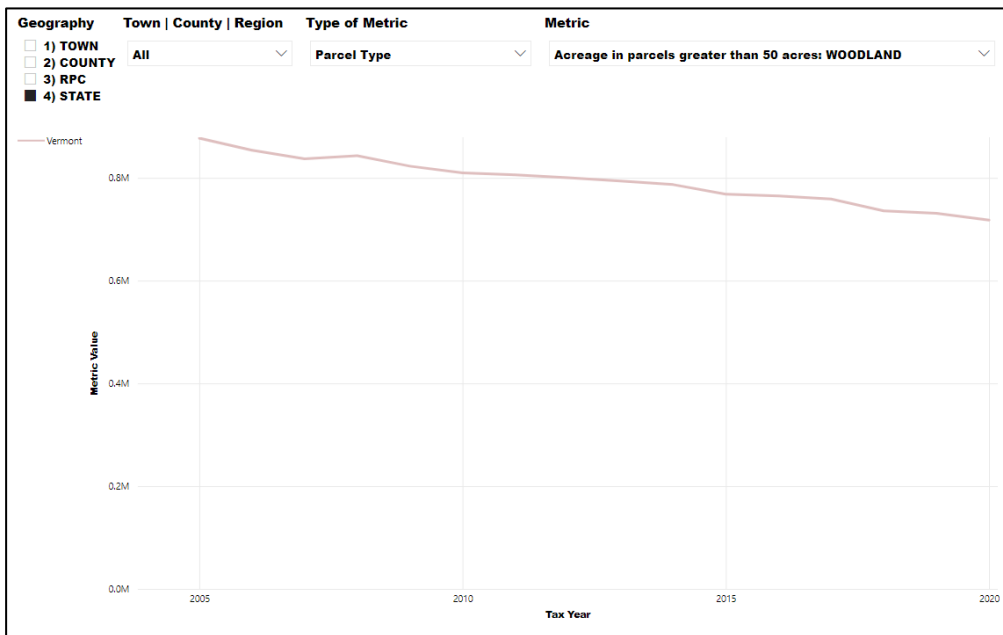
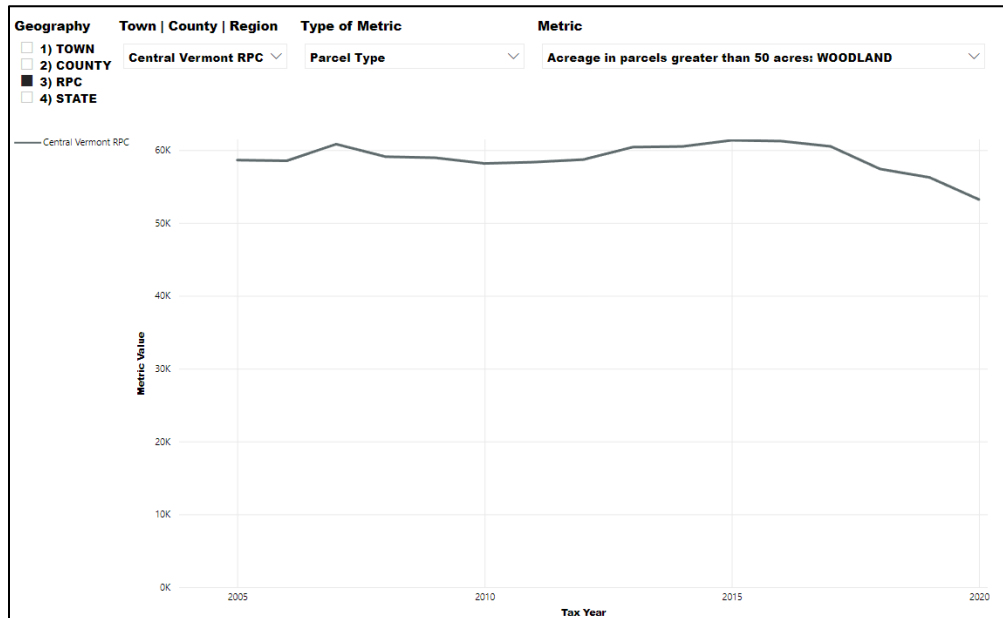
Between 2005 and 2020, the total acreage of woodland parcels larger than 50 acres declined by 9.2% in the Region with an 18.2% loss statewide, according to the Vermont Natural Resources Council. For the first time in more than a century Vermont is losing forest due to the subdivision of land. This trend, also known as parcelization, is the subdivision of land into smaller and smaller pieces and multiple ownerships (VT PARCELIZATION). Parcelization leads to further fragmentation, characterized by the creation of gaps in the forest and barriers to wildlife movement. This may include housing and commercial developments, roads, and power lines, that result in the direct loss or inaccessibility of important habitat. The reduction in size of forest patches by roads and associated development can

² <https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/60981>

³ Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife: <https://vtcoverts.org/passing-lands.html>

⁴ Forest Legacy Program: https://fpr.vermont.gov/state_lands/acquisition/forest-legacy-program

render forest habitats unsuitable for certain species of native plants and animals (VFW, *Conserving Vermont*, 2013). For more information on the interplay of conservation and housing needs refer to the Land Use and Housing chapters.



<https://vtforesttrends.vnrc.org/explorer>

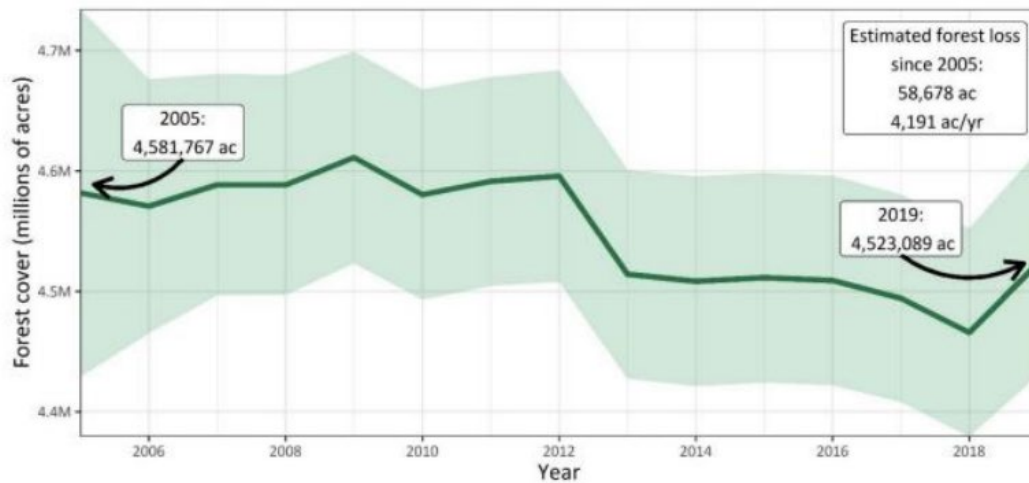


Figure 2: Estimated forest loss in Vermont 2005–2019 (Kosiba, 2021)

Forest Blocks & Vermont Conservation Design

Conservation at the landscape levels involves identifying and planning for intact forest blocks, or areas of continuous forest and other habitats unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture (Sorenson and Osborne 2014). Town plans across the Region highlight the importance of mapping natural resources and identifying priority forest blocks to inform forest management. Town goals and policies support educating residents on the importance of forest blocks, habitat connectors, and riparian buffers. This includes engaging communities in the management process for priority forest blocks such as Camel's Hump State Forest, Mount Mansfield State Forest, Green Mountain National Forest, the Worcester Range, and Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.

Most town plans in the Region promote the use of regulatory and nonregulatory land use planning strategies to protect these valued natural resources. Conservation organizations like the Forest Legacy Program and the Vermont Land Trust have worked with towns and willing landowners to purchase strategic easements and keep priority forest blocks conserved and connected. Conservation reserve funds are another strategy utilized in certain towns for ease of land acquisition. Collaboration between conservation and planning commissions is essential for protecting valued natural resources through a variety of land use planning tools. Common zoning practices to conserve priority forest blocks include cluster development, conservation subdivisions, overlay districts, setbacks requirements, and a thorough development review process.

The Vermont Conservation Design was developed by The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department with the goal of maintaining and enhancing an ecologically functional landscape. This data is free and publicly accessible through BioFinder⁵, the statewide prioritization mapping tool for conservation planning. BioFinder is an interactive way to view state designated forest blocks critical to keeping our forests intact, connected, and diverse. Municipalities can choose which natural resource layers to include in

⁵ [Vermont ANR - BioFinder4](https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/BioFinder4/): <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/BioFinder4/>

printable maps to help inform planning processes. Updated in 2024 BioFinder displays the most up to date data for state level conservation targets. However, gaps may occur when planning at the local level. Town-wide natural community inventories should be conducted to compliment this state data and provide the most accurate depiction of local resources.

Insert map of highest priority forest blocks and significant natural communities

Act 171: The Forest Integrity Act

Act 171 amended municipal and regional planning goals to manage priority forest blocks and habitat connectors and encourage the use of locally grown forest products. Beginning in 2018, municipalities seeking to have their plans approved by their Regional Planning Commission must include additional information on the future land use map and language that identifies state, regional or locally significant forest blocks and habitat connectors. Plans may also include specific policies on how the community will take steps to reduce forest fragmentation, enhance forest health, and support essential ecological functions. Most towns have chosen to create a town forest management plan and work with Consulting Foresters to address thinning, harvesting, access rights, recreation, and wildlife habitat. For an updated list of towns with forest management plans contact your County Forester. The Agency of Natural Resources published Act 171 Guidance⁶ support municipal and regional planning efforts for forest integrity.

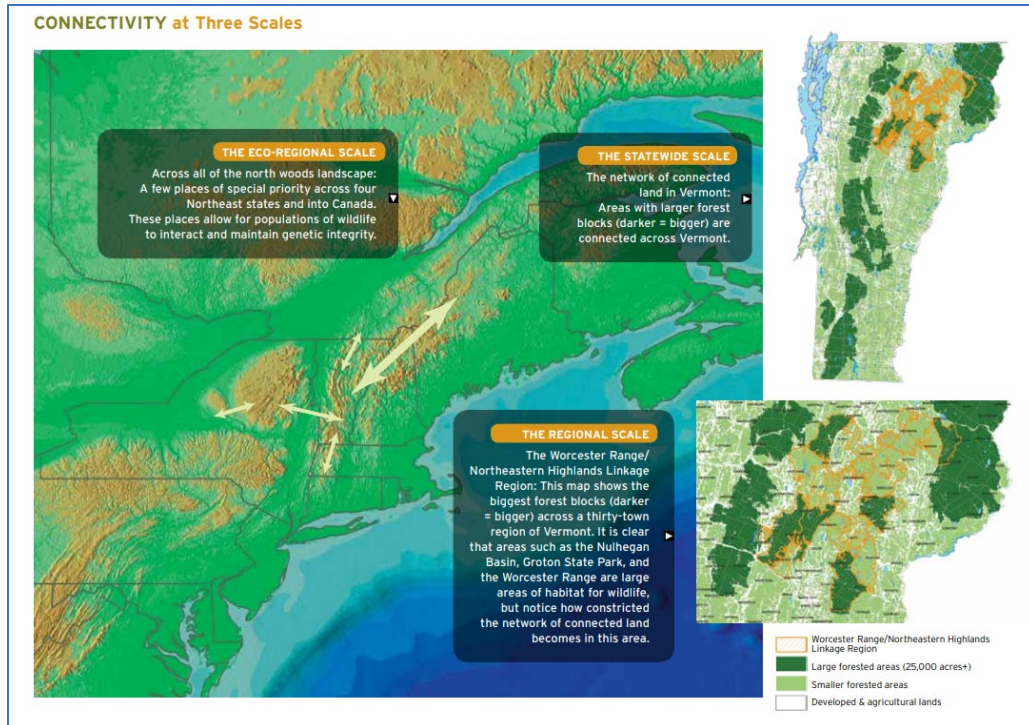
Habitat Connectors/Connectivity Blocks

The Region is at a crossroads for wildlife on the move throughout the Northeast U.S. and Canada. The Nature Conservancy estimates species in North America are shifting their ranges 11 miles north and 26 feet in elevation each decade (Miller 2020). This means we not only need to plan for where wildlife is now, but for where they are going to be soon and the paths they will take to get there. Several municipalities have set the goal of partnering with Conservation Commissions, local organizations, and state agencies to inventory, study, and conserve wildlife habitat connectors across town boundaries.

Habitat connectors or connectivity blocks are the network of forests that together provide wildlife connectivity across the region (Sorenson and Zaino 2018). Connectivity across the landscape allows for regional genetic exchange and adaptation to unpredictable habitat shifts resulting from climate change. Connectivity blocks act as stepping-stones for wildlife moving between larger forest blocks. For example the Worcester Range in Central Vermont is a key connectivity block allowing wildlife to move from priority forest blocks in New York's Adirondacks to the Northeast Kingdom and beyond (Staying Connected Initiative, et al 2012).

⁶ Act 171 Guidance:

<https://anr.vermont.gov/sites/anr/files/co/planning/documents/guidance/Act171Guidance.pdf>



Map credit: <https://anr.vermont.gov/sites/anr/files/2022-11/enduringplacefinal.pdf>

Include Highest Priority Connectivity Blocks in Natural Resources map

Grasslands

Large grasslands and meadows, often created by agricultural activities, provide important habitat for many bird species. Bobolinks, Savannah sparrows, and eastern meadowlarks all rely on large open fields for ground nesting. There are opportunities and actions farmers can take to preserve bird habitat with minimal economic losses. Waiting to mow until after August 1st can greatly increase the chance of survival. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and The Bobolink Project provide financial assistance to farmers who experience a loss of income by choosing to protect grassland birds (VFWD, 2023). Certain grasslands may be suitable locations for multiple uses such as energy and housing development. Regional there are opportunities to explore the preservation of open field resources while increasing our energy supply and housing stock.

-include priority grasslands in natural resources map

Elevation and Slope

As part of the Northern Green Mountain and Northern Vermont Piedmont biophysical regions, Central Vermont is characterized by high elevations and steep slopes. Areas of high elevation and steep slopes are important for resource protection and subject to additional land use regulations. Elevations above 2,500 feet are regulated by Act 250. If triggered, Act 250 also regulates development on steep slopes, those between 15-25%, to reduce the risk of erosion. Certain towns use a lower elevation threshold, such as 1,750 feet, above which they prohibit development. In the case of Montpelier, the city has

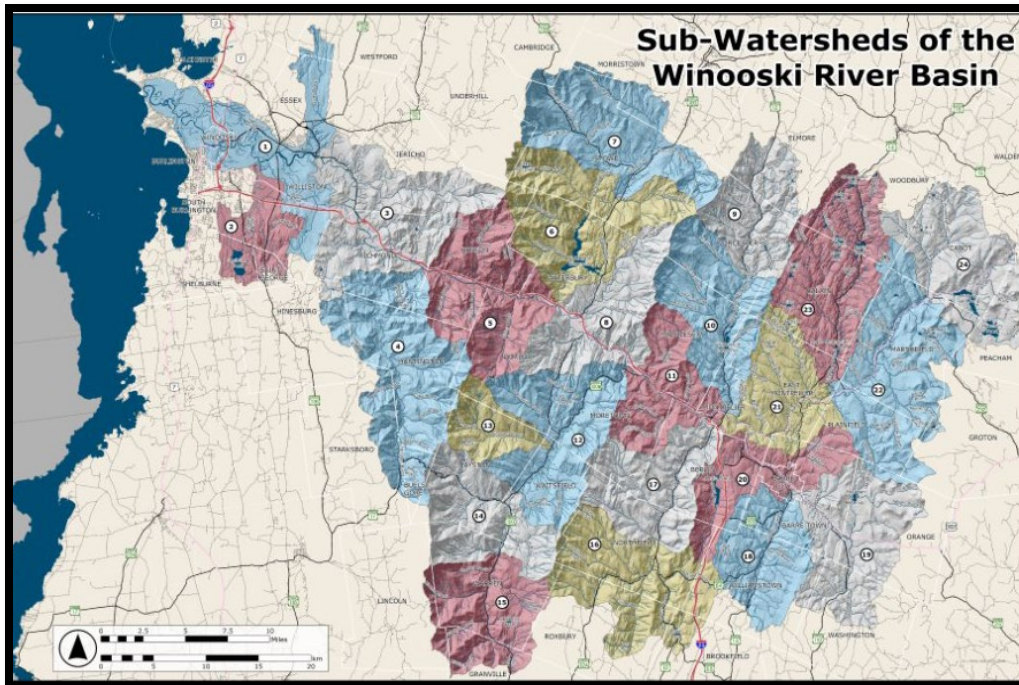
chosen to regulate steep slopes at all elevations. Below is a list of the benefits of regulating land use at areas of high elevation and steep slopes:

1. Rare, threatened, and endangered species – Certain species that are rare or nonexistent at lower elevations are found in our Region’s alpine environments. As the climate warms, more plants and animals will continue to shift to higher elevations to meet their habitat needs.
2. Watershed planning – High elevation areas also play an important role in the watershed as the starting point for precipitation that flows into the valleys.
3. Water quality – Soils in these areas are often more sensitive to erosion due to shallow bedrock, gravity, and exposure to extreme weather. Disturbance of these soils is more likely to impact water quality, as soils and their nutrients are washed into surface waters. Additional sediment in rivers can lead to bank destabilization, streambank erosion, and harmful nutrient loading. Protection of high elevations and restoration of steep slopes and eroding areas is a critical piece in maintaining and improving water quality.
4. Landslides – Understanding where and when slopes in the Region have failed is necessary to plan for future landslides. For local data a Landslide Inventory of Washington County was published by Norwich University professor George Springston in 2017. Statewide information on when and where landslides have occurred can be accessed with the Vermont Open Geodata Portal’s interactive Landslides map.
5. Development limitations – promotes development in more suitable locations.
6. Stormwater mitigation – protects development from potential foundation failures from building on steep slopes.

Insert slope map: Percent of each town subject to slope restrictions (from zoning bylaws) / Percent of each town off-limits to development due to elevation restrictions.

Aquatic Resources

The Region predominantly drains into the Winooski River and is the largest tributary watershed to Lake Champlain covering approximately 11.5% of Vermont’s land area. The Winooski River begins in the northeast corner of Washington County in the Town of Cabot and runs for approximately 94 miles northwesterly before flowing into Lake Champlain just north of Burlington in Colchester. The basin occupies all of Washington County, a little less than half of Chittenden County and smaller parts of Lamoille, Orange, Caledonia, and Addison counties. CVRPC’s regional boundary closely matches the upper portion of the Winooski River Basin.



Act 76: Clean Water Service Delivery Act

In 2019, the Vermont General Assembly approved the Clean Water Service Delivery Act, also known as Act 76. Act 76 provides a long-term funding source for water quality projects, prioritizes financial support for voluntary projects, and establishes a network of decentralized Clean Water Service Providers (CWSPs) and Basin Water Quality Councils (BWQCs) to identify and implement voluntary projects. CWSPs have multifaceted responsibilities. Their role includes establishing partnerships with non-profit groups and landowners, creating and supporting BWQCs, and identifying and implementing nonregulatory projects to meet Phosphorus reduction targets established to clean up Lake Champlain. CWSPs are also responsible for verifying and inspecting projects over time and ensuring consistency with Tactical Basin Plans. CVRPC has been selected to serve as the Clean Water Service Provider for the Winooski Basin.

Watershed

Planning on the watershed scale is a holistic process that involves local, regional, and state partners working together towards a common goal. The Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan⁷ is updated every five years and is a strategic guidebook to protect and restore Vermont's surface waters. Proposed strategies focus on meeting goals through voluntary participation and project implementation by watershed partners and the Basin's Clean Water Service Provider.

Town plans throughout the Region share similar priorities for protecting water resources. River corridor and shoreland overlay districts are widely used to increase protection. Collaboration with the basin's watershed partners is critical in protecting and restoring our shared water resources. Some of the

⁷ 2024 Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan:

https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/WID/WPP/Winooski_TBP_2023_signedFinal.pdf

organization's towns have partnered with to restore riparian habitat and implement town wide water quality projects include Friends of the Winooski, Friends of the Mad River, Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership, Vermont River Conservancy, and the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District.

CVRPC has been involved with assessment and planning for the Winooski River and its major tributaries along with partners such as Friends of the Winooski River, Friends of the Mad River, Vermont River Conservancy, Vermont Natural Resources Council, Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District, the DEC River Management Program, and the municipalities of Central Vermont.

Surface & Ground Water

The Region's ample water resources shape the landscape, support the larger ecosystem, and influence local land use decisions. Surface waters include rivers, lakes, and wetlands that offer recreational opportunities such as fishing, swimming, boating, wildlife observation and hunting. Vegetative buffers on shorelines protect water resources by reducing flood waters, ice damage, sediment loading and bank erosion. Surface waters and buffers provide fish and wildlife habitat and allow for movement up and down stream and between forest blocks. Certain towns utilize zoning ordinances such as setbacks, buffers, shoreland overlay districts, Low Impact Development, and River Corridor Bylaws to maintain or restore the natural condition and function of the river corridors and improve flood resilience. Basin wide initiatives are underway to increase Aquatic Organism Passage and improve water quality through the replacement of undersized culverts and bridges.

Well over half of the Region's residents, and many of its businesses, receive their water from groundwater sources. In our rural areas, this figure rises to almost 100%. The supply of groundwater is threatened in some locations because of increased impermeable surfaces in aquifer recharge areas. Sources of groundwater contamination in the Region include domestic sewage, landfills, improper disposal of hazardous wastes, leaky underground storage tanks, pesticides and fertilizers. The State's strategy to groundwater management includes identifying critical recharge zones or Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs) and establishing land use guidelines to reduce potential contamination on these sites. The Department of Environmental Conservation requires water providers to develop a Source Protection Plan to minimize the contamination risk within WHPAs. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a rising concern for water quality within the Region. In 2023 the Agency of Natural Resources released a PFAS Roadmap⁸ to address the findings from the 2022 PFAS monitoring report⁹. In this report PFAS chemicals were found to be above detection limits in Barre and Montpelier effluent.

*-Insert Table of acres of surface waters & buffered area by town
-Insert Map of 303d waters & watersheds (2024 TBP)*

⁸ ANR 2023 PFAS Roadmap: <https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/DEC-PFAS-Roadmap-December-2023-Final.pdf>

⁹ ANR 2022 PFAS Monitoring Report: <https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/2021-PFAS-Surface-Water-Fish-Tissue-and-WWTF-Effluent-Monitoring-Report.pdf>

Lakes & Ponds

The 2024 Tactical Basin Plan identifies Nelson Pond in Calais and Sabin Pond in Woodbury as candidates for Lake Watershed Action Plans due to increasing nutrient trends, fair shoreline conditions, and moderately disturbed watersheds. These communities are currently undergoing Lake Wise Assessments. The Region has one impaired lake, Waterbury Reservoir, due to sedimentation and turbidity. Lakeshore communities looking to address the major threats to water quality can work with the Department of Environmental Conservation to conduct Lake Wise¹⁰ Assessments and consider adopting a Lake Watershed Action Plan¹¹. Lake Wise Assessments award landowners for implementing shoreland best practices. Lake Watershed Action Plans are a comprehensive assessment of pollutants threatening a lake community and may include possible remediation strategies. Currently, no lake communities in the Region have adopted Lake Watershed Action Plan.

The Region is home to over 65 lakes and ponds, totaling over 2,300 acres of surface water. The largest water bodies are over 180 acres and include Waterbury Reservoir, Berlin Pond, East Long Pond in Woodbury, and Wrightsville Reservoir in Middlesex. Woodbury and Calais contain the most lakes and ponds of the Region's towns. The Town of Woodbury alone contains over 40% of the Region's lakes and ponds acreage. Many of the Region's lakes and ponds have highly populated shorelines due to poorly planned development.

Rivers & Streams

The following rivers and streams have biomonitoring data that indicate fair or poor condition, Little River and West Branch Little River, Graves and Thatcher Brooks in Waterbury, Jail Branch through Barre City, High Bridge Brook in Waitsfield, and Long Meadow Brook in East Montpelier and Calais (Tactical Basin Plan 2024). These streams are a priority for further assessment along with several river segments that are impaired due to E. Coli. Landowners interested in addressing the major threats to river and stream health can work with the Stream Wise¹², a partnership of the Lake Champlain Basin Program and New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission. The Stream Wise Program offers free property assessments, recommendations on improving streamside management, and awards to private landowners that maintain wide riparian buffers of native plants.

The health of the Region's rivers and streams are best addressed through a comprehensive river corridor planning process. This involves the integration of fluvial geomorphic assessment data and the goals and objectives of the State and local community to formulate scientifically sound and ecologically beneficial river restoration and conservation projects that will improve water quality and the community's relationship with the river. Although many of the Region's rivers and tributaries have been evaluated in the past, no new assessments have been completed since 2018. Limited resources requires that Stream Geomorphic Assessments and River Corridor Plan updates are prioritized with respect to their need for collecting current data. The 2024 Tactical Basin Plan recommends partners work with the Vermont Rivers Program to pilot an assessment update process in either the Dog River or Stevens and Jail Branches where partners have previously expressed concern that river corridor plans are out-of-date while communities have expressed interest in new project development. After the flooding of July 2023

¹⁰ DEC Lake Wise: <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/what-lake-wise>

¹¹ DEC Lake Watershed Action Plan: <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/lake-watershed-action-plans>

¹² Stream Wise: <https://streamwisechamplain.org/>

and 2024 several towns have expressed an urgent need to reevaluate rivers and streams that are exacerbating downstream flooding.

Wetlands

Wetlands are some of the most biodiverse places in the state and provide habitat for a variety of aquatic and riparian plant and animal communities. Wetland conservation is critical for preventing the loss of remaining intact wetlands, and wetland restoration is essential for rehabilitating those that have already been degraded or lost. Wetland restoration includes assessing areas of degraded or converted wetlands and areas of saturated soils for restoration potential and implementing restoration projects where feasible. Recommendations for wetland restoration can be found in Stream Geomorphic Assessments, River Corridor Plans, and the Tactical Basin Plan. The 2024 Tactical Basin Plan identifies the following factors that correlate to poor wetland condition:

- presence of invasive plant species,
- disturbance to the wetland buffer or immediate surrounding area,
- disturbance to wetland soils, and
- disturbance to wetland hydrology (how water moves through a wetland) through ditching (e.g., agricultural), filling (e.g., roads) and draining (e.g., culverts).

Wetlands are areas of land inundated or saturated with water for varying periods of time during the year and providing a variety of benefits including productive and diverse biological communities, surface and underground water purification, flood storage during wet periods, and reservoir recharge during dry spells. Wetlands in Vermont are classified as Class I, II, or III based on the value of the functions they perform. Class I wetlands are considered irreplaceable and given the highest level of protection. Class I and II wetlands are both protected by the Vermont Wetland Rules¹³. Chickering Fen is currently the Region's only Class 1 wetland. Kettle Pond has been proposed to study for possible upward reclassification (DEC StoryMap 2023). The VT Wetlands Inventory Map¹³ is a tool for locating classified wetlands and vernal pools.

-Insert Map of class I and II wetlands in the Region

Wildlife & Habitat

Native wildlife species provide numerous values to the Region. Their presence in the landscape is valued intrinsically and is a symbol of sustainability. Wildlife viewing, photography, hunting and trapping are some of the recreational and economic values associated with large forests and healthy wildlife populations. See the Economy chapter for the economic impact of outdoor recreation. Conserving large, forested areas is essential for maintaining the greatest species diversity possible and allowing for wildlife movement across the landscape. Certain species have such specific needs that their habitat must be considered at the local level. The Agency of Natural Resources has labeled certain habitats as significant including: deer wintering habitat; wetlands; habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species; significant natural communities; and feeding / denning habitats for black bears. Protecting these

¹³ Wetlands Inventory Map: <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/WetlandProjects/default.html>

significant habitats from degradation, conversion, and fragmentation is a priority outlined in town plans across the Region.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Towns interested in planning for rare, threatened, and endangered species should combine the state's data with local inventories for a more complete understanding of where and when these species occur. In the Region alone, there are nearly 600 different locations in which vulnerable species and their habitats are found, covering approximately 8,600 acres or 1.5% of the Region. Natural community inventories can alert communities to the presence of these vulnerable species and in some cases lead to overlay districts protecting critical habitats.

Rare, threatened, and endangered species serve important roles in maintaining ecological integrity; sometimes, the details of this role may not be known until a species is lost or becomes extinct. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Natural Heritage Inventory¹⁴ tracks these species (*Rare and Uncommon Species* 2019) and the BioFinder mapping tool uses updated Natural Heritage Inventory data to display known habitat boundaries.

-Include Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species in Natural Systems Map

Invasive Species

Along river corridors and rural roads Japanese knotweed has become one of the largest invasive concerns in the Region. Aquatic invasive plants detected in the Region's lakes and ponds include Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and brittle naiad. The 2024 Tactical Basin Plan identified at least one invasive species present at the following locations: Berlin Pond, Waterbury Reservoir, North Montpelier Pond, Sabin Pond, and Mirror Lake. On the municipal level there are more opportunities to expand education of invasive species and increase best management practices. Towns can set guidelines for invasive management on municipal property and connect landowners with technical assistance providers like the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District. Certain towns have taken a proactive approach to invasive management and with assistance from CVRPC have released Ash Tree Management Plans. Consulting foresters are also available for this work and in 2020 the Town of Waterbury worked with Redstart Natural Resource Management to complete an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan¹⁵. The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program also offers municipal assistance for towns interested in creating an Ash tree management strategy. For invasive species lists, reporting resources, and guides to writing invasive species management plans visit www.vtinvasives.org.

Three common ways to combat invasive species are eradication on specific sites, education and enforcement, and policy advocacy at the state level. The Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation Barre District manages approximately 90,000 acres or 17% of Central Vermont and works to mitigate the spread and effect of invasive plants. The Department of Environmental Conservation hosts the Public

¹⁴ Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Natural Heritage Inventory:

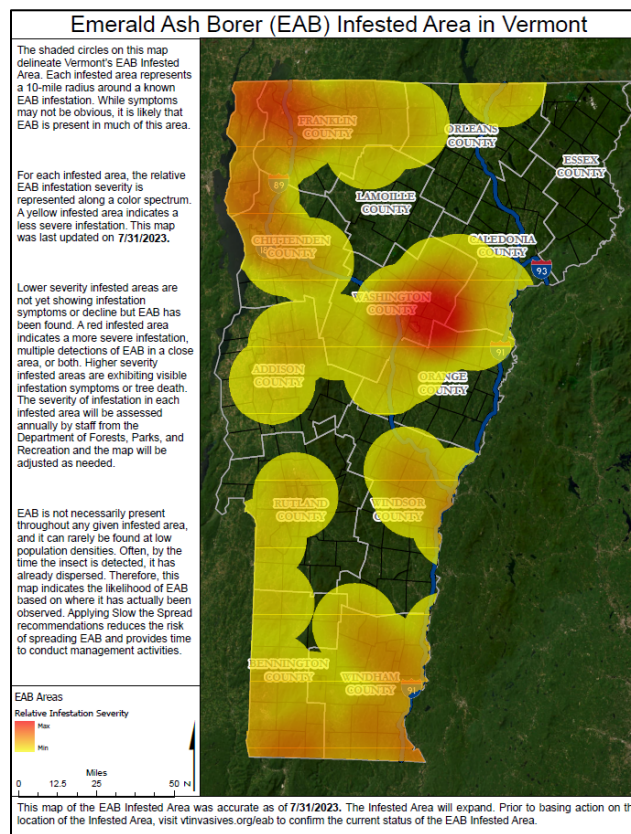
<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/conservation-planning/natural-heritage-inventory>

¹⁵Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan:

https://www.waterburyvt.com/fileadmin/files/Ordinance_files/Plans/Emerald_Ash_Borer_Preparedness_Plan.pdf?be6afe1658327168b960fbc8f73ba0a1514f6950

Access Greeter Program to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Greeters are stationed at boat launches statewide including the Waterbury Reservoir to inspect incoming boats for invasive aquatic hitchhikers.

Invasive species are plants, animals, and other organisms introduced to a non-native ecosystem that cause harm to the environment, economy, or human health (VT Invasives 2023). Non-native, invasive plants and pests present a variety of threats to forest and aquatic health in Vermont and the Northeast. Invasive plants such as bush honeysuckles, buckthorn, autumn olive, and Japanese barberry crowd out native plants and are expensive and difficult to control. Invasive plants outcompete natives species by extending their growing season and capitalizing on natural disturbances. Non-native invasive insects are also on the move into Vermont forests. Invasive insects of concern in Vermont are the emerald ash borer, Asian long-horned beetle, and hemlock wooly adelgid. These species cause extensive mortality of certain native tree species with wide-ranging negative implications for the health of our wildlife and forests. For municipal forests and streets trees the emerald ash borer presents an immediate threat. As indicated in the map below, the Region has some of the most severe cases of known emerald ash borer in the state.



Map credit: https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/images/RiskAreaMap_073123.pdf

Wildlife Road Crossings

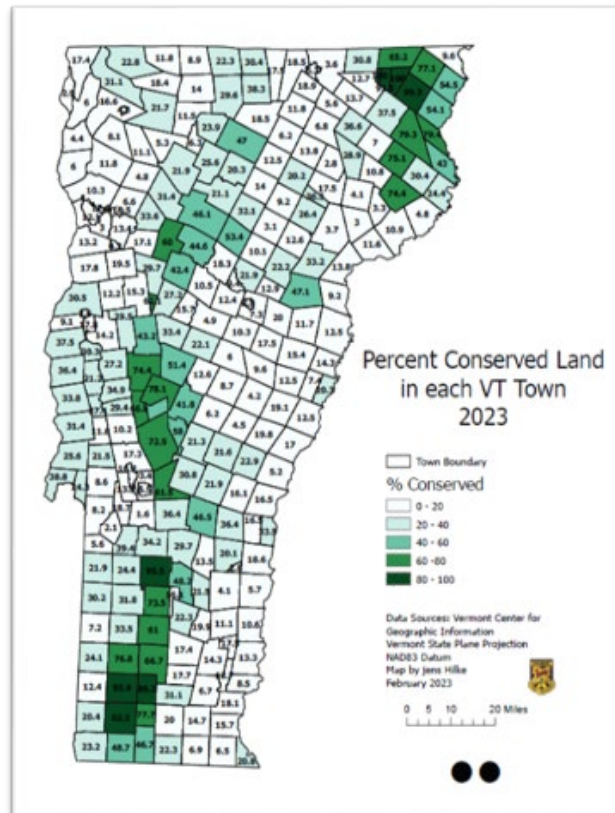
One of the top five most important wildlife crossings in the state is known as the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor¹⁶. This wildlife crossing occurs along Route 100 on the Waterbury-Stowe town line and is the only viable connection between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range. The Waterbury and Stowe town plans recommend protecting Shutesville Hill through zoning and subdivision practices, conservation easements, accompanied by ongoing public outreach and education. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has mapped priority road crossings statewide on the interactive BioFinder map. Towns can build off this data using local knowledge of where and when wildlife is seen along roadways. Removing fencing, installing wildlife shelves, and replacing undersized culverts are all actions that increase connectivity for wildlife. In 2023 a Federal Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program granted the Vermont Agency of Transportation \$1.6 million to fund the design of a wildlife friendly bridge allowing crossing under I-89 and Route 2 in western Waterbury. This is a key crossing that would connect the north and south Green Mountains and allow for wildlife movement from the Taconic Mountains in Massachusetts all the way to the mountains of Quebec (*Wildlife Crossing 2023*).

Insert map of Shutesville Hill & include priority wildlife road crossings in Natural Resources Map

Act 59: Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act

As Vermont's strategy for conservation evolves the Region's role in contributing to statewide targets needs to be considered by all member municipalities. Targets include state, federal, municipal, and private lands. Private lands account for about 80% of Vermont and willing landowners are essential to meeting these targets (VFWD Budget 2022). The VT Fish and Wildlife Department released the following preliminary conservation map below to show the percent of conserved land by town, although it is still unknown which of these lands will count towards the new targets (Giles 2023). According to these figures the average town in the Central Vermont is approximately 20% conserved. Certain towns in Central Vermont have already set goals encouraging or requiring conservation subdivisions to guide development into preferred areas while protecting natural resources. The town plan of Williamstown encourages conservation subdivisions for future development. The Warren town plan sets the goal of requiring conservation subdivision design to protect natural resources and preserve open space. Calais and Marshfield share the goal of developing a town wide plan for placement of planned unit developments and clustered subdivisions. Innovative solutions such as conservation or clustered subdivisions simultaneously protect natural resources and open space while providing housing and opportunities for energy development. Dual land uses will be necessary in order to achieve these visionary conservation, housing, and energy development goals.

¹⁶ Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor: <https://www.shutesville.com/connectivity>



Map credit:

<https://npr.brightspotcdn.com/54/00/c463e839406daf6f03de00ce014c/h.126~Deb%20Brighton~Maps%20and%20Graphs%20on%20Conserved%20Land~2-9-2023.pdf>

The Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act highlights conservation strategies such as supporting private landowner education, technical assistance, sustainable forest management programs, conservation easements, and fee acquisitions focused on passive management. The bill also recognizes the intersection of conservation with statewide housing and environmental justice goals.

Conclusion

The following goals and corresponding strategies are focused on planning for the future of the Region's natural systems. Conservation of our natural resources must be addressed at multiple scales. The proposed strategies call for conservation and preservation of the Region at the landscape, natural communities, and species levels. Providing educational opportunities and direct technical and grant assistance to member municipalities is foremost in protecting our Region's ecologically functioning natural systems. This includes identifying local champions to partner with to meet new and aggressive statewide conservation targets. Also critical is collaboration with state agencies and conservation organizations to utilize the best available science and create innovative solutions in response to threats such as invasive species and climate change. Success will be measured in the health of our ecology, economy, and community health across the Region.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Conservation and preservation of diverse natural areas and wildlife habitats.

Strategy 1: Provide technical assistance to municipalities in identifying and mapping critical resource areas, contiguous wildlife habitat and corridors.

- A) Provide technical assistance to municipalities through training and workshops incorporating the Vermont Conservation Design and mapping tools such as the ANR Atlas and BioFinder into local planning efforts.
- B) Collaborate with municipalities to identify locally significant sites that may not be captured by state level databases and designations.

Strategy 2: Development and associated infrastructure (roads, driveways, utilities, etc.) shall be designed and sited in a manner to preserve contiguous areas of active or potential wildlife habitat.

Strategy 3: Provide technical assistance to communities interested in mandatory clustering, planned unit development, variable lot sizing and/or conservation subdivision design to conserve identified wildlife corridors.

Strategy 4: Collaborate with communities in working with interested landowners to foster participation in State and Federal programs such as Forest Legacy, Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlands, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

Strategy 5: Participate in stakeholder meetings with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Housing and Conservation during the inventory and implementation phases of the Conservation Strategy Initiative.

Goal 2. Protection and restoration of surface water quality.

Strategy 1: As the Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider, work with the State Agencies and Watershed Organizations to identify, design, and implement priority cost-efficient Phosphorus reduction projects to meet the targets outlined in the Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load.

Strategy 2: Encourage and help acquire conservation easements along waterways according to priorities identified in River Corridor Plans.

Strategy 3: Promote the DEC Lake Wise Program and provide technical assistance for development of Lake Watershed Action Plans

Strategy 4: Provide grant assistance to municipalities for the protection and maintenance of native vegetated buffer strips in riparian zones and shoreland areas.

Strategy 5: Participate in the preservation of functional and productive wetlands. Site design decisions by any Act 250 applicant shall be made to mitigate against possible encroachment on the Region's wetlands.

Strategy 6: Provide technical and grant assistance to towns and partners such as the VT Dam Taskforce in the removal of dams not serving a useful purpose.

Strategy 7: Promote the work of partners such as Winooski Natural Resource Conservation

District, Friends of the Winooski River, Friends of the Mad River, and Vermont River Conservancy by encouraging voluntary participation in conservation programs and identifying conservation priorities in the Region.

Goal 3. Protection of ground water quality and an adequate, safe drinking water supply.

Strategy 1: Provide technical assistance to towns in maintaining or creating regulations to ensure that land use near ground water sources will not contaminate public water supplies or wells.

Strategy 2: Disseminate information regarding guidelines for failed septic systems put forth by the Agency of Natural Resources and financial resources for repair or replacement.

Strategy 3: Through participation in state permitting processes, help ensure hazardous waste is disposed of properly (in accordance with State and Federal regulations, etc.) to prevent any degradation of groundwater.

Strategy 4: Promote the application and implementation of wastewater treatment technologies that will help protect and improve water quality and address wastewater PFAS effluent results of the Department of Environmental Conservation 2022 PFAS Monitoring Report¹⁷.

Strategy 5: Provide education and training to municipalities to advance the Department of Environmental Conservation 2023 PFAS Road Map¹⁸

Strategy 6: Support towns in applying for funding sources to better their groundwater quality.

Goal 4. Improve the identification and mapping of surface and groundwater resources.

Strategy 1: Provide technical assistance in delineating groundwater supply, aquifers, and groundwater protection areas for incorporation in municipal plans.

Strategy 2: Support towns in identifying wetlands and vernal pools that are not already mapped by the State of Vermont.

Goal 5. Enhance the capacity of the Region's Conservation Commissions.

Strategy 1: Educate municipalities on the value of establishing and maintaining Conservation Commissions

- A) Provide training and workshops on the importance of landscape and community scale resource protection.
- B) Participate in and promote trainings, workshops, and stakeholder meetings with partner organizations such as the VT Fish & Wildlife Department, and the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions.
- C) Target outreach, consultation, and technical assistance to Town's without a functioning Conservation Commission.

¹⁷2021 PFAS monitoring results: <https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/2021-PFAS-Surface-Water-Fish-Tissue-and-WWTF-Effluent-Monitoring-Report.pdf>

¹⁸2023 PFAS Road: <https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/DEC-PFAS-Roadmap-December-2023-Final.pdf>

Strategy 2: Develop a forum for the Region's Conservation Commissions to meet and discuss trends, current projects, and gaps in management.

Strategy 3: Provide technical and grant assistance to municipalities interested in purchasing development rights, conservation easements, or fee simple acquisition to protect contiguous areas of active or potential wildlife habitat.

Goal 6. Prevent the spread of invasive species and forest pests.

Strategy 1: Educate local partners on the value of coordinated invasive species and forest pest detection, prevention and control measures.

Strategy 2: Promote such programs as the DEC Vermont Invasive Patrollers and Public Access Greeters Program through municipal workshops.

Strategy 3: Assist municipalities in integrating invasive species management into town planning such as adopting an Ash Tree Management Plan.

Strategy 4: Provide grant assist towns in applying for grants, such as the Vermont Aquatic Nuisance Species Grant-in-Aid program, to combat aquatic invasive species.

State Requirements	CVRPC Goals & Strategies	Other Chapters
State Planning requirements: # (6) statement of policies on the:		
6(A) preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources; and	Goal 1.1	Economy
6(B) protection and improvement of the quality of waters of the State to be used in the development and furtherance of the applicable basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.	Goal 2.1 - 2.7, Goal 3.1 - 3.6, Goal 4.1 - 4.2	
State Planning Goal # (5) To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape,		
5(A) including: significant natural and fragile areas;	Goal 1.1	
5(B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands;	Goal 2.1 - 2.7, Goal 3.1 - 3.6, Goal 4.1 - 4.2	
5(C) significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;		Economy, Transportation
State Planning Goal # (6): To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.		
6(A) Vermont’s air, water, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).	Goal 1, 2, 3	Economy, Land Use
6(B) Vermont’s water quality should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.	Goal 2, 3	
6(C) Vermont’s forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.	Goal 1.1 - 1.5	

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MEMO

Date: October 2, 2024
To: Board of Commissioner
From: Christian Meyer, Executive Director
Re: Update on basin wide coordination for flood hazard mitigation

I am providing the Board of Commissioners with this memo as follow-up on past Board discussions and updates to members on the status of current efforts to foster greater basin wide flood hazard mitigation planning and coordination.

I participated in an initial conversation with several regional partners on what a regional coalition for flood mitigation might look like.

Participants discussed priorities for the Winooski Basin and identified basin wide initiatives that could serve as a first step toward a coalition. The group agreed on the value of a basin wide roundtable or convening. Such a convening might be used to:

- build a campaign that grows cultural and political momentum towards community and collective action that can reduce the impacts of future flood events and improve resilience in the watershed;
- tell the story of those actions and collaborations already taking place across the watershed;
- increase coordination amongst the towns and other partners;
- articulate needs.

The product of this work has not been strictly identified, but might include:

- better aligning resources with needs;
- building towards a comprehensive watershed flood resilience plan that identifies and prioritizes common projects and goals.

I believe this work directly responds to needs articulated by individual CVRPC members regarding flood risks originating beyond municipal borders. Additionally, this work may help inform the regional planning process.

1 **CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
 2 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
 3 **Draft MINUTES**
 4 **September 10, 2024**

5 **Commissioners:**

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barre City | Janet Shatney, Sec/Treas | <input type="checkbox"/> Moretown | David Stapleton |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vacant | <input type="checkbox"/> | Joyce Manchester, Alt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barre Town | Alice Farrell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northfield | Royal DeLegge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vacant | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jeff Schulz, Alt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berlin | Robert Wernecke | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orange | Lee Cattaneo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Karla Nuissl, Alt. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plainfield | Paula Emery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabot | Brittany Butler | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bob Atchinson, Alt. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Calais | John Brabant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roxbury | Jerry D’Amico, Chair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Melanie Kehne, Alt. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waitsfield | Don La Haye |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duxbury | David Wendt | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Alice Peal, Alt. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vacant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warren | Alexis Leacock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E. Montpelier | Vacant | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jenny Faillace, Alt. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Clarice Cutler, Alt. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Washington | Peter Carbee, Vice Chair |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fayston | Andrew McNealus | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waterbury | Doug Greason |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marshfield | Vacant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Williamstown | Richard Turner |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middlesex | Ron Krauth | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jacqueline Higgins, Alt. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mitch Osiecki, Alt. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodbury | Michael Gray |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Montpelier | Mike Miller, Alt. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Worcester | Bill Arrand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vacant | | |

6
7 Staff: Christian Meyer, Sam Lash, Lincoln Frasca, Eli Toohey, Niki Sabado Will Pitkin

8
9 **Call to Order:** Chair D’Amico called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm, a roll call was completed, and a quorum
10 was present.

11 **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None

12 **Public Comments:** None

13
14 **Open Meeting Law Follow-up:**

15 C. Meyer summarized CVRPC’s response to the allegations of Open Meeting Law violation following the July
16 2024 special meeting. It was determined that CVRPC had not violated Open Meeting Law as alleged.

17
18 Chair D’Amico read to the commissioners the most important points of CVRPC’s letter of response to the
19 complainant. The full letter is posted on CVRPC’s website.

20
21 **Open Meeting Law Resolution Amendment:**

22 C. Meyer summarized the proposed amendment to CVRPC’s Open Meeting Law Resolution, as detailed in the
23 meeting packet. This modification would include changing certain committees’ meeting schedules publishing the

1 schedules. R. Wernecke moved to adopt the amendment, L. Cattaneo seconded. No discussion. All in favor,
2 motion passed.

3

4 **Readopted Energy Element Crosswalk:**

5 C. Meyer explained the intent of the energy element crosswalk between goals and strategies in the 2016
6 Regional Plan as amended and the goals and strategies of the energy element in the 2024 Regional Plan, then
7 broadly summarized the changes to the goals and strategies. The Regional Plan Committee will review the
8 Energy draft chapter of the upcoming Regional Plan rewrite at the 10/15/2024 meeting.

9

10 A. Peal discussed renewable energy siting constraints in the Waitsfield Town Plan; S. Lash discussed mapping
11 procedures to determine areas that have high potential for energy generation infrastructure and constraints
12 that limit energy infrastructure siting (including state constraints, regional constraints, and local constraints).
13 Discussion included factors that would enable energy development and help determine preferred site types.

14

15 J. Brabant reiterated concerns that previous restrictions on wind turbine hub height are no longer present in the
16 2024 Regional Plan. P. Emery asked how to provide feedback directly; best method is to email S. Lash directly
17 and CC Regional Plan Committee chair A. Peal. J. Brabant opined that wind energy generation, because it needs
18 to be sited on ridgelines to be financially viable, always has a regional impact beyond only in the host
19 municipality; M. Gray agreed.

20

21 **Regional Plan Chapter Review – Economy:**

22 C. Meyer gave context on the regional plan review process in which the Regional Plan Committee reviews draft
23 chapters, staff incorporates committee feedback, then the full Board of Commissioners reviews a more
24 advanced draft. Tonight’s review of the Economy draft chapter is the first such full commission review.

25

26 N. Sabado presented on staff’s and the Regional Plan Committee’s progress to date and priorities moving
27 forward in developing the draft chapter, along with areas where staff are especially seeking commissioners’
28 input.

29

30 L. Cattaneo commented that using “shall” and other mandatory language in a document typically would be
31 followed by a definition of the consequences for non-conformance. C. Meyer stated that Peter Gregory, the
32 executive director of Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, spoke on the use of mandatory language
33 vs. advisory language at the 9/4/2024 Regional Plan Committee meeting. Meeting minutes are available on
34 CVRPC’s website.

35

36 Regional Plan Committee members (A. Peal, A. Farrell, and D. Greason) provided further information from that
37 discussion. D. Greason also referenced a Natural Resources Board (NRB) training manual (in the 9/4/2024
38 Regional Plan Committee meeting packet) that provided instruction for how NRB employees evaluate
39 mandatory language and advisory language (AKA guidance language) when reviewing proposed developments
40 for conformance with regional and municipal plans.

41

42 A. Farrell spoke about the economic impact of career centers and requested further information on educational
43 resources in the region and requested more information about the relationship between the region’s aging

1 population and the housing shortage. P. Emery agreed that housing that is appropriate for aging populations
2 should be a priority to the region.

3
4 **Programs Update (MERP, GMT, Flood Prevention Group):**

5 **MERP:**

6 S. Lash provided updates on the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, including a recently-announced policy
7 change from the VT Department of Buildings and General Services that limited the number of towns that are
8 eligible for no-match grants; four towns in the region (Barre City, Cabot, Worcester, and Plainfield) remain
9 eligible and staff are continuing to work with those towns to advance eligible projects. S. Lash emphasized that
10 other funding sources will continue to be available, even with this unexpected policy shift, and staff will continue
11 to work with towns to find alternative funding sources for projects that were in the works but are now unable to
12 advance under MERP.

13
14 Discussion followed related to the intent of limiting funding to towns with the highest energy burden and how
15 energy burden is calculated.

16
17 S. Lash provided updates on mini-grants and how many towns that have received the mini-grants have used
18 them to date. Windowdressers is an eligible use of those mini-grant funds; S. Lash will provide reminders in
19 future reports of how that money can and cannot be used.

20
21 **GMT:**

22 C. Meyer summarized Green Mountain Transit's recent proposals to reduce budget and how those proposals
23 might affect the region and its residents. This may include service cuts in the region, though details are to be
24 determined. CVRPC is considering whether to advocate for state funding to meet gaps in federal funding;
25 additionally, CVRPC will continue to track an ongoing study that is examining the possibility of shifting
26 Washington County service to a different provider instead of GMT, which is focused more on Chittenden County.

27
28 **Flood Prevention Group:**

29 C. Meyer summarized a new initiative to address flooding at a larger scale than individual municipalities and
30 listed various existing CVRPC committees and work groups that are already addressing flooding at a regional
31 scale. C. Meyer asked commissioners whether to consider creating a new group that more directly addresses
32 flooding at a regional level than the existing groups and whether flooding is a place where commissioners would
33 be interested in using more mandatory language to create stronger regulations.

34
35 P. Emery spoke about Plainfield's experience in recent flooding and the importance of maximizing flood risk
36 mitigation. E. Toohey provided an example of how flooding has been addressed in Brownfields and other related
37 issues.

38
39 A. Farrell asked how the 2025 Regional Plan will tie together issues through the entire plan instead of having
40 siloed chapters created by separate staff and committees. Staff and Regional Plan Committee members
41 addressed ways to ensure cohesion throughout the regional plan.

42
43 **Meeting Minutes:**

1 A. Farrell moved to approve the 7/9/2024 drafting meeting minutes, R. Wernecke seconded. All in favor, motion
2 carried.

3 D. La Haye moved to approve the 7/18/2024 drafting meeting minutes, M. Miller seconded. All in favor, motion
4 carried.

5

6 **Reports:**

7 C. Meyer encouraged commissioners to review reports and expressed gratitude for the excellent work that the
8 planning technicians (K. Hansen, J. Gross-Dixon, and G. Corbett-Valade) did this summer.

9

10 C. Meyer provided updates on programs including Municipal Energy Resilience Program, Local Hazard Mitigation
11 Plans, and Brownfields. CVRPC will consulting with municipalities more in the coming months related to the
12 Future Land Use Maps.

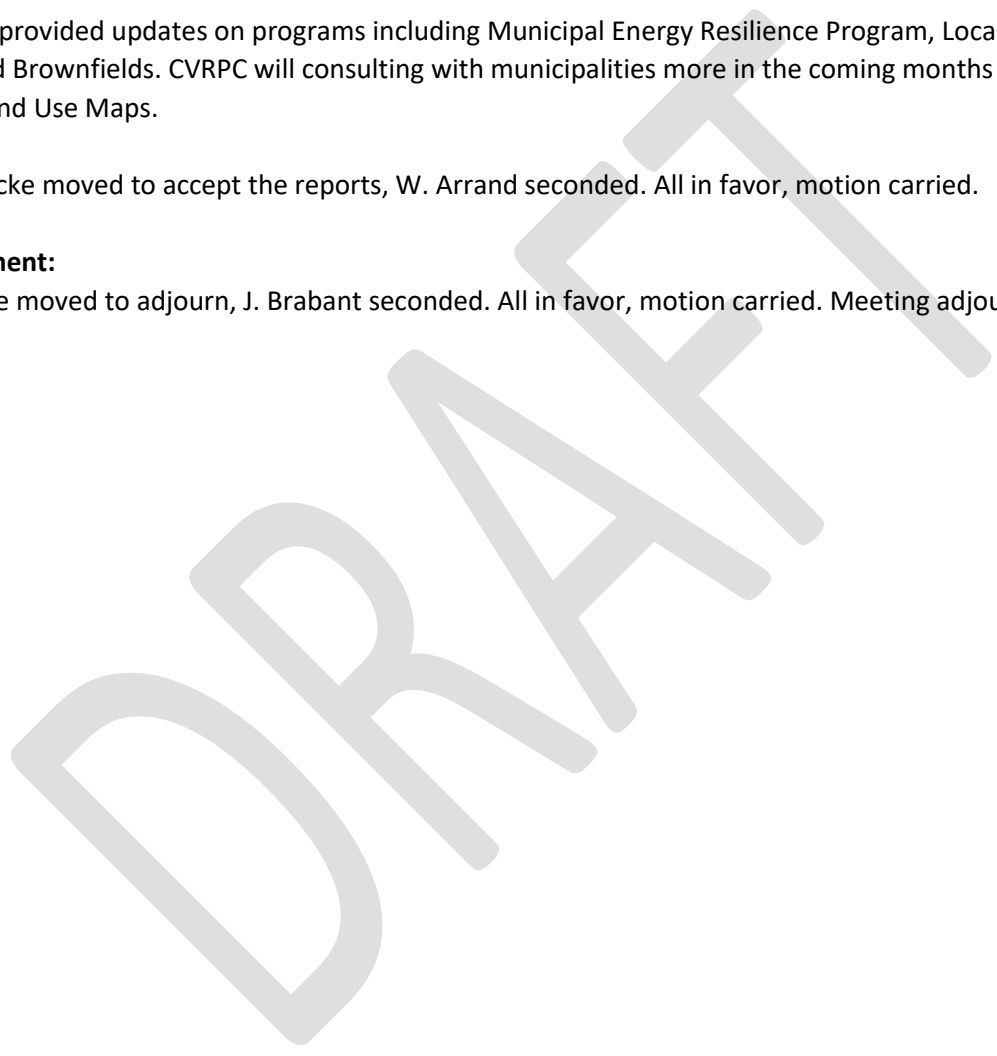
13

14 R. Wernecke moved to accept the reports, W. Arrand seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

15

16 **Adjournment:**

17 D. La Haye moved to adjourn, J. Brabant seconded. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:49pm.



<p style="text-align: center;">Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Committee & Appointed Representative Reports, September 2024</p>
--

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Monday of week prior to Commission meeting; 4pm) [9/30/2024]

- A quorum was not present, so action items could not be voted on.
- Reviewed the August 2024 unaudited financials.
- In the absence of a quorum, per the CVRPC bylaws, the Chair approved the Board agenda for 10/8/24.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (February - April; scheduled by Committee)

- Did not meet

PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE (4th Thursday, 4pm)

- Did not meet
- Staff prepared memo to committee summarizing noteworthy new and ongoing Act 250 and Section 248 applications.

REGIONAL PLAN COMMITTEE (1st Tuesday, 4pm) – (9/4/2024 - rescheduled to Wednesday due to Labor Day)

- Peter Gregory, executive director of Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (“TRORC”), presented on the use of mandatory language vs. advisory language in the TRORC regional plan and the impact that language choices can have in various contexts, especially during regulators’ review of Act 250 and Section 248 permit applications.
- Staff reviewed with committee the first draft of Transportation chapter.
- Regional Plan Committee members provided preliminary feedback on Transportation chapter and goals and strategies crosswalk from old and new goals/strategies for the new regional plan.

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

- Did not meet

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

- The committee approved the FY25 Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) work plan and budget
- Reviewed status of bridges listed in FY22 VPSP2 program and request new list from towns to update regional list even though VPSP2 is not currently accepting new projects.

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

- Elected officers.
- Discussed CVRPC water resources program areas and opportunities for engagement.
- Next meeting is scheduled for 14 November 2024.

BROWNFIELDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (3rd Thursdays 10-10:30am)

- Met on Thursday, September 19th
- Funding Request for up to \$50,000 approved for Phase II Environmental Assessment of the 203 Country Club Road, Montpelier (SMS Site # 2022-5116)
- Updates made of Brownfields assessment funds
- Updates made of currently enrolled projects
- Updates of RFP grant writing and management (if awarded) for EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant and Revolving Loan Fund Grant.

WINOOSKI BASIN WATER QUALITY COUNCIL (3rd Thursday, 1pm)

- Reviewed three proposals:
 - Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District: project development in the Little River watershed.
 - Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission: project development in Waitsfield and project final design in Calais.
- Adopted a budget adjustment policy to establish conditions for when approval is required by the Basin Water Quality Council and when the Clean Water Service Provider Director (CVRPC Executive Director) can approve budget adjustments without Basin Water Quality Council consent.
- Next meeting scheduled for 17 October 2024.

VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (VAPDA)

Discussion included:

- VAPDA held its annual retreat. Directors from Vermont's 11 RPCs met to discuss adaptation to recent legislation, participate in peer learning, and consider priorities for the coming year.

VERMONT ECONOMIC PROGRESS COUNCIL

No Central Vermont activity.

GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT

The GMT Board of Commissioners met to discuss and act on several items:

- Approve a capital budget adjustment.
- Consider service proposed reductions and comments received by the public in response to said cuts.
- Review the draft rural service financial analysis and the implications of transferring services to alternative providers in Washington County, Franklin County and Grand Isle.
- Governance Committee – Staff participated in the GMT governance committee. Commissioners reviewed and commented on the proposed GMT affiliate non-profit.

CENTRAL VERMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- Staff were not available to participate.

MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT

- Staff were not available to participate.

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

P: 802-229-0389

Staff Report, September 2024 cvrpc@cvregion.com

Staff are in the office Monday - Friday. Due to telework schedules, please schedule in-person meetings in advance.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Contacts: Eli Toohey, toohey@cvregion.com, Niki Sabado sabado@cvregion.com & Will Pitkin, pitkin@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Municipal Planning & Plan Implementation:

- Plainfield – Met with Plainfield Planning Commission Chair and other stakeholders to discuss zoning updates and state designation programs (Niki, Will)
- Began preparing guidance materials for municipalities on regional plan future land use maps and reforms to zoning and state designations in recent legislation (Act 181 of 2024, Act 121 of 2024, Act 47 of 2023). (Niki, Will)
- Participated in Plainfield Housing Steering Committee meeting and shared funding options and steps. (Eli, Niki)
- Presented on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and other Housing topics at the Woodbury Planning Commission meeting. (Eli)
- Participated in Plainfield Flood Updates meeting. (Eli)
- Barre City – Collaborated with Friends of Mathewson Playground to continue work on a VT Urban & Community Forest Community Tree Planting Grant and provided RPC letter of support.
- Reviewed Barre City Municipal Plan and CVRPC Regional Plan for supporting town goals.
- Waterbury – Provided Conservation Commission with a tutorial training on VT Fish & Wildlife’s BioFinder 4.0 online mapping tool to inform natural resources mapping updates as part of the 2026 Town Plan update.

Regional Planning and Implementation:

- Reviewed transportation chapter with Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) and received feedback to incorporate into second draft. (Reuben, Will)
- Reviewed VT Housing Finance Authority’s housing targets and refined methodology for municipal disaggregation of housing targets within Central Vermont. (Christian, Eli, Niki, Will)
- Began housing targets methodology spreadsheet and soliciting capacity data. (Eli, Niki, Will)
- Participated in the Washington County Continuum of Care Coalition Meeting. (Eli)
- Completed crosswalk for Housing chapter for 2025 Regional Plan. (Eli and interns)
- Completed second draft of Economy chapter for 2025 Regional Plan and submitted to Board for review. (Niki, Eli, Will, Lincoln)
- Completed second draft of Natural Systems chapter for 2025 Regional Plan (Lincoln)
- Completed goals/strategies crosswalk with 2016 Regional Plan.
- Participated in the following trainings and meetings:
 - Association of Vermont Conservation Commission's annual meeting (Lincoln)
 - VT Conference on Recreation & Trails Symposium in Killington, VT (Lincoln)

Economic Development: (Contact Eli Toohey, toohey@cvregion.com and Christian Meyer, meyer@cvregion.com)

- Regional Priority Project outreach to all municipal planning commissions, economic development staff and select boards of application and process for Regional Priority Projects. (Eli)
- West Central VT Economic Development District (EDD) Program Staff Meeting. (Eli)

Brownfields: (Contact Eli Toohey, toohey@cvregion.com)

- Potentially expanded funding for Brownfields through EPA Coalition Assessment and Revolving Loan Fund Grants drafted RFP posting.
- Presented Montpelier's 203 Country Club location for Phase II to the Brownfields Advisory Committee and posted RFP for Phase II Environmental Assessment.
- Updated Brownfields Site list for active and potential projects in our region.
- Cabot – technical assistance for Brownfields Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation (BRELLA) application.
- Participated in meeting for next steps of Cabot BRELLA for Clark's Sawmill Dam.
- Reviewed Phase II findings with DEC and CVSWMD, presented on the Phase II Supplemental to Brownfields Advisory Committee.
- Participated in DEC RPC Brownfields Roundtable.
- Met with Sarah Wraight from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission to get feedback on EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment and Revolving Loan Fund RFP.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HAZARD MITIGATION

Contact Keith Cubbon, cubbon@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Local/Regional Planning:

- Met with Vermont Emergency Management and engineering consultant SLR for Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery (RIVER) projects discussions (Keith, Will)
- Middlesex – Drafted and submitted 2024 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) (Will & Keith)
 - Met with Town to expedite process and planned meetings.
 - Facilitated Mitigation Action Analysis Meeting with Planning team at Town Hall
 - Presented plan to public at Selectboard meeting
 - Submitted final LHMP to Vermont Emergency Management (9/18/2024)
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program
 - Middlesex (Lincoln & Brian):
 - Distributed Bid Documents.
 - Received all Landowner Operation & Maintenance Agreements
 - Prepared reimbursement documentation for Engineering costs
 - Attended pre-bid site visits with consulting engineer and three prospective bidders.
 - Received one bid and provided a recommendation to the Middlesex Selectboard. The bid exceeded the amount of allocated funds.
 - Helped prepare documents to be submitted to request additional funding for project implementation.
 - Completed site visits with Natural Resources Conservation Service to identify properties that will be eligible for program funding following the July 2024 storm.
 - Marshfield (Eli & Brian):
 - Distributed Bid Documents.
 - Received one bid and provided a recommendation to the Marshfield Selectboard.
 - Woodbury (Brian):

- Scheduled date for site visit with Natural Resources Conservation Service staff to identify properties that will be eligible for program funding following the July 2024 storm.

TRANSPORTATION

Contact Reuben MacMartin, macmartin@cvregion.com or Keith Cubbon, cubbon@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Field Services:

- Completed 3 traffic studies in Barre Town
- Completed 3 traffic studies in Waterbury
- Started 2 traffic studies on Rt 12 in Worcester
- Repeated pedestrian count on Waterbury Stowe Street bridge
- Installed 5 pedestrian counters on Cabot Trails

Public Transit:

- See Committee Report for participating in GMT Board of Commissioners work

Municipal Assistance:

- Provided quote for Road Erosion Inventory to Marshfield
- Assisted Waterbury in getting 2019 Road and Bridge standards acceptance processed by District 6 to increase the town Emergency Relief and Assistance Funding score.
- Tracked down and provided information on work in Great Brook by VTrans to Plainfield selectboard.
- Cabot - Deployed 4 trail counters with Cabot Rec. & Trails Committee as part of VOREC grant data collection (Keith & Lincoln)

Regional Activities:

- Purchased 2 new traffic counters.
- Reviewed updated flood mapping from UVM for resiliency planning of structures and roadways.
- Held TPI meeting.
- Scheduled and began planning Fall Road Foreman meeting.
- Started discussion with TAC about updating Bridge list for region to prioritize for possible funding opportunities for replacement.
- Provided outreach on Better Roads funding for Road Erosion Inventories.
- Site visit with VTrans and VT Fish & Wildlife to the I-89 "Sharkyville" culvert in Waterbury where a wildlife undercrossing is under design with funding through the Federal Highway Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (Lincoln)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Contact Brian Voigt voigt@cvregion.com and Lincoln Frasca frasca@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

Tactical Basin Planning Assistance:

- Hosted Clean Water Advisory Committee meeting where officers were elected, water resources program areas were discussed and opportunities for engagement were highlighted.
- Confirmed guest panelists for November Clean Water Advisory Committee;
 - Ned Swanberg, DEC - Regional Floodplain Manager
 - Stephanie Smith, VT Emergency Management - State Hazard Mitigation Officer

Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP):

- Winooski River Basin Water Quality Council:
 - Reviewed two Project Development and one Final Design proposal.
 - Established a budget adjustment policy for Formula Grant funded projects.
- Met / corresponded with the following regional partners:
 - American Council of Engineering Companies: participated in a round table discussion about the Clean Water Service Provider program and opportunities for engineers to work on project development and design, construction / implementation oversight and verification and maintenance.
 - Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission: discussed progress on Huntington Project Development effort.
- Vermont Land Trust: Discussed funding and implementation timelines, proposal development for a culvert replacement project in Richmond.
- Lamoille County Conservation District: Assisted with application for Upper Little River Project Development.
- Winooski Valley Parks District: Discussed water quality opportunities on park land. Provided pre-qualification and application materials.

- Met / corresponded with the following municipalities:
 - Berlin: met with the Conservation Commission and discussed project opportunities on municipal and private lands and opportunities for engagement to promote the program in town. Drafted a Front Porch Forum post and flyer to be distributed by the Conservation Commission.
 - Plainfield: Attended Conservation Commission meeting to discuss project opportunity on municipally owned recreation fields.
 - Waitsfield: met with the Conservation Commission and discussed project opportunities on municipal and private lands and opportunities for engagement to promote the program in town.
- Participated in the following Department of Environmental Conservation meetings and trainings:
 - Clean Water Service Provider Check-in: discussed potential changes to procurement policy.
 - Met with Basin Planner and regional partners to discuss strategies for identifying and prioritizing culvert replacement projects.

604b:

- The 604b grant administered by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission ended 15 December 2023. Additional funding is anticipated in FY25.

FEMA Map & Flood Bylaw Updates:

- No activity this month

Water Quality Project Development:

- Berlin - Riparian Planting and Culvert Replacement Project Development.
- Submitted project development application for Formula Grant funding
- Waitsfield - Floodplain Restoration Project Development
- Received letter of support from Conservation Commission to seek Formula Grant funding
- Drafted project development application for Formula Grant funding

Stormwater Projects:

- Upper Winooski Stormwater Implementation (Calais): Attended Calais DRB meeting to discuss Conditional Use Permit for stormwater project implementation. Corresponded with Department of Environmental Conservation staff regarding contract updates.

CLIMATE & ENERGY

Contact Sam Lash, lash@cvregion.com unless otherwise noted.

Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP)

Mini Grants (closed May 31st): 22 of 23 municipalities applied and were approved

Assessments:

- Reviewed assessments with municipalities

Implementation Phase: opened 8/27/24, closes 9/20/24

- Supported municipalities develop applications for the Municipal Energy Resilience Program implementation grant, Including: reviewing reports with municipalities, collecting resources, and taking part in virtual and in person walk through, preparation, drafting and submitting applications. Staff Worked with: Barre City, Berlin, Cabot, Calais, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Fayston, Marshfield, Middlesex, Montpelier, Moretown, Northfield, Orange, Plainfield, Roxbury, Warren, Washington, Waterbury, Worcester, and Williamstown

Municipal Planning and Implementation

- Provided technical assistance to East Montpelier for energy mapping, model energy code development, and scenic buffer impact on energy planning.
- Supported Waitsfield re hot weather preparedness planning
- Provided technical assistance to Waterbury to review utility bills for to planning commission for enhanced energy planning
- Participated in the Northfield see heat differently community thermal energy networks workshop.
- Conducted out reach and support for Windowdressers community build

Regional Energy Planning and Implementation

- Reviewed proposed energy developments' conformance with regional plan and corresponded with Project Review Committee chair. (Sam, Will)
- Participated in thermal energy network (TEN) meeting (community thermal networks). Reviewed TENs potential mapping development (integrating into econ/housing infill- designation center work). Looked at municipal projects and planning initiatives and developed next steps for Plainfield and Northfield
- Participated in meeting on municipal solar projects and transferability of tax benefits in preparation of utilizing IRA direct pay option.
- **Regional Plan 2025 update:**
 - Ongoing drafting and review in preparation for the first review with the Regional Plan Committee
- **Vermont Climate Council Climate Action Plan Update:** participating as member of Just Transitions Sub-Committee& Cross-Sector Mitigation Liaison:
 - Participated in Climate Council meetings and sub committee meetings. Included: the just transitions subcommittee cap update, the thermal working group CAP update, social cost carbon report, and drafting plan workflow

- **Hot Weather Preparedness Planning:** Internal planning
- **Municipal Vulnerability Index Tool:** Worked with interns to develop municipal profile template and Municipal Vulnerability Index tool. Participated in the MVI meeting with RPCs and ANR.

GIS – Geographic Information System Mapping

Contact Brian Voigt, voigt@cvregion.com, unless otherwise noted.

- Prepared Local Hazard Mitigation Plan maps (land cover, residential development, critical facilities, transportation facilities and flood hazards) for Middlesex and Waterbury.
- East Montpelier: developed a table of roads by road class.
- Fayston: developed a map for the Planning Commission displaying zoning district boundaries and flood hazard areas.
- Moretown: developed map series to be included in revised Town Plan.

OFFICE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office:

- Received new staff laptops. Worked with Rural Solutions to get computers set up. Worked with staff to migrate the server to the cloud (SharePoint).
- Continued work with auditor on FY24 CVRPC audit.
- Conducted interviews and made job offer for Assistant Planner.
- Coordinated SharePoint migration with IT consultant.

Upcoming Meetings:

CVRPC meetings currently offer remote access unless otherwise noted. Meeting access information is provided on agendas at www.centralvtplanning.org.

October

Oct 8	4 pm	Executive Committee Special Meeting
Oct 8	6:30 pm	Board of Commissioners
Oct 14		Office Closed - Holiday
Oct 15	4 pm	Regional Plan Committee
Oct 17	10 am	Brownfields Advisory Committee
Oct 17	1 pm	Winooski River Basin Water Quality Council
Oct 22	6:30 pm	Transportation Advisory Committee
Oct 24	4 pm	Project Review Committee – TBD

November

Nov 4	4 pm	Executive Committee (Tuesday due to holiday)
Nov 5	4 pm	Regional Plan Committee (Wednesday due to holiday)
Nov 11		Office Closed - Holiday
Nov 12	6:30	Board of Commissioners
Nov 14	4 pm	Clean Water Advisory Committee
Nov 21	10 am	Brownfields Advisory Committee
Nov 21	1 pm	Winooski Basin Water Quality Council
Nov 26	6:30 pm	Transportation Advisory Committee
TBD		Project Review Committee
Nov 28 & 29		Office Closed – Holiday

RECENT CVRPC NEWS HEADLINES

Click on a week to read more about the headlines listed. *To receive Weekly News via email, sign up on our [website](#).* Visit CVRPC's web site at www.centralvtplanning.org to view our blog and for the latest publications and news.

September 6

- Town Of Marshfield Emergency Watershed Program
2024 Request for Bids
- Town Of Middlesex Emergency Watershed Program
2024 Request for Bids
- CVRPC's Summer in the Field
- Act 250 Exemption Map
- Recreation Economy for Rural Communities
Assistance Opportunity
- Friends of the Winooski - River Clean Up on
September 7
- 2025 Historic Preservation Grant Applications
Available
- VLCT Town Fair