

# Two Rivers-Ottauquechee

## Regional Commission Newsletter

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## Regional Petroleum Brownfields Sites Sought

As part of TRORC's economic development efforts, we applied for and received \$200,000 directly from US EPA to assess petroleum contaminated sites. This important initiative helps us address multiple land use, environmental and economic development goals.

**Why redevelop Brownfields?** EPA data shows that every one acre of Brownfield that is redeveloped, we protect 4.5 acres of greenfield from development. Brownfield redevelopment protects natural resources, especially water quality, and prevents sprawl. Experience with redeveloped properties has shown that a relatively small up front investment will yield steady tax returns to the community in the long run. These projects are worthwhile, but they're not easy.

That's where the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission comes in. TRORC has grant funds to help public or private property owners who suspect their property may be contaminated by petroleum products. Is there an old tank buried somewhere on the property? Was the property used to dispense fuel or repair vehicles?

Was there a junk yard? Was oil used to heat a building, but there's no tank above ground? The grant funds will be used to assess whether contamination exists on a property and, if so, to determine what can be done to return the property to active use.

Assessments will only be conducted on properties where owner permission has been granted. If the assessment determines that cleanup is needed, TRORC will help property

owners seek funds to undertake the cleanup.

We are beginning outreach to banks and developers about potential sites, and community members are welcome to nominate sites. A good candidate property exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

It has high redevelopment potential, such as properties that are easily marketed, have an interested developer, or adequate infrastructure to support redevelopment;

It is located in a downtown or village center;

Redevelopment will support job creation, housing, rehabilitation of a historic building, recreation, or municipal or state facilities;

Redevelopment will address human health risks or environmental concerns; or

Redevelopment would benefit low and moderate income persons.

Redevelopment can include commercial or industrial uses, retail use, housing, and green space.

For information on assessing the potential for petroleum contamination on properties, contact Sally at 457-3188 or [smansur@trorc.org](mailto:smansur@trorc.org)



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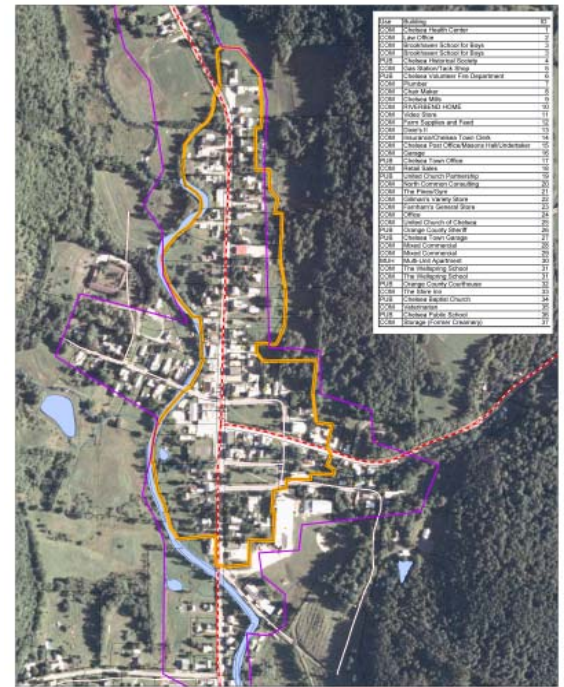
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# Ten TRORC Villages Designated as "Village Centers"

Ten Villages in the TRORC Region have been granted "Village Designation" status by the Vermont Downtown Board, and the list continues to grow! Bethel, Chelsea, Fairlee, Hartland Four Corners, Hartland Three Corners, North Hartland, East Randolph, Tunbridge, North Tunbridge and Rochester can now take advantage of the benefits of Village Designation. The benefits include:

- A 5% Vermont income tax credit for substantial rehabilitation for certified historic buildings.
- A 50% Vermont income tax credit for code improvements to commercial buildings.
- The State's Municipal Planning Grant Program, and the Consolidated Plan for HUD funding including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDGB) will give designated village centers a priority consideration for all grants.
- The State Buildings Department will give consideration and priority to designated village center locations when leasing or constructing buildings, in consultation with the community.
- A Special Assessment District in a designated village center may use funds for operating costs in addition to capital expenses.



TRORC has assisted most of these towns with the application process and mapping. In general, we have been able to write these applications at no cost to our towns. We have a great deal of experience with this program and can give you an idea of what the Downtown Board is looking for in an application. If you are considering applying for Village Designation, we urge you to contact Chris Sargent to find out how we can help.

**Village Designation Map**  
Chelsea, Vermont  
Designated on April 25, 2005 by the Vermont Downtown Board

1 inch equals 311 feet 1:31,731

TRORC GIS Service Center  
www.trorc.org

*Chelsea's Village Designation map, created by Chris Sargent at the TRORC GIS Service Center. Our maps have received very positive responses from the Downtown Board.*

## Chapter 117 Training Round 2

Are rules of procedure and ethics policies required of planning commissions and other municipal panels? When should hearing warnings and permit notices be posted? What should be done if our town's bylaw references, or incorporates by reference, a section of the old Chapter 117? Is a zoning bylaw in jeopardy if the municipal plan expires? What if we don't make our bylaws consistent with the new state law by September 1, 2005?

These questions and many more can be answered for your town's planning commission or development review board when the TRORC staff conduct a second round of meetings about the changes to Chapter 117. We will revisit the changes to the state's land use and development act in more detail and answer your questions later this spring and early summer. So stay tuned! And in the meantime, visit our website to view publications that can help your town with the shift to the new statutory regulations.

## Waits River Watershed GIS Geomorphic Assessment Completed

After learning a lot about thalwegs, sinuosity, sliver polygons and meander centerlines, TRORC has completed its first GIS database of a Phase I Stream Geomorphic Assessment for the Waits River Watershed. Pete Fellows created this database with the assistance of Jonathan Frishtick of Norwich, our GIS Volunteer Intern, through an innovative GIS tool developed by the Department of Environmental Conservation. These data help watershed planners to compare portions of the watershed and coupled with field information, these data can be used to determine which portions of the river may be unstable and contributing to erosion or flooding downstream.

TRORC is hoping to complete more assessments on other watersheds in the region. Currently, only the Strafford portion of the West Branch of the Ompompanoosuc has a completed Phase I assessment using the GIS tool. Strafford's Conservation Commission has just received a grant to complete a detailed assessment of portions of the watershed with the assistance of Sally Mansur of TRORC. If you have any questions about geomorphic assessments, please contact Pete Fellows or Sally Mansur.

## School Emergency Planning

As part of TRORC’s support to Local Emergency Planning Committee #12, staff members Kevin Geiger and Crystal Loffler have, upon request, met with schools in the region to discuss emergency planning. During the visits, schools have been advised on increasing school safety based on an evaluation of their hazards. Schools were also advised to create school crisis plans using the model crisis plans distributed to schools last year by the state.

Crystal has been working most recently with the Rochester Schools. Their school crisis plan is complete and a full scale evacuation drill was conducted on May 4th.

## Tunbridge Emergency Planning

Over the past several months, TRORC staff has worked with the Tunbridge Fire Department to draft an Emergency Operations Plan for the Town of Tunbridge, focusing specifically on incidents at The World’s Fair.

Area responders and World’s Fair coordinators gathered for a meeting on March 30th to discuss the plan and provide input for improvements. A tabletop exercise to test this plan will take place in early June. The development and exercising of an Emergency Operations Plan for this large event will assist in improving response in any emergency situation at the fair, and also be useful for other emergencies in town.

## Topsham Adopts First Town Plan

Topsham, the only town in the TRORC region that has never had a Town Plan, adopted their first Town Plan on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

During the early 1970’s the town organized a planning commission with the intent of creating a Town Plan. With assistance from TRORC (then known as the Two Rivers Regional Commission) a document was written by the planning commission, but was not adopted by the selectboard.

Efforts to revitalize Topsham’s planning process were sparked by then new Selectboard member Tom Flanigan (now chair of the Selectboard) and his interest in capturing any grant monies that Topsham might gain from having a Town Plan. A new planning commission was formed, consisting of residents Bill MacDonald (chair), Carl Maxwell, Polly Stryker, Robert Sullivan, Stanley Wadsworth and William Hodge. For nearly a year, the planning commission met on a monthly basis with TRORC Planner Chris Sargent to work through the creation of a vision for the future of Topsham.

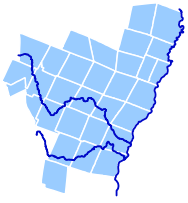
The process culminated in a series of spirited public hearings in which townspeople voiced their concerns about the possibility of zoning and their support of a planning process. As is clearly stated in the preface to the town plan, it is not the intent of the Planning Commission to impose land use regulations on their residents, and this was made clear by all members during the hearing process.

We at TRORC are pleased that Topsham has put in such a great effort to plan for their future, and look forward to working with them in the coming years.

## Norwich Mixed-Use Development Charette



*On April 27, 28, and 29, TRORC and the Norwich Planning Commission sponsored a design charrette or workshop to examine Norwich residents' feelings on mixed-use development. Citizens discussed multiple unit residential, office, and commercial uses over three evenings. Jim Donovan, ASLA, AICP of Wilbur Smith Associates (pictured) was the project leader and Pete Fellows of TRORC coordinated the work.*



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## News Shorts

May 2005

### Emergency Management Events

**Flagger Training** - Wednesday  
June 8th 6-9PM White River  
Valley Ambulance in Bethel.

Please contact Crystal Loffler at  
cloffler@trorc.org or 802-457-  
3188 for more information and to  
RSVP.

**visit us on  
the web!!  
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Where are we?  
What is this map showing?  
Find out inside!