



News

April 2014



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news@trorc.org

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Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

TRORC is working with the East Central Vermont Consortium to develop a vision and plan for a sustainable future.

We want to hear from you!

Share your vision of the future by visiting the website:

www.ecvermont.org

FEMA Conditionally Approves the Braintree and Rochester Hazard Mitigation Plans



FEMA

TRORC is pleased to announce that FEMA has conditionally approved both the Braintree Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Rochester Hazard Mitigation Plan!

Pending the adoption from each respective Selectboard, both Braintree and Rochester will be eligible to apply for FEMA grant funding, which will help both communities keep their residents safe and protect infrastructure.

FEMA's conditional approval of these Plans represents the culmination of months of hard work by both local officials, residents and the tireless efforts of both Sam and Ellie from TRORC staff. TRORC continues to work with towns on developing their Hazard Mitigation Plans and looks forward to seeing more continued success. Congratulations to the Towns of Braintree and Rochester!

If you would like to know more about Hazard Mitigation Plans, please contact: Samantha (Sam) Holcomb at sholcomb@trorc.org

NADO President and TRORC Executive Director Present Award to Congressman Welch

Congressman Welch was presented with the 2014 Congressional Partnership Award last week in Washington, DC. The Award was given to the Congressman for his leadership on issues championed by NADO and Vermont's regional planning commissions, including rural economic development, infrastructure funding, energy efficiency and ongoing Irene recovery efforts.



Attending the presentation with Gregory were Tom Kennedy, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Charlie Baker, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and Catherine Dimitruk, Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

Gregory and other Vermont regional planning commissions were in DC attending NADO's Washington Policy Conference last week meeting with key federal partners and Hill staff from House and Senate Appropriations, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Environment and Public Works.



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Chairperson -
Pomfret

David Brandau
Vice Chairperson -
Royalton

Paul Haskell
Secretary - Sharon

Gerald Fredrickson
Treasurer - Barnard

Frank Roderick -
Corinth

Nancy Jones -
Bradford

Act 250 Data Reveals Interesting Facts

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total applications	439	380	355	330	340	295
-Major (hearing)	102	70	60	61	73	62
-Minor (no hearing)	337	310	295	269	267	233
Denials	2	5	2	3	3	5
Denials as %	0.45%	1.30%	0.56%	0.90%	0.88%	1.69%

Data Source: Vermont Natural Resources Board

Denials are a rarity in Act 250. With data showing an average of less than one percent of total applications denied each year, it is clear that most Act 250 applications are approved. Act 250's purpose is not to limit development in Vermont. Instead, its purpose is to ensure that development in Vermont meets environmental standards set by law to maintain and enhance our state. Act 250's ten criteria are designed to protect our important environmental resources (such as water resources), to minimize the potential for negative impacts on our infrastructure (such as roads), to maintain the rural character that Vermont is known for and to support the vision of our region and our communities.

There are an average of 356 Act 250 permits applied for each year. Out of these permits, 80% of these permits are viewed as minor (which means that the applications do not require a hearing). If the District Environmental Commission finds that a proposed project is not likely to significantly or adversely affect the environment under the Act's 10 criteria, it is generally treated as a minor application. Minor applications move through the Act 250 process quickly. While minor applications may be subject to permit conditions, they are on an expedited schedule.

For the 20% of permit applications that have been deemed "major," it is the responsibility of the applicant to present enough information for the District Environmental Commission to make affirmative findings on each of the ten criteria. During this process, statutory parties such as state agencies, the Regional Planning Commission and the Municipality, may offer testimony that indicates the 10 criteria have or have not been addressed in a satisfactory manner. Other parties must have a "particularized interest" in order to provide testimony.

Most applicants in Vermont understand the process and know how to work within the process efficiently, thus reducing their costs. The advantage to Act 250 is that it can often take a development proposal and through review and public input make it a better project, one that works for the applicant, fits well within the community and region in which it is located and continues to protect Vermont's resources.

If you have any questions regarding the Act 250 process and TRORC's role, please contact Chris Sargent at: csargent@trorc.org

2014 High Risk Rural Roads Announced

The VTrans High Risk Rural Roads program identifies high crash locations in the region and provides low cost safety improvements like upgraded signs, striping and new guardrails. The previously implemented projects from years past have proven to be effective at mitigating traffic accidents.

The 2014 selection of the two high risk rural road projects in the region were Brookfield - Ridge Rd from Randolph town line to VT65 and Hartford - Quechee Main St from Waterman Hill to Tichenor Rd and Dewey Mills Rd.



If you have any questions regarding the project or selection process please contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org

Ecosystem Restoration Program and Watershed Grants Awarded to TRORC



As part of the State's Ecosystem Restoration Program's annual competitive grant process, a Project Selection Committee elected to award TRORC with \$48,000 to implement the Ottauquechee Abutment Removal project in West Bridgewater, which will serve the dual purpose of protecting the State's water quality and supporting our goal to restore floodplain access, channel geometry and habitat conditions in a section of the Ottauquechee River.

Old US Route 4 in the Town of Bridgewater parallels the modern US 4 alignment and historically crossed the Ottauquechee River at the abutment just east of the Pancake House in West Bridgewater. This abandoned bridge abutment is a channel constriction that is contributing to geomorphic instability through upstream and downstream deposition and streambed scour as well as loss of floodplain access. The two facing abutments will be removed, the banks graded and seeded and re-vegetated to prevent erosion and enable the Ottauquechee to better access the floodplain on the south side during bankfull events.

The second grant awarded to TRORC was a State Watershed Grant for \$4,900 that will ensure that high level survey work is completed in order to develop a restoration plan for the largest and singular floodplain in the lower Pinney Hollow Brook in Plymouth. Future grant funding will be sought to develop designs for floodplain restoration and then construction. This survey and restoration project intends to address the post-Tropical Storm Irene in-stream activities in Pinney Hollow Brook that have created stream channels more susceptible to erosion, flooding, and sedimentation. The loss of riparian and in-stream fish habitat and vegetation as a result of Tropical Storm Irene in-stream work will also be addressed.

*For questions regarding the grants or work being done, please contact:
Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org*

East Central Vermont Regional Plan for Sustainable Development



After HUD's review and approval to move forward, the Climate Resilience, Regional Habitat Planning, Energy Use in the Built Environment, and Our Homes plan elements were unanimously approved by voting East Central Vermont Sustainability Consortium members. We would like to thank all the workgroups for their hard work in creating a usable document of which we can be proud.

For more information about this meeting or the overall project, please contact Loreale Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org or 457-3188.

Local Emergency Operations Plans



It is that time of year-- to begin thinking about emergency preparedness! For 2014 and beyond, we have a new version of the BEOP, which is now called the Local Emergency Operations Plan, or LEOP. This document is incredibly important and can be very useful, especially in the event of an emergency. Having an adopted LEOP is an essential preparedness measure and is one of the four basic mitigation measures required to maximize state match under the Vermont Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF). As of the beginning of April, we have mailed an LEOP updated with the latest town appointments for 2014 to more than half of our towns and are working to mail LEOPs to the remaining towns in the next few days.

Please contact Sam Holcomb at sholcomb@trorc.org or 457-3188 with question about the LEOP or for assistance.

Announcements

TRORC Selected for Americorps VISTA Position

The Regional Commission applied for and has been selected to host an Americorps VISTA position starting in the late summer. This position is meant to take our regional programs, and those of others working to alleviate poverty, out to our lower-income residents. It will also help to bring their voices into our programs, representing people who are often not heard in planning discussions. AmeriCorps VISTA is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty.



Founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993, VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years.

For more information, contact robyn.baylor@state.vt.us or check out the opening by searching

2014 Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan Update

VTrans is updating their 2008 Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan which looks at the current public transit system as well as transportation services serving the elderly and disabled population.

The study goals are to:

- Confirm and document needs being met by current transportation system
- Identify opportunities to enhance use of current system and services (medicaid, dialysis, elderly and disabled programs)
- Identify strategies to efficiently meet new and/ or unmet needs
- Develop plan to guide program development
 - Must be compliant with MAP-21
 - Must be consistent with State policy and related plans and programs.



*The Thompson Senior Center Shuttle.
(courtesy of The Thompson Senior Center)*

VTrans hopes to increase coordination and capture as much value from the current public transit system as possible by coordinating programs and rides. Input that is being sought includes:

- What human service transportation programs and services are you aware of in your community?
- How do people typically find information about these services?
- What are the most significant human service transportation issues and needs in your region?
- Have you witnessed or taken part in any innovative or creative solutions to addressing transportation needs in your region that you can share?
- Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

Vermont Brownfields Program Initiatives Informational Flyer



Brownfields Response Program

Informational flyer released for Brownfields Response Program. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/otgoxdz> to learn more.

TRORC actively participates in the redevelopment of Brownfields properties and has received more than \$1,000,000 over the last decade to perform hazardous waste assessments.

If you wish to learn more or discuss a project, please visit <http://www.trorc.org/> or contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org

Get Ready For Way To Go! Week

Way To Go! week is a chance for you or your business to go toe to toe against carbon pollution. Bike, walk, carpool or ride the bus to victory! Win prizes, have fun-and help us reach our goal of reducing 300,000 lbs of carbon pollution in Vermont.



To learn more and sign up, visit <http://waytogovt.org/>

Spring 2014 is Community Revitalization Season at TRORC

TRORC Staff will be hosting several different presentations/workshops this spring that focus on Vermont's Community Revitalization Programs. The State of Vermont has a number of programs that are aimed at revitalizing and sustaining our communities' villages and downtowns, including Downtown and Village Designations, Growth Centers and the newest addition to the program - the Neighborhood Development Areas.



Learn about the Programs

In April, we will be presenting information about Vermont's Designation Programs with a focus on changes to the programs as a result of Act 59. We will also introduce the newest member of Vermont's Designation Program - the Neighborhood Development Area.

Date: Thursday, April 17th
Time: 7:00pm-9:00pm
Location: Fairlee Town Hall, Fairlee, VT
Cost: Free

Date: Thursday, April 24th
Time: 7:00pm-9:00pm
Location: Chandler Center for the Arts, Esther Mesh Room (Upstairs Gallery), Randolph, VT

Learn how to Access the Benefits

In May and June, we will be working with the White River Valley Chamber of Commerce, Randolph Area Community Development Corp and the Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce to host two breakfast sessions that will provide attendees with information on how they can access the tax credit benefits offered by Vermont's Designation Programs.

Look for more information on when these benefit presentations will take place on www.trorc.org or your local chamber's web site.

Upcoming Events

April 17 - LEPC #12 Meeting

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Hartford Fire Station, Hartford

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 457-3188 x13

April 23 - Tools to Address Local Housing Needs: Presentation

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Bradford Academy Building, 172 North Main Street, Bradford, Vermont

Description: Housing is a key focus of the Vermont's Neighborhood Development Program. This workshop will present attendees with a range of suggested tools that communities can use to encourage housing. It will not only focus on methods to encourage new housing, but also on preserving and improving existing stock. Planners will discuss how communities can utilize the tools to prioritize areas of needs and how to implement housing plans.

For more information, contact Ellie at eray@trorc.org or 457-3188

April 23 - TRORC Board Meeting

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Location TBD

For more information, please contact dgish@trorc.org

April 30 - Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable

5:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Bugbee Senior Center, White River Junction

Please visit <http://tinyurl.com/lkro5z9> to learn more and register

May 8 - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Tracy Hall, Norwich

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 457-3188 x13

May 21 - Economic Development and Resilience: New Approaches to Building Communities: Presentation & Workshop

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Quechee Club, 3268 Quechee Main Street, Quechee, VT

Description: The time is right to join the conversation about new approaches to strengthening economic development and focusing efforts toward more locally-lead, regional efforts. The East Central Vermont Economic Development District will be hosting a presentation and workshop that will focus on a more localized and resilient economy, an economy that keeps dollars local and makes communities stronger and more resilient; even in the face of energy, climate and economic shocks.

Presenter: Erik Pages, President of EntreWorks Consulting, an economic development consulting and policy development firm focused on helping communities and organizations achieve their entrepreneurial potential. In this role, he has led projects in more than 40 U.S. states and in Asia, Europe, and Latin America. EntreWorks Consulting specializes in helping small cities and rural communities improve their capacities to support local innovators and entrepreneurs, and to nurture new drivers of local wealth creation.

Registration is required and space is limited. RSVP by Wednesday, May 14 if you would like to attend by sending an email to [Loralee Morrow at \[Loralee.Morrow@trorc.org\]\(mailto:Loralee.Morrow@trorc.org\)](mailto:Loralee.Morrow@trorc.org).

June 12 - Orange/ Windsor County Road Foreman Meeting

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Location TBD

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 457-3188 x13

TRORC's mission is to advocate for the needs of our member towns, and to articulate a vision for building a thriving regional economy while enhancing the region's quality of life.

The Commission's staff provides technical services to local, state and federal levels of government and to the Region's non-profits and businesses.

To learn more, visit our website: www.trorc.org.

2014 Dry Hydrant Grants Program

The Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force is pleased to announce the 16th year of funding (pending Vermont Legislative approval) to enable towns to improve fire suppression capabilities. The goals of the program are to:

- Save lives, by reducing response time and improving both public and firefighter safety
- Enable fire fighters to have a quicker, easier, and safer year round drafting capability
- Reduce risks to property and natural resources, both public and private
- Lower insurance premiums, both public and private.

NEW FOR 2014

- The maximum grant award is now \$4,000 (previously \$2,500)
- The installation of new dry hydrants & other rural water supplies is still the priority of the program, but eligible projects now include repair/upgrade, replacement, and relocation of existing rural water supplies, whether previously grant funded or not.

*To learn more or access the application please visit: <http://nvtrcd.org/vtrfptf.html>
Applications are due by: Friday May 2nd, 2014*



Better Backroads Grant Now Accepting Applications

The Vermont Better Backroads Program is pleased to announce the seventeenth year of funding to support projects on Town or private roads that improve water quality and result in maintenance cost savings. The grant funds are provided by the VT Agency of Transportation and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The Vermont Better Backroads Program's goal is to promote the use of erosion control and maintenance techniques that save money while protecting and enhancing Vermont's lakes and streams. Funds, subject to availability, will be distributed as small grants to municipalities and local organizations to address town or private road erosion problems.

The Better Back Roads program has proven to be very successful in the TRORC region. Just last year alone, over \$80,000 in both planning and implementation funds were awarded. TRORC used a portion of these monies to assist the Town of Norwich with their town wide road inventory and capital budgeting. Planning funds were also used with the Town of Plymouth and Randolph to develop culvert inventories to assist with capital budgeting.

The application is here: <http://tinyurl.com/myo3zl3>. **Applications are due May 5, 2014.**

*If you would like assistance with an application or have any questions, please contact:
Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org*





Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
128 King Farm Rd
Woodstock, VT 05091