



April 2015



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In This Issue
News

Announcements

Upcoming
Events

Grants/Funding
Opportunities



**Regional Plan
for Sustainable
Development**

The "East Central Vermont: What We Want" action plan is finalized, and some actions are already underway. Please let us know if you'd like to participate in moving any of the actions forward.

Visit the project website to access the complete action plan and to learn more.

www.ecvermont.org

TRORC Assisting in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Projects

As towns that have experienced the CDBG applications process can attest, they are not grant applications for the faint of heart. TRORC's experience and close working relationship with the Vermont Community Development Program staff have been a great resource for towns needing application and grant administration assistance. In addition to successful Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery Projects that have been awarded to the Town of Rochester, the Town of Royalton, and the Village of Woodstock, TRORC continues to assist communities with new applications.



Damage to Taggart Hill, Stockbridge

The most recent examples of CDBG application support are the Town of Barnard's Mount Hunger Road Bank Stabilization grant application and the Town of Stockbridge's Taggart Hill Road Relocation application. The bank directly underneath Mount Hunger Road and directly across from the Town Garage/Recycling Center was destabilized during T.S. Irene, and threatens both the town garage and the newly rebuilt bridge on VT Route 12. The application proposes bank stabilization as an immediate action. Taggart Hill Road South in the Town of Stockbridge was destroyed during T.S. Irene, and serves one of the most isolated sections of the community. The road is next to Taggart Brook, and competes for real estate with the waterway. The application proposes to move the road over to give the brook room. Both projects are great opportunities for the Towns to implement hazard mitigation solutions and create more resilient infrastructure. To learn more about these grant applications, contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org.

Community Development Block Grants in the TRORC Region

Many congratulations to Juli Reiderer, Executive Director of Rochester Community Care Home, Inc. (also known as the Rochester Park House), which is a subgrantee to the Town of Rochester, for a new CDBG grant! The purpose of the project is to develop plans that will demonstrate how to bring 15 units of affordable senior housing into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act while also generally improving safety and energy efficiency in the building. The Park House serves a large swathe of more remote White River watershed towns. TRORC, which has assisted with grant administration activities, and the Town of Rochester will both continue to provide support for this grant. More on this story can be read at <http://governor.vermont.gov/node/2255>.



*Juli Reiderer with Governor Shumlin
(photo courtesy of Josh Hanford, VCDP)*

For further information on this grant application, please contact either Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org, Ellie Ray at eray@trorc.org, or call the office at (802) 457-3188.



Staff

Bob Ennis
Grant Administrator

Pete Fellows, CFM
GIS Manager

Kevin Geiger, AICP,
CFM Senior Planner

Dee Gish
Finance Manager

Peter G. Gregory, AICP
Executive Director

Samantha Holcomb
CFM Planner

Pollaidh Major,
VISTA Member

Loralee Morrow, LEED
AP Regional Planner

Ellie Ray,
Regional Planner

Chris Sargent, AICP
Senior Planner

Rita Seto, AICP
Senior Planner

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The Return of the Vermont Economic Resilience Initiative

On April 23rd, the Department of Housing and Community Development along with the Agencies of Natural Resources and Transportation, TRORC, and river scientists will return to the Billings Farm for a Vermont Economic Resilience Initiative (VERI) community forum. The event will be an opportunity to share preliminary recommendations borne out of discussions in September on matters of public safety and economic resilience in the wake of a flood event. We invite the public to attend this session to share feedback on the draft recommendations, help prioritize the list of follow-up projects, and establish the next steps required to reduce flooding along the Ottauquechee River and their negative impacts to the economy.



VERI Forum at the Billings Farm, September 2014

To learn more about the VERI program, Woodstock-specific flood information, prior community forum information, and general localized flood risk information, please visit VERI's website: <http://tinyurl.com/k2etz7s>.

2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update Underway

The CEDS planning and development process is underway. Data has been collected by Springfield Regional Development Corporation, Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission, and Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, and they have begun providing the framework for the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT analysis draft will be completed in mid-April, which will allow the strategic action plan to start to take shape.



Businesses along the railway lin in South Royalton

All input from the public is welcome and all meetings are open to the public. Please watch the events calendar at the newly launched ECVEDD.org for meeting updates (the beta version of the website is live, with the final website slated for release in late May). For more information on the CEDS project and other activities of the East Central Vermont Economic Development District, please contact Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org.

Annual Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) Updates

Every year, TRORC requests towns review and, where necessary, update their LEOP to ensure that all information is up-to-date. This document is a critical component to response efforts in the wake of an emergency, and ensuring it is routinely updated is an essential preparedness measure. The LEOP is also one of the documents required to maximize the state's match funding under the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF).

Draft 2015 LEOP documents were distributed to our member towns in early April. They are required to be adopted by the Selectboard/Town Manager of each town before Friday, May 1, 2015, and submitted promptly to TRORC thereafter. If you should have any questions about this process or LEOPs generally, please contact Samantha Holcomb at sholcomb@trorc.org or call (802) 457-3188.



TS Irene damage to Rte. 132



East Central Vermont has Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS) through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, which benefits all the communities in the 40-town region - not just the East Central Vermont: What We Want project. HUD awards 2 bonus points to applicants that are working with us to further the Livability Principles. Other federal entities; such as, EPA and DOT also recognize the PSS points when reviewing grant applications.

Please contact Lorelee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org for more information.

Capital Budgeting and Planning in Your Town

What is a capital budgeting? And why is it useful? Capital budgeting is a process of asking and answering three basic questions. The first question is: what are our anticipated large capital costs? These could be a new roof for the town hall, a plow truck, a fire station, a pump station, or any other large cost for a physical item. This sounds like a simple assessment, but it can be tough since it involves basic decisions about what towns need. However, most of these costs are really predictable. Part of that prediction is the second question: when do we need it? There can be a lot of denial and kicking the can down the road, but that makes the eventual purchase all the more painful. You will need a new plow, and you have a good idea of when that will be. The final question is: how much will the item cost? This is not how much you can, or would like to, pay. A plow truck will run \$120,000 or so, a fire engine more like \$350,000. Big numbers if you are not ready.



Inside the Braintree Town Garage

With the answers to these three questions in hand, you are ready to crunch some numbers and see how you can avoid huge swings in expenditures by using reserve accounts, loans, and staggering purchases. TRORC can help you through all phases of such a project. We can do small budgeting projects as our standard service to member towns, or larger projects under contract. This is an excellent scope for a municipal planning grant. For more information on such assistance, contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org or by calling (802) 457-3188.

TRORC Assists with Affordable Housing Opportunities

Two new affordable housing projects are planned for the Village of White River Junction. Twin Pines Housing Trust, which currently manages nearly 300 housing units in the Upper Valley, is set to work on a \$5.5 million project to upgrade and expand low-income housing at two sites. Meanwhile, further down Main Street at the intersection with Bridge Street, another project is in the works, courtesy of the Town of Harford in collaboration local developer Bill Bittinger of Railroad Row, LLC and with administrative support from staff at TRORC. Construction plans call for a \$3.5 million four-story building where a club once stood that was destroyed in a 2005 fire. Not only will this project revitalize an important corner in White River Junction, but it will also create 16 affordable apartments within a mixed-use commercial and residential building. Plans include many energy efficient measures and the possibility of solar photo-voltaic panels on the rooftop. TRORC staff is currently assisting Hartford to secure funding toward site acquisition, in view of the project's dual affordable housing and economic development benefits. For more information on this project, please contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org or Ellie Ray at eray@trorc.org.



Downtown White River Junction

To further drive home the issue of affordable housing needs in the region, TRORC is putting together an outreach film focused on affordable housing and the people from all sectors of our communities who need it. Our region is in need of thousands of new housing units in order to house our workforce and our senior population. This film aims to change the mental image associated with affordable housing and to put a local face on the issue. If there are story-lines which you think should be included or ideas of people to interview, please contact Pollaidh Major at pmajor@trorc.org.

Shared Municipal Services: Joining Forces and Spreading Costs

With budgets tightening at all levels of government, our communities are seeking opportunities to reduce costs and streamline services. TRORC is working to help municipal officials come together to find mutually beneficial opportunities to share services. To begin this process, we surveyed municipal officials as to their level of interest in shared services and what types of opportunities they might be seeking.



Pittsfield Fire Engine

Our survey results show that one of the most viable opportunities for cooperation may be the sharing of staff. For example, a single person might act as the floodplain administrator or health inspector for multiple communities. This has the advantage of limiting costs (a ¼ time employee would not require benefits) and provides each community with a staff member who has a wide range of experience. Likewise, the sharing of equipment - particularly highway and transportation equipment and bulk goods - may show promise. Other communities indicated an interest in sharing the services of a grant writer.

All survey respondents indicated an interest in the concept of shared services, but recognized that “the devil is in the details” - municipal agreements can be complicated. Knowing that, TRORC staff offered workshops in the region earlier this month that were specifically designed to bring municipal officials up to speed on how the process works, what the different agreement structures are and what responsibilities involved parties have under each type of agreement. To learn more about the possibility of establishing shared service agreements, contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org or call the TRORC office at (802) 457-3188.

Kevin Geiger Participates in Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup Economic Resiliency Workshop

TRORC was part of the Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup’s winter business continuity workshop on February 3rd. This morning workshop focused on business continuity in times of climate change. Nearly 70 people attended the workshop held in Hypertherm’s new facility in Lebanon, NH. Alex Jaccaci and Jenny Levy from Hypertherm welcomed the group, and then Erich Osterberg from Dartmouth began the workshop with an overview on climate change trends and the business implications. Bonnie Canal then took the group on a frank and humorous tour of what business continuity means and many lessons learned the hard way. Bonnie is a Managing Partner with The Resiliency Institute in New Orleans.



Kevin Geiger presenting at the Economic Resiliency Workshop

TRORC’s Senior Planner, Kevin Geiger, along with Patrick Crawl from Woodstock Farmers Market and Deb Eibner from VT Small Business Development Center, each presented on lessons learned during Irene and the importance of community support and determination in recovery. Amy Seidl and 23 intrepid students from her UVM class attended the workshop, having boarded a bus in the wee hours, to help take notes. They will be forming into several teams to carry on more in-depth consulting projects with partner businesses on continuity planning. The workshop was supported by the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation. Copies of the workshop presentations and materials are available at <http://tinyurl.com/ptamz77>. To learn more about business continuity and resilience matters, please contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org.

Save the Date: Essentials of Land Use Planning

Are you a newly elected or appointed:

- Selectboard Member?
- Development Review Board Member?
- Zoning Board of Adjustment Member?
- Planning Commission Member?
- Conservation Commission Member?

Are you an active board member who feels like you need a refresher course in planning and regulation?

Join municipal board members from communities around the TRORC Region for an evening course that will cover the essential components of land use planning and regulation in Vermont, including:

- Land Use Planning
- Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Plan Implementation
- Meetings, Hearings, and Due Process

TRORC staff members will tailor the content of this two-hour course on land use planning and regulation to the needs of attendees. All attendees should leave this training with a basic understanding of the fundamental framework that defines how land use planning and regulation works in their communities. Presentation dates are as follows:

Wednesday, April 29th, 7 PM - 9 PM at the Bethel Town Office

Wednesday, May 13th, 7 PM - 9 PM at the Fairlee Town Office

For more information, or to RSVP, contact Chris Sargent at 802-457-3188, ext. 12 or csargent@trorc.org. Refreshments will be provided.



TRORC Training Session

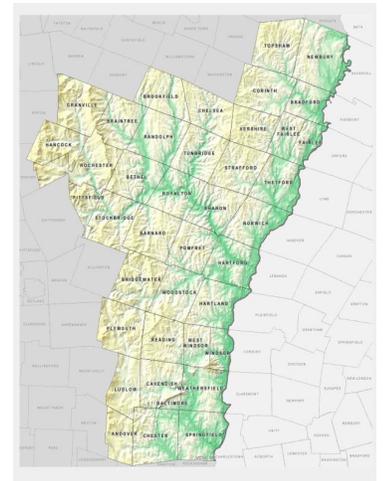
Announcements

Health Matters: Promoting Healthy Communities Initiative Implementation Guide and the Inventory of Vermont Community Health-related Resources

Implementing "East Central Vermont: What We Want" Healthy Communities

Goals A & B

Funded by the Mount Ascutney Prevention Program (MAPP) through funding provided by the Department of Health, MAPP has hired TRORC to assist in the development and design of an implementation guide for the "East Central Vermont: What We Want Healthy Communities" plan chapter. For more information on this effort, please contact Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org.



Related to ECV discussions is the question of: what health resources are available in East Central Vermont towns? In 2005, the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont completed the first ever inventory of community health-related resources for the state of Vermont. This work, done in conjunction with the Vermont Department of Health, is being updated. As such, the Center is seeking feedback from municipal officials regarding the services available in their towns. Information can be provided to the Center either by completing an online survey (visit <http://tinyurl.com/perz7gb>) or by calling the Center at (802) 656-1936. If you have any questions on to the survey, please contact Erin Roche at the Center for Rural Studies by e-mailing eroche1@uvm.edu.

Announcements

VTrans On-Road Bicycle Plan



The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is continuing its community outreach efforts to learn where individuals currently enjoy bicycle riding as well as those places where people would like to be able to ride safely on state roadways. This will help inform plans to determine where work is most needed to ensure roads are bike-friendly to the public. To learn more and participate in this project, you may either:

1. Mark your calendar to attend or stream the project's public meeting on April 30, 2015 from 6-8 PM at Vermont Technical College.
2. Add your information to the On-Road Bicycle Plan WikiMap and learn more about this VTrans project online at <http://vtransplanning.vermont.gov/bikeplan>

Planning for Passenger Rail in Vermont

The Vermont Agency of Transportation plans to release a comprehensive State Rail Plan that will guide future investments into the state's rail system. Assuming continued annual ridership increases in line with the 3% spikes in passenger rail ridership on the Vermonter and Ethan Allen Amtrak rail lines seen in recent years, attaining the 2011 Comprehensive Energy Plan goals of 400,000 passengers per year will be achievable. To reach this goal, the State is mulling whether to open more stations, establish new rail routes, and potentially extend the Vermont line to Montreal, Quebec for the first time in twenty years.



The VTrans plan is set for release by mid-2015, and public meetings will be held in both White River Junction and Essex Junction to present findings and new statewide passenger rail service goals. For further background information on the proposed plan, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/lo85q3v>. TRORC will provide additional information on the Plan and the future public meetings as it becomes available.

Vermont Agency of Transportation Pedestrian Crossing Treatment Guide

Earlier this year, VTrans released new guidelines to help ensure uniform treatment of pedestrian crossings statewide on both highways and local roads. The new guide serves as a supplement to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). To access the new guidelines, visit <http://tinyurl.com/mth9kvm.com/lo85q3v>.



Cold Climate Heat Pump Workshop

The Sustainable Energy Resource Group, in conjunction with TRORC and other sponsors, will be hosting a workshop to help answer whether cold climate heat pumps make sense for you. Join Jake Marin, the HVAC Program Manager with Efficiency Vermont, and heat pump manufacturer representatives and/or installers to learn about the latest in heat pump technologies, the economic costs of using them compared with other fuel sources, case study information, and general resource information. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, May 6 from 6:30-8:00 PM in the Monshire Museum Community Room. Doors will open at 6:00 PM. Food and drinks will be provided. For more information, please contact SERG at (802) 785-4126 or e-mail Bob Walker at bwalker@SERG-info.org.



Announcements

Town Officers' Education Conferences

The 70th Annual Town Officers' Education Conferences are open for registration! These events are designed to help town and municipal staff and officials more effectively do their jobs by providing instruction on how to address and handle an array of town issues.

Two conference dates still have registration availability: the Lake Morey Inn on April 22nd and the Killington Grand Resort Hotel on April 29th. To learn more about these events, please contact Pam Lowell at (802) 773-3349 or e-mail pamela.lowell@uvm.edu. Registration and general information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/pswbxou>.



Efficiency Vermont to Offer Building Energy Standards Support

With the State's recent update to residential and commercial building energy standards (RBES and CBES) along with a new code enabling municipalities to adopt enhanced energy standards exceeding those set by the state, Efficiency Vermont is offering to host free presentations on the new standards. If you should wish to include such a discussion as part of a regularly scheduled town meeting or offer it as a standalone presentation, please contact Paul Markowitz, Community Energy Program Manager with Efficiency Vermont, for more information. Paul can be reached at pmarkowitz@veic.org or by calling (802) 540-7608.



Upcoming Events

April 22 - Town Officers' Education Conference

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT

To learn more, contact Pam Lowell at (802) 773-3349 or e-mail pamela.lowell@uvm.edu.

April 22 - TRORC Board Meeting

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Thompson Senior Center, Woodstock

For more information, contact Dee Gish at dgish@trorc.org.

April 23 - Vermont Economic Resilience Initiative Community Forum

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Billings Farm and Museum Theater, Woodstock, VT

For more information, contact Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org or call (802) 457-3188. Additional information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/k2etz7s>.

April 28 - Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Montshire Museum, Norwich, VT

The Sustainable Energy Resource Group (SERG) and partners will be hosting an Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable event on April 28th. This Roundtable promotes networking and information sharing to assist energy committees in carrying out their work. This year's focus panel will discuss Community Solar Group Net Metering: the opportunities, resources, and models to promote community solar group net metering in VT and NH. To register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ommovut>.

April 29 - Essentials of Land Use Planning Presentation

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Bethel Town Office, Bethel, VT

This presentation is free of charge. Refreshments will be provided. To register, contact Chris Sargent at csargent@trorc.org or by calling 802-457-3188, ext. 12.

Upcoming Events

April 30 - VTrans On-Road Bicycle Plan Public Meeting

6:30 AM - 8:00 PM

Vermont Interactive Technologies, Vermont Technical College, Morrill Hall, Randolph Center

Participants may attend a local meeting or follow a live stream of the event to learn more about the project and provide input.

May 6 - Cold Climate Heat Pump Workshop

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Community Room, Montshire Museum, Norwich, VT

For more information, contact SERG at 802-785-4126 or bwalker@SERG-info.org.

May 7 - Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Bradford Town Office, Bradford, VT

For more information, contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org.

May 13 - TRORC Executive Committee Meeting

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

King Farm, Woodstock

For more information, contact Dee Gish at dgish@trorc.org.

May 13 - Essentials of Land Use Planning Presentation

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Fairlee Town Office, Fairlee, VT

This presentation is free of charge. Refreshments will be provided. To register, contact Chris Sargent at csargent@trorc.org or call 802-457-3188, ext. 12.

May 20 - Economic Development Workshop: The Impact of Local Food Systems on the Regional Economy

Implementing "ECV: What We Want" Economic Development Goals B, C, & H

5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Billings Farm and Museum, Woodstock, VT

Visit ECVEDD.org to learn more. To RSVP, e-mail Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org.

May 27 - TRORC Board Meeting

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Thompson Senior Center, Woodstock

For more information, contact Dee Gish at dgish@trorc.org.

June 5 - Vermont Downton and Historic Preservation Conference

All Day

Main Street Landing, Burlington, VT

The 2015 Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference requires registration (the event fee is \$75 unless booked before April 30th, earning you a \$10 discount). To learn more, contact Gary Holloway at gary.holloway@state.vt.us or call (802) 828-3220.

June 10 - Spring Planning and Zoning Forum

8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT

Join the Vermont League of Cities & Towns for their Planning and Zoning Forum, which is designed for local officials involved in planning and development review processes. Registration is open until June 3. To learn more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/knrphnf> or contact Lisa Goodell at info@vlct.org or call (802) 229-9111.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Money is available for Vermont municipalities, tribal organizations, and private non-profits to help mitigate the impacts of future disasters on public infrastructure and some private property. HMGP funds will cover up to 75% of the costs of projects, such as flood-proofing municipal buildings, replacing culverts, and stabilizing riverbanks. The grant application is available on the Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security website: <http://vem.vermont.gov/mitigation>. DEMHS staff is available to assist with the application process. Applicants are encouraged to contact Ray Doherty at 802-241-5258 or ray.doherty@state.vt.us, or Misha Bailey at 802-241-5362 or misha.bailey@state.vt.us for assistance. The application deadline is May 1, 2015.



Lintilhac Foundational Support

The Lintilhac Foundation supports organizations that aim to make a sustainable, positive change in Vermont's environment and its people. It grants money to help organizations achieve their environmental destinies in the following areas: clean water economy, renewable energy economy, and land use and environmental equity. They will accept requests from organizations serving Vermont for project support and general operating costs in amounts ranging from \$5,000-30,000. Applications are reviewed quarterly, with the next upcoming application deadline being June 1. To learn more about this opportunity, visit <http://tinyurl.com/p52b4ta> or call the Foundation at (802) 985-4106.



Vermont Community Foundation Small and Inspiring Grants



The Vermont Community Foundation administers Small and Inspiring Grants that help keep Vermonters happy and healthy. The foundation funds projects that connect people through volunteerism and community-building, connect people to the environment that surrounds them, and brings people together to enhance social interaction. These small grants range from \$500-2,500, and the next deadline for submission is August 3. To learn more about these grants, please visit the Vermont Community Foundation website: <http://tinyurl.com/mlpx52b>.

Vermont Agriculture Individual Development Account Program

The Vermont Agriculture Individual Development Account (YAIDA) program is seeking applications for new participants. This pioneering program, the first of its kind in the nation, is directed at young adults between the ages of 14 and 21 who are engaged in or interested in farming. It will equip participants with the skills that are needed to be successful in the field, and even help toward saving for future agricultural endeavors. To learn more about the program, please visit the UVM Extension website at <http://tinyurl.com/qxw4msc> or contact Liz Kenton at the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture at liz.kenton@uvm.edu or by calling (802) 257-7967, ext. 308.



Rural Fire Protection Grant Program

Formerly known as the Dry Hydrant Program, funding is available to help with the installation of new dry hydrants or other rural water supply needs. Funds may also be used for repairs and upgrades, replacements, or relocation of existing rural water supplies, with maximum awards up to \$4,000 per project or system (with a 25% local match requirement). To learn more, visit the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts website (<http://www.vacd.org/rfp>) or contact Troy Dare at (802) 828-4582 or e-mail dryhydrantguy@yahoo.com.





Two Rivers-Ottauquechee

REGIONAL COMMISSION

128 King Farm Rd. • Woodstock, VT 05091