

TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION



August 2013



To receive this newsletter by e-mail instead of hardcopy, please write to:

news@trorc.org

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Greetings!

As you know, TRORC is active in delivering the Home Buyout Program for properties destroyed in Tropical Storm Irene. Closing on these properties is a key first step, but once municipalities take ownership of the land, what can be done with it? The article below describes an inclusive process that has been used in Pittsfield to gather opinions and agree on a plan for buyout property use. We would welcome the opportunity to facilitate these discussions in all our affected communities.

Finally, please note the release of the FY 14 Municipal Planning Grant program. With new requirements for plans, now is a good time to seek funding to underwrite that effort.

Enjoy the summer!

Sincerely,

Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director

News

Pittsfield Looks to the Future

A beautiful mid June evening was the culmination of three months of work between TRORC and the Town of Pittsfield Planning Commission. The topic at hand was the discussion of conceptual site plans for the properties being purchased by the Town from the HMGP buyouts.

The goal of the forum was to elicit feedback from the public on the design renderings being presented. The overall consensus was after building demolition, to regrade the site and begin riparian restoration to improve the ecological habitat. The attendees were also excitedly in agreement for the construction of low impact trails bordering the Tweed, which would provide great access to the river.

The planning process and public forum was a well received success. Pittsfield now plans on using this information to begin working on obtaining implementation grants and constructing the project site over the years to come.



The proposed "West Branch Park" will be a community asset located on three adjacent property buyout locations.



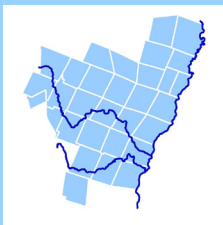
Regional Plan for
Sustainable
Development

TRORC is working
with the East Central
Vermont partnership
to develop a vision
and plan for a

We want to hear
from you!

Share your vision of
the future by visiting
the website:

www.ecvermont.org



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TRORC Assists Rochester with ADA Upgrades

TRORC is assisting the Town of Rochester and the Library Trustees on a recently awarded grant from the Vermont Community Development Program to administer the Accessibility Modification grant for ADA upgrades to the Library building. With the project just kicking off, everyone is greatly looking forward to the end result!

If you wish to access Community Development Block Grants from this Program, give us a call at 802-457-3188



Rochester Village Library

East Central Vermont Consortium Meeting Discusses Transportation

The July Consortium meeting was well attended by a wide variety of people from around the region. The meeting featured three transportation-related presentations:

1. Rita Seto from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission presented the first draft of the Regional Transportation Plan, an ECV plan deliverable. The draft plan is open for public comment until August 30, 2013 at ecvermont.org under the "Deliverables" tab found at the top of the page.
2. Jason Rasmussen from Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC) presented the Housing and Transportation Affordability Index: The True Cost of Transportation. A study created for the 10 towns in the SWCRPC region. Future work on this index will include the 30 towns in the TRORC region.
3. Aaron Brown from Vital Communities presented Understanding Our Starting Point: 2013 Data on Transportation in East Central Vermont.



Rita Seto, discussing the state of transportation in East Central Vermont

All three presentations can be found at ecvermont.org under "News" and "Resources."

What's Next?

Three deliverables are scheduled for presentation at the October 15, 2013 Consortium Meeting: the Housing Plan, Health as a Sustainable Outcome and, an Elder-Friendly Region. Mark your calendars and plan to join us at the Hotel Coolidge in White River Junction from 9:30 to 11:30. All plans will be posted to the "Deliverables" section of ecvermont.org prior to the meeting.

ECVermont has hired Building Communities, Inc. to help with the "Strategic Plan for Rural Economic Development." They have created a unique and efficient way to facilitate an organized process that yields locally driven direction and immediate action. You can read more about their approach at www.BuildingCommunities.us

If you would like to participate in the ECV: What We Want in any way, please contact Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org.

Town Plans Must Address Flood Resiliency

Governor Shumlin signed Act 16 into law at the end of the 2013 legislative session. In Act 16 the legislature added a new state planning goal and a new element (Flood Resiliency Plan) to town and regional plans. The plan elements are meant to accomplish two things - identify areas at risk of flood damage or storage through a map, and then recommend ways to protect these areas and to minimize flood damage.



A class 3 road rebuilt after T.S. Irene

The new “Flood Resiliency” Plan becomes a mandatory requirement for municipal and regional plans adopted after July of 2014. Any communities that are working on plan revisions or are planning to revise their plans soon should include this chapter. Staff at TRORC can offer suggestions as to what types of policies should be considered in this chapter.

For more information please contact Chris Sargent (csargent@trorc.org) or Kevin Geiger (kgeiger@trorc.org)

By laws and Plans Can and Should be Submitted Digitally



Municipalities can and should submit their proposed and adopted plans and bylaws, including public hearing notices as well as plan and bylaw reports, to Wendy Tudor by email (Wendy.Tudor@state.vt.us) She will then reply with an official email notifying the senders that their submittal was received by the Department. Eventually these documents will be posted to a searchable website and available to the public.

Towns with Certificates of Occupancy must require RBES Certificate

With the implementation of Act 89, state statute now mandates that zoning administrators “shall provide the applicant with a copy of the applicable building energy standards...” This can be given to the applicant in either paper or digital format. Act 89 also stipulates that if a bylaw has a certificate of occupancy “provision of a certificate as required by V.S.A §266 (residential building energy standards) or 268 (commercial building energy standards) shall be a condition precedent to the issuance of any such certificate of occupancy.”

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Sargent (csargent@trorc.org)

If you would like to learn more, please head to:

http://publicservice.vermont.gov/topics/energy_efficiency/rbes

Flood Insurance Premiums Rising

(courtesy of Ned Swanberg, Vermont Watershed Management Division)



- Rates have risen significantly to meet the actual costs
- Current insurance policy premiums will rise at 20-25% a year until at actuarial cost
- Contact your insurance agent to look at options
- Elevation Certificates are now required
- Making your structure safer will reduce the risk of damage and the cost of insurance

In Vermont, there are around 8,000 structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area. Banks are required to assure that any mortgage or loan to a structure in a mapped hazard area is insured for at least the value of that mortgage, the value of the structure, or amount of insurance available through the NFIP - whichever is less.

Currently in Vermont ~ 2/3s of the structures in the high risk Special Flood Hazard Area do not have flood insurance. Most of these structures were built before the flood hazard maps were available and most have basements. In Vermont around 2/3 of residences have a mortgage.

In 2012 the Biggert-Waters Act requires the National Flood Insurance Program to charge actuarial rates and to pay off accumulated debt. In Vermont an average flood insurance policy in a high risk Special Flood Hazard Area will be around \$4,000/year for \$170,000 in insured value.

IF you are getting a new policy the structure will be rated at the actuarial rate for the structure. A new policy (or a policy renewed after 10/1/2013) will require an Elevation Certificate to identify how high the flood water (Base Flood Elevation/BFE) will rise relative to the elevation of the lowest floor of the structure. The lowest floor is the basement floor.

IF you have a current Pre-FIRM Flood Insurance Policy your rates will increase step-wise 20 or 25% each year to the actuarial rates. An additional charge of 5% will be added to establish a reserve fund for the program.

For more information visit: <http://vtfpm.blogspot.com/2013/06/flood-insurance-premiums-rising-for.html>

*For questions regarding NFIP regulations,
contact Pete Fellows CFM at pfellows@trorc.org 802-457-3188 x21*

The East Central Vermont Draft Transportation Plan and Park & Ride Needs Assessment are now Available!

The draft plan and assessment are available for download
here: <http://trorc.org/events.html#regionalnews>



*For any questions or comments regarding the drafts, please contact:
Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org*

“...hands down the best investment”

“TRORC is hands down the best investment the Town of Pomfret has ever made. We use Pete Fellows to make maps for us and he is the best... very understanding and always quick to respond to our every need. Kevin Geiger got us off on the right foot after Irene so we were able to keep the kind of records that FEMA needed which saved the town over \$1,000,000. Rita has been very helpful with our Teago Bridge project. She is always very easy to work with and extremely capable. My only advice to you would be “Don’t change a thing!” Thanks.”

Neil Lamson, Selectboard Member/ Administrative Assistant, Pomfret



A typical picturesque scene for the TRORC transportation field crews

Upcoming Events

August 22 - LEPC #12 Meeting

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Hartford Fire Station, 812 VA Cutoff Rd White River Junction, VT

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 802-457-3188 x13

September 12 - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Bethel Town Hall

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 802-457-3188 x13

TBD - Orange/Windsor County Road Foreman Meeting

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 802-457-3188 x13

September 25 - TRORC Board Meeting

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

The King Farm (128 King Farm Rd., Woodstock)



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.

Grants / Funding Opportunities

2014 Municipal Planning Grants

In recognition of the community planning and improvement efforts taking place in municipalities large and small throughout Vermont, for the first time in many years the legislature increased the amount of funding by 10%, making \$450,000 available for Municipal Planning Grants (MPGs). Maximum funding for grants will also increase from \$15,000 to \$20,000 for a single municipality.

Projects that fit into one of the following priorities will have a higher likelihood of funding:

- Bylaw updates intended to correct clear conflicts with the municipal plan, bylaw updates that address one or more of the smart growth principles in 24 V.S.A. § 2791 (13), and bylaws that implement the flood resilience recommendations of the plan.
- Utilities and facilities/infrastructure planning in support of compact centers and smart growth. Projects could include, but are not limited to: capital improvement planning (structured to implement the municipal plan and further smart growth principles); facility inventories, mapping and needs identification; conceptual design/visioning; and developing policies relating to sewer, water, storm water, energy, transportation, green infrastructure and/or communications infrastructure. (For any sewer or water projects, please contact us for guidance before starting your application.)
- Updating or amending a Municipal Plan for the purpose of addressing inconsistencies with statewide planning goals or the Regional Plan. (A recently expired plan or pending expiration of a plan alone is not considered a priority.)
- Planning and implementation for achieving greater flood resilience: Updating a municipal plan to meet the new statutory requirement for a flood resilience element integrated with river corridor and hazard mitigation planning. See 24 V.S.A. §4382. Projects that implement the flood resilience recommendations of the plan are also priorities.

To see the FY14 MPG program description and application please visit:

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/municipal_planning_grants/mpgy14

If you need assistance with an application or have questions, please contact Chris Sargent at 802-457-3188 x12.

Application due: September 30, 2013.