MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

This year’s round of Municipal Planning Grants have been announced and applications are due on October 2, 2017 with regional confirmation of your Town Plan needed by September 30, 2017. Projects can include town plan rewrites, bylaws and studies for villages, downtowns, and walkable neighborhoods with an emphasis on housing, and on correcting conflicts and inconsistencies in plans and bylaws. Municipalities may be awarded up to $20,000 through a competitive selection process. TRORC is actively working on several applications and is happy to help your municipality with the application and assist with your project if awarded.

For more information about the program and how to apply, please contact Tory Littlefield at vlittlefield@trorc.org.

TRO REGION RECEIVES ALMOST $500,000 FROM MUNICIPAL GRANTS-IN-AID PROJECT

The TRO Region has received almost half a million dollars in grant funds that will improve water quality. Twenty-seven out of thirty towns sought funds through the Municipal Grants-In-Aid Pilot Project. This program is providing funding for municipalities to implement best management practices (BMPs) on municipal roads ahead of the forthcoming State Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP).

Projects must be on a hydrologically connected segment to bring it up to MRGP standards and the work should be complete the work by October 31, 2017. Projects include, but are not limited to; grass and stone-line ditching, removal of grader berms, improvement/replacement of culverts, gully erosion, and stabilizing catch basins. The amount the municipality receives from this project is dependent on the amount of hydrologically connected segments located in town.

Contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org for more information.
3-4-50: COMMUNITY SIGN-ON FORM

TRORC has partnered with the Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership (MAPP) in working with communities on policies that focus on healthy communities. After a presentation at a TRORC Board meeting, MAPP presented on one of the first steps a community can take which is the 3-4-50 Vermont campaign.

3-4-50 Vermont focuses on the three behaviors (lack of physical activity, poor diet, and tobacco use) that lead to four chronic diseases (Cancer, heart disease and stroke, type two diabetes, and lung disease) which result in more than 50% of all deaths in Vermont. This program is a simple but powerful way to understand and communicate the overwhelming impact of these diseases by making a difference at a level that can influence the health of many. The common goal of this program is to make the healthy choice where we live, work, learn and play.

For more information about this program, contact Melanie Sheehan at Melanie.sheehan@mahhc.org and download the community checklist at http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/3-4-50_SignOnForm_Community_FINAL_distributed.pdf.

CDBG PROJECTS START CONSTRUCTION

TRORC’s major construction projects have begun work and are on track for completion this construction season:

- **Taggart Hill Road Relocation, Stockbridge:** Stream work is almost complete, road relocation work started in June.
- **Churchville Culvert Replacement, Hancock:** The old culvert has been removed and the concrete deck bridge has been poured.
- **Mt. Hunger Road Bank Stabilization, Barnard:** Construction is scheduled to begin this fall 2017.
- **Bridge & Main Housing, White River Junction:** Sixteen affordable housing units have begun construction and are expected to be completed in January 2018.

TRORC manages several other CDBG grants in our region that include handicap accessibility, affordable housing, and design plans. If your community or organization is interested in this grant program, please contact Peter Gregory for assistance or more information at pgregory@trorc.org.
FLOODING HITS TRO REGION

On July 1, 2017, several powerful thunderstorms hit the TRO Region, causing extensive damage to several towns. Thetford and Norwich each experienced over $1 million in road and infrastructure damages alone. Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) activated TRORC staff to call towns after the storms to get preliminary damage assessments on Town infrastructure, as well as private residential damages. Based on preliminary cost estimates, VEM sent a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to conduct a Preliminary Disaster Assessment (PDA) to determine if a federal declaration is warranted. Staff attended this PDA over several days in Thetford, Strafford, and Norwich with members of VEM, Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), and town officials. Governor Scott has requested a federal declaration to President Trump for federal aid.

TRORC is still actively working with Towns on procurement policies and receiving reports of residential damages. If you or someone you know has damage from these storms, please contact your Town Clerk and leave your name, address, description of damages, and contact information. We encourage all of our member towns to send TRORC your list of residential damages and to contact us with any questions regarding the FEMA reimbursement process. TRORC is passing this information to VEM and Upper Valley Strong.

For more information, please contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org or Tory Littlefield at vlittlefield@trorc.org.

CLEAN WATER WEEK!

Clean Water Week is August 20th-26th! On August 21st, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will be hosting the Association of Clean Water Administrators’ in Burlington, where Governor Scott will be leveraging the opportunity presented by this national conference to issue a proclamation declaring Clean Water Week in Vermont. During the week, the state and its partners will celebrate the many efforts undertaken by Vermont businesses and farms, individuals and advocates, municipalities and organizations that help keep our rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands clean.

For more information, go to http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/clean-water-week for events and how you can get involved.
STAFF PERSON CHRIS DAMIANI ATTENDS NADO CONFERENCE

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) held its 2017 Regional Transportation Conference at the end of June in Denver, Colorado. TRORC has long been a member organization of NADO which provides advocacy, education, research, and training for the nation’s regional development organizations. Staff member Chris Damiani had the opportunity to attend the conference and learn from transportation professionals from all across the country.

The conference’s overarching theme was focused on rural transportation and how regional development organizations can assist those that live in the rural areas connect with their public transit providers, access multi modal networks, and be engaged in their communities. There was also emphasis around the importance of aligning transportation and economic development planning together in order to maximize funding opportunities for a resilient transportation network. Some notable presentations were on technological applications for mobility services and tools for identifying bike friendliness in small towns. Chris is excited to bring back the lessons learned and implement them in our region.