

TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION



Issue: #57

February 2013



To receive this newsletter by e-mail instead of hardcopy, please write to:
dgish@trorc.org

In This Issue

News

Announcements

Upcoming Events

Grants



Regional Plan for
Sustainable
Development

TRORC is working with the East Central Vermont partnership 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

News

Home Buyout Update

TRORC continues in its role as the statewide coordinator of Community Development Block Grant funding for the buyout of flood damaged structures. There are currently 132 properties in 40 towns statewide that are working their way through the grant application, approval or implementation process. Several properties have purchase and sales agreements in place and we expect that our next newsletter will report on closings.

TRORC was chosen for this task by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development based on the high number of buyouts in this region (64 in 11 towns) and our involvement in emergency planning and grant administration.

The Town of Stockbridge has the largest number of buyout properties in the state, 19, with most of these concentrated in one neighborhood along the Tweed River. Once towns officially acquire the properties, TRORC's staff will guide them through the process of clearing away the damaged structures.

If you have questions, please contact Kevin Geiger (kgeiger@trorc.org) or Bob Ennis (bennis@trorc.org) at 802-457-3188.



Property in Rochester slated for buyout.

Report Considers Options to Address Vermont's Estimated \$240M Transportation Funding Gap

On January 8, 2013, the Vermont Transportation Funding Options Report was published. This report answers the 2012 Vermont Legislature's charge to (1) estimate the gap between revenue sources and the cost to maintain, operate, and build the state's transportation system, (2) evaluate potential new state revenue sources, and (3) determine how existing state revenue sources could be optimally modified to address the gap.

Vermont is facing an estimated shortfall of more than \$240 million per year in transportation funding for 2014 through 2018. During this four year period, it will cost an estimated \$700 million annually to maintain, operate and administer the transportation system in a state of good repair, while revenue is estimated to range between \$469 and \$486 million per year. Key issues include the state gasoline tax revenue (which continues to decline as residents drive less and buy more fuel efficient vehicles), uncertainty surrounding the Federal Highway Trust Fund (the fund is no longer self-sustaining since the federal gasoline tax has not increased since 1993), and the funding problems associated with the Federal Transportation Reauthorization.

Staff

Pete Fellows, CFM
GIS Manager

Kevin Geiger, AICP, CFM
Senior Planner

Dee Gish
Finance Manager

Peter G. Gregory, AICP
Executive Director

Brian Hamlin
Planner

Samantha Holcomb
Planner

Loralee Morrow, LEED AP
Regional Planner

Chris Sargent, AICP
Senior Planner

Rita Seto, AICP
Senior Planner

Emma Zavez
Planner

The report lays out 15 different funding options and assesses them based on the following criteria: revenue stream opportunities, implementation/administration, economic efficiency, and equity. Ultimately, the report recommends the need for continued focus on the transportation funding challenge, coupled with outreach to municipalities. TRORC will assist the state with outreach in the near future.

You can find the report at: www.aot.state.vt.us/Documents/Sec%2040%20Funding%20Study%20-%20Final%20Legislative%20Report%20Jan%208%202013.pdf.

Relicensing of TransCanada Dam on Connecticut River: Public Comment Period is Open!

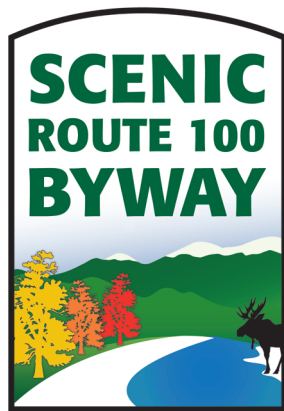
The hydroelectric dam in Wilder, Vermont will require a new operation license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by April 30, 2018. Although 2018 is several years away, the relicensing process has already begun, which means that **FERC is accepting public comments now through March 1, 2013.**

Comments should be focused on the Scoping Document (SD1), which can be found online at: www.fws.gov/r5csrc/pdf/FERCCTRiverMainstem. Please be sure to review the issues that have been raised by FERC in regard to relicensing (see Section 4.2 on pages 24 - 26) and TransCanada's study proposals (see page 30).

All comments must clearly identify the project and number, **Wilder Project No. 1892-026**, on the front page. Your name and contact information must be included on the last page of the comments. Comments may be submitted online at: www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp. Or, if you would prefer to mail hard copies, please mail an original and seven copies to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20426. To submit study requests, please contact Samantha Holcomb (sholcomb@trorc.org or 802-457-3188) for more information.

If you do not wish to submit individual comments, but would still like your voice to be heard, please share your thoughts with Samantha (same contact information as above), who will be submitting comments on behalf of TRORC for the region.

Announcements



Route 100 Byway is Expanding!

The Scenic Route 100 Byway Committee is completing the final touches on their application to expand the Vermont Byway to run from the Granville Gulf to Stamford (on the Massachusetts border). In the Two Rivers region, Granville, Hancock, Rochester and Stockbridge will be joining Pittsfield, Bridgewater and Plymouth to form the Byway. Interested in learning more? Check out the Draft Corridor Management Plan Update online at: www.yourplaceinvermont.com/scenic-route-100-byway/. Or, you can get involved by attending the Vermont Scenery Preservation Council's public hearing to consider the expansion (March 13th at the Londonderry Town Offices, 6:30pm). Contact Rita (rseto@trorc.org or 802-457-3188) for more information.

Adopted Town Plan Now Required to Access Community Development Block Grant Funding

The Vermont Community Development Program, which manages Vermont's allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, has recently changed the application requirements for communities that apply for funding. It is now mandatory that any community seeking CDBG funding have a locally adopted Town Plan. Any municipality that seeks CDBG funding for economic development, public works, housing, etc. should pay careful attention to the status of their Town Plan. If your Plan has expired, you will not be eligible for these funds until it is formally readopted.

If your community needs assistance revising your Town Plan, or you have questions regarding the CDBG program, please contact Chris (csargent@trorc.org or 802-457-3188).

It's Time to Update Your Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan...

TRORC has secured funding to assist member towns in updating their Hazard Mitigation Plans (all plans are set to expire on September 30, 2013). The purpose of a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is to identify the hazards that may arise in your town as a result of natural occurrences and then provide hazard-specific mitigation measures to reduce property losses and human injuries or fatalities. Hazards might include flooding, winter storms, wild fires, hurricanes and tropical storms, among others.

It is important to have a HMP that has been adopted by your local legislative body and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure eligibility for hazard mitigation grants in the future. Please contact Emma (ezavez@trorc.org) or Samantha (sholcomb@trorc.org) at 802-457-3188 with questions.

FY'15 Capital Projects Prioritization

Every year, TRORC's staff works with the Transportation Advisory Committee and town officials to prioritize transportation projects in this region. Each project is ranked by VTrans according to engineering criteria and other technical factors and by TRORC according to economic, historic, and other considerations. VTrans' analysis comprises 80% of the final decision, while TRORC's fills in the remaining 20%. We have sent the draft list of regional projects to our member towns and comments will be accepted until March 13. Please contact Rita (rseto@trorc.org or 802-457-3188) with inquiries.

Upcoming Events

February 26, 2013 - American Red Cross Shelter Training

Edgewater Room at the Lake Morey Inn (1 Clubhouse Road, Fairlee) from 6:00 - 8:30 PM.

This training will focus on managing a shelter during the first 72 hours of operation. The training is free and open to anyone with interest. For questions, contact Rita (rseto@trorc.org or 802-457-3188).

February 27, 2013 - TRORC Board Meeting

The King Farm (128 King Farm Road, Woodstock) from 7:00 - 9:00 PM.

March 5, 2013 - Town Meeting Day

Don't forget to attend your local Town Meeting!

March 6, 2013 - "Connecting It All" Presentation to the Springfield Planning Commission

Town Hall (96 Main Street, Springfield) at 7:00 PM.

This presentation will focus on how the choices that you make (particularly where you choose to build and drive) can impact your community. It is part of a lecture series organized by the East Central Vermont consortium (www.ecvermont.org). The event is free and open to all. Please contact Lorelee (lmorrow@trorc.org or 802-457-3188) with questions.

March 13, 2013 - Vermont Scenery Preservation Council's Public Hearing

Londonderry Town Offices (100 Old School Street, South Londonderry) at 6:30 PM.

This is a public hearing to consider the expansion of the Scenic Route 100 Byway. See announcement (on page 2) to learn more.

March 14, 2013 - Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Pond Village Church (First Congregational Church, 49 Ridge Road, Brookfield) from 9:30 - 11:00 AM.

March 23, 2013 - Selectboard Institute I (Workshop) by the VT League of Cities & Towns

The Capitol Plaza (100 State Street, Montpelier). For more information and to register, go to: www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-calendar/selectboard-insitute-i-montpelier/view/2013-03-23.

"The Selectboard Institute provides Vermont selectboard members with the skills they need to manage the affairs of their town, focusing on the fundamentals of municipal governance and current issues facing selectboards in small and large towns..."

April 2013 - Town Officers' Education Conference (TOEC)

April 3 (Hilton Hotel, Burlington), April 17 (Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee), April 24 (Grand Hotel, Killington). A list of workshops will be available soon. Registration will go live on March 5th at: www.uvm.edu/extension/community/?Page=toec.html.



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

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

Additional Funding Available for Businesses Impacted by Tropical Storm Irene

A Community Development Block Grant (in the form of \$1 Million) has been awarded to the Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC), the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation (GMEDC), and the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) to provide businesses in Windsor and Washington Counties with assistance in recovering from Tropical Storm Irene.

The application has been posted online (www.gmedc.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CV-CDBG-DR-Bz-app-1-14-12.pdf) and funding is first come-first served. Please contact Joan Goldstein (jgoldstein@gmedc.com or 802-295-3710), Executive Director of the GMEDC, with questions.

Additional Funding Available for Homeowners and Renters Impacted by Tropical Storm Irene

Funding has been granted by Rotary International to Vermont's Community Action Network providers to assist residents who still have unmet needs due to Tropical Storm Irene. Please contact your local community action center for more information:

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA): 1-800-464-9951 or sevca@sevca.org
Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC): 1-800-639-1053

If you have any trouble contacting your community action center, please ask Emma at TRORC (ezavez@trorc.org or 802-457-3188) for additional assistance.

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design is Accepting Applications

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) is accepting applications for rural communities that would like to host a two and a half day community design workshop aimed at tackling local challenges and building on their existing assets. Chosen communities will receive a \$7,000 stipend and technical assistance and design expertise valued at \$35,000. To learn more, check out CIRD's website at: www.rural-design.org/. Applications are due March 5, 2013 and can be downloaded at: www.rural-design.org/apply.

Examples of Irene-related assistance that may be provided could include:

- Short-term rent
- Fuel & Utility Assistance
- Furnace repair or replacement
- Appliance repair & replacement
- Mold Abatement & Remediation
- Well/Septic System Repairs
- Waste/Debris Removal
- Transportation Assistance *and*
- Service Road & Culvert Repairs.