

TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION



June 2013



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

news@trorc.org

In This Issue

News

Announcements

Upcoming Events

Grants

Greetings!

A lot of very important work continues at TRORC: work that furthers the aspirations of our residents, implements local and regional plans, and meets the ever changing needs of our communities.

To improve our effectiveness, one of the efforts underway is a strategic planning process for TRORC. Our economy, environment, and community needs are changing and growing in number and complexity. No one entity alone can properly address the issues we face. Therefore, it is essential that we look inward, as well as outward and seek the counsel of local, regional and state leaders who can help us identify our collective future needs and find creative ways to meet them.

So, as part of our outreach, I invite you to e-mail me (pgregory@trorc.org) about what you see, what we need, and tell me your ideas on how to ensure TRORC serves in the most effective way possible.

Thank you for your interest in how we serve our towns, the region and the state!

Sincerely,

Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director

News

The ECV Consortium Gears Up for Economic Development

Several of the East Central Vermont (ECV) Consortium's workgroups are up and running and now, the Economic Development workgroup is about to begin. The scheduling of our first 2013 meeting is coming soon; watch the calendar on our website (<http://ecvermont.org/calendar/>) for specifics!

The ECV Consortium is excited about the prospect of asset-based economic development which focuses on how small towns and rural communities can build on their natural and working landscapes, local institutions, existing infrastructure, historic and cultural resources, industry clusters, and human capital.

TRORC's staff recently drafted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an ECV region-wide "Strategic Plan for Rural Economic Development." This Plan will include an inventory of the ECV region's existing assets, an analysis of their financial contribution to the area, and recommendations on how we can build on them. It is a positive way of enhancing the existing economy, rather than focusing solely on challenges.

The East Central Vermont: What We Want project is a HUD-funded planning opportunity that focuses on economic competitiveness, housing, transportation, health and society, climate resilience, energy, and habitat in the ECV 40-town region. For more information about the project, please visit our website: www.ecvermont.org. If you would like to participate in the ECV Economic Development workgroup, please contact Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org or (802) 457-3188 x20.



Participants at the ECV Consortium Meeting on April 30, 2013.
Photo Credit: Ray Brewster.



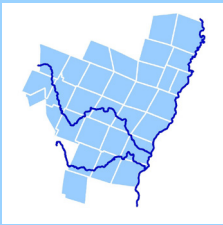
Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

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. Please take our survey by going to:

www.ecvermont.org

**TAKE THE
SURVEY!**



Flood Damage Buyouts Update

Bethel continues to lead the state in property buyouts that have moved to the actual purchase of the property, with three completed. Other recently completed buyouts include one each in Plymouth, Northfield and Bolton. Over one hundred more are in the works with closings likely coming soon in Bridgewater and Rochester.

A few applications for buyouts in Pittsfield, Sharon and Braintree were denied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), appealed, and then recently denied again. TRORC will work with the state and towns to try to facilitate these buyouts through expected future funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in Fall 2013.

There is also another round of funding for any additional properties in need of a buyout (see the funding announcement on page 4). Please feel free to contact Kevin Geiger (kgeiger@trorc.org) or Bob Ennis (bennis@trorc.org) with questions about the buyout process at (802) 457-3188.

Governor’s Energy Siting Commission Emphasizes Local and Regional Role

After several months of listening to public testimony, conducting site visits, and reviewing research on siting energy generation facilities, the Governor’s Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission published its final recommendations on April 30, 2013. The Vermont Public Service Department’s press release (4/30/2013) notes that the report focuses on “bolstering the local and regional energy planning processes and ensuring that local and regional plans receive greater consideration before the Public Service Board (PSB).” Read the Full Report and the Separate Statement of Commissioner McCarren at <http://sitingcommission.vermont.gov/publications>.

Announcements

TRORC Offers Free Trainings to Municipalities

TRORC has published its first comprehensive list of training opportunities for member municipalities. Workshops cover a variety of topics including:

Land Use Planning * River Management and Flooding * Natural Resources and Conservation * Transportation * Data Collection and Mapping * Emergency Management



If you are a town official or serve on a volunteer committee (such as the Conservation Commission or Energy Committee), please download our Trainings for Municipal Officials list at <http://www.trorc.org/events.html#MT> and let us know if anything piques your interest! TRORC generally offers these trainings to our member towns for free. If you are interested in scheduling a training, please e-mail (training@trorc.org) or call us at (802) 457-3188. We look forward to hearing from you!

New Environmental Review Requirement for Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) Applicants

Starting July 1, 2013, an Environmental Review must be completed by anyone interested in submitting an application to the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP). This requirement covers VCDP’s regular funding programs, as well as funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Disaster Recovery program, as well as HOME funds. To learn more about the changes, please visit VCDP’s website: http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp.

VCDP will be hosting Environmental Review trainings to help grantees understand the process and requirements. If you have questions, please contact Josh Hanford, VCDP Director, at josh.hanford@state.vt.us or (802) 828-5201.

Congratulations Sam, TRORC’s Newest Certified Floodplain Manager!

In April 2013, Samantha (“Sam”) Holcomb joined the ranks of Certified Floodplain Managers (CFM) accredited by the Association of State Floodplain Managers. TRORC now has three CFMs on staff: Pete Fellows, Kevin Geiger, and Samantha Holcomb. Congratulations Sam!

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

Brian Hamlin
Planner

Samantha Holcomb, CFM
Planner

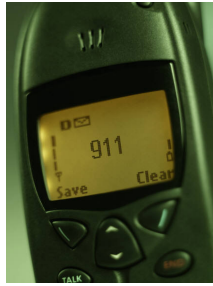
Loralee Morrow, LEED AP
Regional Planner

Chris Sargent, AICP
Senior Planner

Rita Seto, AICP
Senior Planner

Emma Zavez
Planner

Announcements



Eleven Towns Finish Updating & Readopting their BEOPs

In the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee region, the towns of Barnard, Bradford, Braintree, Bridgewater, Chelsea, Granville, Hancock, Rochester, Stockbridge, Strafford, and Topsham deserve special mention. These eleven towns have finished updating and readopting their Basic Emergency Operations Plan (BEOP). Congratulations for being the first towns to finish!

All towns should be reviewing and revising their old BEOPs at this time.

How Resilient is Your Community?

The Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) recently released an excellent planning tool for towns: the *Resilient Communities Scorecard*.

"This Scorecard is a checklist of questions to help Vermont communities assess their resilience in key areas including land use, transportation, energy, and healthy community design. Knowing where your community stands is a first step toward developing goals, action steps, and investment strategies that build or reinforce resilience" (page 1 of Scorecard). The checklist is easy to use and full of tips on planning for the future.

TRORC encourages you to download the Scorecard (<http://vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/tools/vermont-smart-growth-score-card/>), gather together a group of community members and begin assessing where your town stands in terms of resilience. Questions? Please contact Kate McCarthy, VNRC's Sustainable Communities Program Director, at kmccarthy@vnrc.org or (802) 223-2328 x114.

Upcoming Events

June 1 & 2 - CERT Basic Course

Barre City Alumni Hall from 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM both days. "The local Citizen's Corps CERT is looking for enthusiastic neighbors who are interested and willing to become a volunteer and receive training in: Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Medical Operations, Disaster Fire Suppression, Disaster Psychology, Light Search & Rescue Operations, Traffic Control, Incident Command System, and Disaster Animal Rescue." For more information, please download the flyer and contact Julie Benedict, Assistant CERT Leader, at julie.benedict@state.vt.us or (802) 431-5701.

June 3 - Vermont Economic Development Summit

Paramount Theater (30 Center St., Rutland) from 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Make your voice heard by participating in this gathering of Vermont's leading business minds for a day of panel discussions and breakout sessions on the opportunities and challenges of doing business in Vermont. Sponsored by Green Mountain Power and the Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development.

June 4 - Nonprofit Skillshare Workshop

Town Hall (67 School St., Rochester) from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM. This workshop is part of the Vermont Digital Economy Project by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). "This workshop is an open format in which nonprofits will share how they are using online tools and resources to help them gain more attention for their cause and to fundraise. Rob Fish will be leading these discussions, and helping nonprofits see the revolutionizing potential of digital technology, from social media to cloud computing. Rob will be available to meet 1:1 with area nonprofits to discuss their specific needs following the meeting" (<http://vtrural.org/programs/digital-economy/events>). For more information, please contact Rob Fish, Nonprofit Advisor and Community Organizer, at rob@vtrural.org or (802) 223-6098.

June 5 - Public Comment Meeting on Draft White River Basin Plan

Sharon Town Office (69 Route 132, Sharon) from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM. This meeting will focus on the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) Draft White River Basin Tactical Water Quality Management Plan. ANR staff will give a presentation and then ask for comments and questions from the public. All are welcome to attend. To download the draft plan, go to: <http://www.vtwaterquality.org/>.

June 6 - Public Comment Meeting on Draft White River Basin Plan

Bethel Town Office (134 South Main St., Bethel) from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM. See description and link to download the plan (immediately above).

June 7 - The 2013 Downtown & Historic Preservation Conference

Barre Opera House (6 N. Main St., Barre) from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM. For more information and to register, go to http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/downtown_conference2013.



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.

Upcoming Events

June 19 - Orange/Windsor County Road Foreman Meeting

Strafford Town Garage (287 VT Route 132, South Strafford) from 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM.

June 20 - Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) #12 Meeting

Whitcomb High School (273 Pleasant Street, Bethel) from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM.

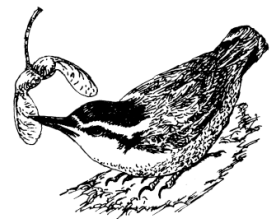
July 11 - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

Location TBD. Check TRORC's website (www.trorc.org) for details or contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org or (802) 457-3188 x13.

Grants / Funding Opportunities

Tiny Grants for Conservation!

The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) is now accepting applications for its Tiny Grants program through June 15, 2013. Awards will be made in the amount of \$250 - \$600 to existing Conservation Commissions or other local groups/committees that would like to become a Conservation Commission and partner of AVCC. Projects should further these goals:



“To assist local committees/groups to become Conservation Commission
 To increase the functioning capacity of existing Conservation Commissions, and
 To provide seed money and/or matching funds for specific projects in the broad categories of land conservation, education and outreach, stewardship and management, and planning.”

To learn more, download the information sheet and application at <http://www.trorc.org/events.html#grants>. Please direct any questions to AVCC Board Member, Karen Freeman (kfreeman@vhcb.org). Application Deadline: June 15, 2013.

5th Round of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Funding

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has extended the deadline for participation in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). This 5th round of funding is open to all towns and agencies, regardless of whether you were impacted by Tropical Storm Irene. The Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) is now accepting Letters of Intent (LOI) and applications. If interested, please read the funding announcement and download the application at <http://vem.vermont.gov/mitigation>.

Please contact Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org or (802) 457-3188 x24 if you have questions or need assistance with the application. Letter of Intent Due: June 7, 2013. Application Due: July 12, 2013.