Upper and Lower Granville Village Designation Renewal

At its meeting on August 1, 2022, the Downtown Development Board at the Vermont Department of
Housing and Community Development found Upper and Lower Granville renewal applications for the Village Center Designations met the statutory requirements (24 VSA Chapter 76A). The Designated Village Centers will be eligible for benefits for the next eight years until July 2030.

TRORC is very pleased to have supported the Granville Selectboard in preparing the renewal application for each village.

Lower Granville (photo by John Knox)

At Home by the Water

The shoreland and watershed guide, At Home by the Water - Caring for Lake Fairlee and Its Watershed, is a collaboration by tri-town residents: Libby Chapin, formally of Post Mills; Peggy Willey, West Fairlee; Tom Ward, Thetford; and Bonnie MacAdam, Fairlee. Development of this guide was fully supported by the Lake Fairlee Association and funded with surplus LakeFest Celebration funds and the LFA membership. Mapping support of the Lake Fairlee watershed provided by TRORC’s Pete Fellows.

This user-friendly book was created to inform and educate Lake Fairlee and watershed homeowners as to best practices that we, as homeowners, can do to help protect and preserve our fragile lake and watershed ecosystem.

A link to download this book can be found here.

TRORC Seeks Responses to Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure Survey

TRORC is conducting a survey to determine regional needs for updates, extensions, and connections within its sidewalk, public multi-use pathways, and on-road bike lane networks. Survey responses will help TRORC gauge priorities and begin to determine which projects may be available for future grant funding.

Town Administrators, Administrative Assistants, and TAC members are invited to respond. The survey opens on September 8th and closes September 30th. Please respond by September 23rd, as initial review of responses will begin on the 24th.

The survey can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TRORC_Transpo1, or you may request a paper copy by emailing Sydney Steinle at ssteinle@trorc.org
**TRORC Conducting Services Survey**

TRORC is conducting a survey to determine interest in expanding TRORC’s scope of services. Options under consideration include TRORC helping towns secure additional staffing and expertise by creating a position at TRORC which would be contracted to multiple towns, helping towns create joint or individual in-town positions, or obtaining services directly from TRORC on a contract-basis.

The survey opened on September 1st and will close on September 26th. Town Managers, Town Administrators or Administrative Assistants, Selectboard Chairs, Planning Commission Chairs, and Zoning Administrators should have received paper copies of the survey in their mail.

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Strafford, VT (Photo by John Knox)

**Meeting Notification: Strafford**

The Town of Strafford is in the process of updating its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Local Hazard Mitigation Plans enable towns to qualify for grant funds, and they make our communities safer. The next Strafford Hazard Mitigation planning meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at 7:00 PM at the Justin Morrill Homestead, 214 Justin Morrill Memorial Highway, Strafford, VT 05072. The focus of the meeting will be to review top hazards and mitigation goals and strategies.

If you are interested in participating in the planning process, but are unable to attend the meeting, please take our [online survey](https://www.scavengergallery.com) so we can include your ideas in the planning process.

The meeting is open to all interested community members. Local Hazard Mitigation Plans are part of an effort by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reduce damage from foreseeable natural and human-caused hazards. Examples of projects in local plans include increasing culvert sizes, regulating flood hazard areas, stabilizing landslides, and tree trimming near power lines. For more information, please contact Kyle Katz at kkatz@trorc.org.

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**3CVT August Artist Spotlight**

For more on Stacy and her work, visit [https://www.scavengergallery.com](https://www.scavengergallery.com)
Efficiency Vermont seeking your feedback on their programs

Every three years Efficiency Vermont creates a plan for rebates and services Vermont needs to help save money on energy, and lower greenhouse gas emissions in our state. This document is called the Demand Resources Plan (DRP), and it is overseen by the Public Utility Commission (PUC).

Efficiency Vermont is primarily funded by an Electric Efficiency Charge, and it supports programs that reduce Vermont’s overall electric costs for all ratepayers. They do this through programs and services like:

- Rebates and incentives on energy efficient products, technologies, or projects
- Education, advice, and technical support
- Training for contractors, retailers, and other trade organizations
- Engagement with supply chain partners (such as global manufacturers or national retailers) to ensure energy efficient products are sold in our state

Please let us know how they can help you by taking this brief survey - www.efficiencyvermont.com/feedback. Plus! You’ll be entered into a raffle to win one of three $100 VISA Gift Cards!

Prefer to complete the survey in a different language? Efficiency Vermont also offer translation services in our call center. Give Efficiency Vermont a call at 1-888-921-5990.

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3CVT Artist Spotlight: Stacy Hopkins

Tell us about the work you do:
I'm a former Biologist who had the opportunity to study jewelry making in Florence, Italy. I learned artisanal techniques, cuttlefish bone casting and experimented with casting from nature. I began collaborating with Natural History Museums and selling in Florentine Boutiques. In 2012 after returning to the U.S. I opened Scavenger in WRJ, where I showcase my own jewelry along with other artwork.

Share something exciting you are working on:
I love collaborating with natural history & science related organizations. I recently created a collection for the Vermont Institution of Natural Sciences where my work is on display and a percentage of sales goes to the raptor center. I am in-process of working with Saint Gaudens's National Park where I will be part of "Sculptural Visions", on September 24, 2022; a day of sculptural demonstrations.

What changed for your work during the pandemic?
I have had to rely on online sales and up my social media presence. I've also been creating more from my home studio.

What is special about being a creative in your town/community?
I'm based in White River Junction, which has been revitalized by creativity. I feel fortunate to be in a town that is free from corporate chains and the homogenous vibe that is overtaking other states (knock on wood!). The community of small businesses is very supportive, we have created a friendly and non-competitive ecosystem where we all help each other out. The First Fridays are quite wonderful here, where shops stay open late with live music, art openings, and special events that bring the community together.

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Staffing Changes and Updates
Connor Rigney and Sydney Steinle have been recently hired on as

TRORC UPDATES
Planners.

Connor provides support for towns updating their comprehensive plans, hazard mitigation plans, and writing and administering community development block grants. A born and raised Ohioan, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs from The Ohio State University. Recently, he has received his Master of Regional Planning from Cornell University, where he focused his research on the role of different public institutions in economic development planning. His prior work experience includes being an elementary school secretary, facilities manager, and school nurse. In his free time, Connor can be found reading, writing, playing music, going to the movies, and discovering new people and places in Vermont.

Sydney’s main duties include writing and revising town plans, hazard mitigation plans, and zoning bylaws. She received a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Grinnell College, and a Master’s in Community and Regional Planning from Iowa State University. She brings experience in survey creation, editing, and Capital Improvement Plans. Sydney considers both Iowa and Kansas “home,” but looks forward to adding Vermont to that list. In her free time, Sydney enjoys baking sourdough bread, swimming, and reading.

Interns

TRORC has been reaching out to colleges over the last year as we look to bolster relationships with programs that are a natural fit with our work. Two interns from Dartmouth College will be joining TRORC this fall. Virginia Coffey will be supported by Dartmouth’s Center for Social Impact (DCSI). DCSI partnered with the Keys to the Valley last spring in looking at barriers to the development of accessory dwelling units. Virginia will work primarily on the urgent issue of increasing housing. Isabelle Cheney will be working on town planning and education around the need to retain unfragmented forests. Vermont now requires town and regional plans to address the planning for large forest blocks and their connections. There is an abundance of trees in the region, but roads and subdivisions steadily eat away at forests. Many species rely on hundreds to thousands of acres of unbroken forest for habitat. Towns have a critical role to play in planning for their forests.
American Recovery Plan Act Funding

Municipalities will be receiving the second half of their ARPA awards in August and September. We expect that it will come in two payments, the first during the week of August 22nd and the second sometime in early September.

ARPA funds must be obligated (promised through subgrant or contract) by December 31, 2024 and actually spent by December 31, 2026. That is a lot of time, but if you are planning to use ARPA funds on a large project that requires public discussion at Town Meeting Day and/or does not have engineering and permits yet, it’s important to begin preparing now.

In your municipality’s first Project and Expenditure report to Treasury in April of this year, your municipality declared whether it would be accepting the standard revenue loss allowance and how much of its award should be considered “revenue loss.” A municipality can spend its ARPA dollars on provision of government services, up to its declared revenue loss amount. Most of the municipalities in our region declared the entirety of their awards as revenue loss; those municipalities can therefore spend 100% of their ARPA dollars on any service traditionally provided by a local, county, or state government (excluding the restricted uses outlined in the Final Rule). You are not limited to the types of services previously provided by your municipality. Local ARPA dollars can also be used as non-federal match for many grants (check with your grant program manager). Remember that the following uses are prohibited under ARPA’s Final Rule:

- Extraordinary contributions to pension funds
- Replenishing rainy day funds or other financial reserves
- Debt service (regardless of when the debt was incurred)
- Projects that undermine efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19
- Satisfaction of court, administrative, or regulatory settlements/judgments (certain exceptions apply)
- Projects that do not comply with the regulations referenced in the award documentation, or other federal, state, or local laws

One possible approach to minimize the administrative burden on your municipality and to maximize flexibility for spending is to use your ARPA monies to pay off the non-contract portions of your regular operating budget (e.g., salaries and benefits). Doing so avoids federal procurement regulations, and it frees up money in your budget that is not restricted by ARPA regulations. If your municipality is interested in taking this approach, keep in mind the following:

- Accounting Considerations: As with any funding source, effort should be made to document the use of the funds clearly and thoroughly for audit purposes. Examples of documentation could be a memo describing what the funds were used for and a supporting spreadsheet showing the budget lines, actual expenditures, and how much ARPA money was spent toward that line.
- Although the freed-up funds are not subject to federal regulations, they do constitute a surplus and you must follow your municipality’s established policies/procedures for spending surplus funds.
- If you use ARPA dollars to pay road crew salaries and benefits, the freed-up funds do not have to be spent on highway projects. In the most recent legislative session, the state eliminated the requirement to keep highway funds separate from other general funds in municipal budgets.
- If it’s illegal to spend taxpayer money on it, don’t spend ARPA money on it.
- If spending money on it will create a conflict of interest, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest, then don’t spend your ARPA money on it.
- If you would not bring it before the voters on Town Meeting Day, then maybe you should not spend your ARPA money on it.
- VLCT can provide tailored accounting guidance if you have questions about fund assignment procedures. Because each town has different policies and practices, they cannot provide one-size-fits-all budgeting guidance.

If you are contemplating transferring money to organizations, businesses, or individuals, be aware of the distinction Treasury makes between beneficiaries and subrecipients. A subrecipient is operating under an agreement/contract to provide services on behalf of a municipality. More information can be found in Treasury’s Compliance and Reporting Guidance.

TRORC staff are available to help with eligibility questions and facilitating community dialogues about how to spend ARPA funding. Both VLCT and TRORC staff are here to assist you. You can email ARPA@vlct.org or contact Sarah Wraight at swraight@trorc.org or 802-457-3188 x3007 for assistance.
2022 VTrans Bike Ped Grant Awards

Congratulations to the following towns on the recent VTrans Bike Ped grant awards where over $1.02 million in funding is awarded to the region to improve bike and pedestrian safety:

- **Bethel** – Pleasant St sidewalk construction
- **Hartford** – North Hartland Rd (US5) sidewalk/bike lane project
- **Hartford** – Hartford Ave Small Scale Sidewalk Rehabilitation
- **Tunbridge** – Tunbridge Village Scoping Study

TRORC was pleased to provide application assistance for the successful awards to Bethel, Hartford Avenue, and Tunbridge projects.

Pleasant Street sidewalk in Bethel

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FY23 Municipal Roads Grants in Aid Technical Assistance

Towns have been awarded their final offers from the VTrans Grants in Aid program. A reminder that if the town wishes to employ TRORC to provide technical assistance for scoping out their ditching projects, please reach out to Rita Seto rseto@trorc.org.

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2023 VTrans Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Grant Announced

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) announced a grant funding opportunity for 2023 municipal highway and stormwater mitigation projects, as part of the Agency’s ongoing commitment to improve the quality of state waters and provide financial assistance to municipalities in these efforts. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff could be eligible. There is not a program cap on the amount of funding granted to a specific project. There is, however, a 20% local match requirement. All projects must be developed in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations. For more information: [http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Highway-and-Stormwater-Mitigation-Program](http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Highway-and-Stormwater-Mitigation-Program) **Deadline Oct. 7, 2022 1pm.** For application assistance, please contact Rita Seto rseto@trorc.org.

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Funding Opportunities

The CCRPC Funding Opportunities database is a near complete list of funding opportunities available to municipalities, non-profits, and businesses for planning and infrastructure-related projects. The list is updated by CCRPC staff annually every July. Users may filter the database by category, funding agency, and eligible organizations.

Users are encouraged to click on the link for each funding opportunity to ensure access to the most up-to-date information available about each program.

Questions about all funding opportunities should be directed to the respective funding agency. All other questions about the database can be directed to Taylor Newton (tnewton@ccrpcvt.org). The full list of funding opportunities in this database is also available as an [Excel worksheet](http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Highway-and-Stormwater-Mitigation-Program) and a [PDF](http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Highway-and-Stormwater-Mitigation-Program)
Weatherization Technician — Free Training Starts Sept. 12 in Barre

Here’s a chance to receive free training and job skills doing hands-on work. Includes 7 hours of training, 5 days a week, over 6 weeks starting September 12, 2022. The goal of this program is to provide training and job placement to Vermonters ready for full-time employment in the growing weatherization industry. **Job placement is included!**

The program, called Weatherization 101, is offered by ReSOURCE and Capstone. Training takes place in Barre and includes
- hands-on experience with weatherization and construction tools and techniques,
- the opportunity to earn OSHA 10 certification, and,
- full-time job placement in the weatherization industry for work-ready candidates.

**Tuition is free to trainees who also earn $300/week training stipend.**

Detailed information and an online application can be found at [https://resourcevt.org/training-programs/weatherization-101/](https://resourcevt.org/training-programs/weatherization-101/)