



Two Rivers-Ottauquechee
REGIONAL COMMISSION



News & Notes
April 2024



Photo Caption: Quechee Gorge Dewey Pond. Source: TRORC, 2014.

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PROJECT UPDATES AND REMINDERS



Randolph and South Royalton Receive Support from the Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program

The Preservation Trust of Vermont is pleased to announce the recipients of the [Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants](#). A total of \$625,000 has been awarded to eight communities, including two in our Region: [Kimball Public Library, Randolph for \\$50,000](#) and [Skinner Block, South Royalton for \\$50,000](#). The program supports the preservation and restoration of buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities with fewer than 7500 residents.

“We are glad to see this federal funding support the preservation of historic sites in rural communities throughout Vermont. Each recipient represents a unique part of our state’s history and, thanks to the good work of the Preservation Trust of Vermont, will remain protected and preserved long into the future,” said Sen. Sanders, Sen. Welch, and Rep. Balint. “We look forward to seeing the role these historic community sites will play for generations to come.”

Photo Caption: Skinner Block in South Royalton. Source: Google (2019). Kimball Public Library in Randolph. Source: CC image courtesy by Jessamyn on Flickr.



Photo Caption: Pictured left to right: Emo Chynoweth, Vice President and COO, Butler’s Bus Service; James Fenn, Mountain Views Supervisory Union Director of Finance and Operations; Brian Cressey, President of W.C. Cressey & Son; Harry Falconer, Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator, TRORC. Source: Rita Seto, TRORC staff.

Mountain Views School District Takes Delivery of Three Electric School Buses from EPA Program

Thanks to a \$1.185 million grant from the [EPA Clean School Bus program](#), the Mountain Views Supervisory Union—the school district based in Woodstock—now has three brand-new electric buses. TRORC’s former [IREC coordinator](#), Geoff Martin, applied for the grant in cooperation with Sustainable Woodstock, Mountain Views, and Butler’s Bus Service. The IREC program provides energy coordinator services to six towns that contract with TRORC for a full-time position dedicated to supporting energy projects.

The new buses are virtually indistinguishable from their diesel counterparts—except for their bumpers, which are painted a cool electric blue and, of course, their much quieter and cleaner operations. Each bus has a 244 kWh battery, providing roughly 150 miles of range. The Thomas Built buses were manufactured in North Carolina, with final outfitting performed by W.C. Cressey & Son in Kennebunk, Maine. The Clean School Bus grant also provided

funding for charging infrastructure, soon to be installed at the Woodstock Union High School and Middle School campus. Local residents can look forward to seeing these sleek new buses out in the wild later this spring.

VTrans Awards TAP/Municipal Stormwater Mitigation Grants

Congratulations to Town of Randolph who was awarded a scoping study for sidewalks on Weston St. from Randolph Senior Center to downtown village and on VT12 from Gifford Medical Center to Shaws plaza and to the Town of Fairlee for Phase 2 stormwater mitigation efforts along US5.

Hartford Downtown & Bike/Pedestrian Surveys

Downtown Vibrancy: White River Junction

The Town of Hartford wants to hear from you about your experience shopping, living, working, and/or visiting Downtown White River Junction. Click [this link](#) to complete the survey.

Bike/Pedestrian Survey for the Town of Hartford!

Do you use sidewalks in Hartford? Do you bike? We want to hear about your experiences and how we can improve safety for everyone traveling in town. [This survey](#) will allow TRORC to collect information from residents and visitors about their experiences, and feedback will help Town officials assess the current conditions and issues that pedestrians and cyclists encounter in Hartford. Please send any questions/feedback about the survey to bkovalick@trorc.org.

Photo Caption: Cover of Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2009). Art by [Alexis-Frederick Frost](#).

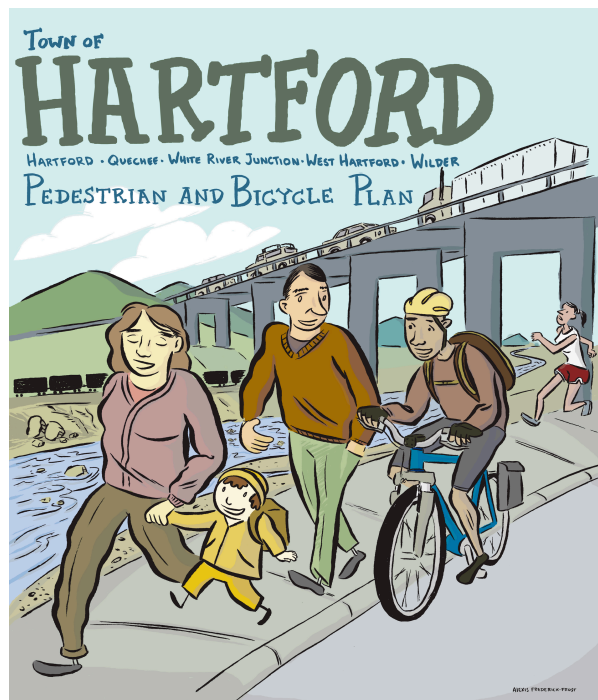




Photo caption: A flood-damaged structure following TS Irene. Source: TRORC, 2011.

Simple steps to reducing flood damages and costs

The frequency of severe flood events is increasing, and with more flooding comes the possibility of greater damage and higher costs associated with repair and recovery. According to FEMA, just one inch of flooding in a home can cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage. Fortunately, there are preemptive steps we can take to protect our homes and businesses.

Purchase flood insurance: Whether in a mapped flood zone or not, anyone can purchase flood insurance. In fact, more than 25% of flood insurance claims come from outside of high risk-areas. If your home is prone to flooding, flood insurance may be a good option to protect your home or business against flood losses.

Set higher regulatory standards: Local flood ordinances can and should require structures to be elevated or floodproofed, to 1' or more above the base flood, which can decrease insurance premiums for newly built structures (TRORC recommends 2' above base flood). Furthermore, building higher, or preventing new construction within a certain distance of streams or rivers, can increase the safety of structures and reduce the costs and damage associated with future flood events.

To learn more about how your community can better address the risk of flooding, reach out to Kyle Katz, kkatz@trorc.org.

How Will You Be Using Your ARPA Money?

All Towns and Villages that received ARPA (SLFRF) funds are required to submit their annual Project and Expenditure Reports by **April 30, 2024**. Reporting is required even if your municipality expended all of your funds in a previous reporting period. Failure to report by the deadline could jeopardize your funding.

The Treasury's portal opens on **April 1st**. If you have any questions about the reporting process or need help troubleshooting, please contact Sarah Wraight (swraight@trorc.org, 802.457.3188 x3007). VLCT has prepared some [helpful guides](#) to walk you through the reporting process.

EVENTS AND DATES

Last TRORC LIVE 101 Grants Training

Wednesday, April 17 | 6:30 PM - 7:45 PM

A TRORC staff member will speak about everything you need to know about grants in the upcoming "Grants 101" training. The presentation aims to provide basic training to anyone interested in becoming more literate in the grant

world. Subjects related to what information to look for when searching for grants, how to look for grant opportunities, where to apply, allowable costs, period of performance, procurement, and recordkeeping will be discussed. Access the Zoom [here](#). The video will be recorded and uploaded to our [YouTube account](#). (If requested, the presentation slides can be emailed.)

Vermont Bond Bank: Capital Planning Forum

Thursday, April 11 | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Come to this in-person event to explore best practices in capital planning! With a wide array of speakers, presentation topics include addressing energy efficiency for campus planning to learning about post Sandy resiliency efforts in the City of Hoboken, NJ. The Forum's intended audience is for municipal staff members and other associated professionals, and the cost to attend is \$15 or free for officials who submit a capital plan. Learn more about the presentation topics [on their website](#).

Save-the-Date! Creative Sector Convening

Wednesday, June 5 and Thursday, June 6 | Time TBD

Please join the Vermont Arts Council at Bellows Falls on Wednesday, June 5 for the [Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference](#) and on Thursday, June 6 for the Vermont Creative Network's [2024 Creative Sector Convening](#). Be inspired, make connections, and learn new skills to invigorate Vermont communities through creativity. Full details and registration will be coming out in April.

Vermont Homes for All Toolkit

Wednesday, April 10 | 11 AM - 12 PM

Wednesday, April 24 | 6:30 PM - 8 PM

Tuesday, May 21 1:40 PM - 2:55 PM

The VT Development of Housing and Community Development created a "Design & Do" Toolkit full of tips and resources for small-scale home builders, community leaders, planners, and investors. Download The Homes for All Toolkit for free and sign up for an informational presentation at one of these upcoming opportunities on their website [here](#).

Climate Catalyst Leadership Program

Monday, April 15 (deadline to apply)

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is accepting applications for the fifth cohort of Climate Catalysts to begin in May. The program brings together new and emerging leaders from Vermont communities to form a structured group focused on building peer connections, strengthening leadership skills, and receiving development support for their climate-related community projects. There is no cost to participate. [Learn more & apply](#).

Statewide CISMA Webinar

Friday, April 15 | 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Associates (CISMA) is a nonprofit group of volunteers who monitor and respond to the spread of invasive plants and share resources to help communities control invasives in their area. The free webinar is for landowners and residents interested in learning more about invasive species management in Vermont. Beth Torpey, NVDA's Water Resource Planner, will be a Presenter. [Register here](#).

Vermont Community Development Association Annual Spring Conference

Tuesday, June 25 | 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

[The Vermont Community Development Association Annual Spring Conference](#) at the Hardwick Town House will emphasize the crucial role of municipalities in fostering vibrant communities and driving economic development. Attendees will hear impactful stories, share tools and strategies, and learn effective techniques for collaboration. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow community champions and contribute to building a brighter future for Vermont. Morning snacks, lunch, coffee, tea, and water will be provided. Please check back for ticket prices!

GRANTS & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

VTrans Invites Towns to Participate in Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program

Deadline: Tuesday, May 10

VTrans' Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid program for SFY25 is now accepting submissions! This program allows towns to apply best management practices (BMP) as long as it's in compliance with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). Towns that submit reimbursement requests directly to VTrans can be reimbursed up to 80% of the municipality's construction expenses (such as in-kind support for BMPs on hydrologically connected roads). Towns wishing to participate in the program must fill out an application and must return the signed letter by May 10th, 2024. More information about the application process and eligibility requirements can be found on VTrans' website using [this link](#).

MERP Mini Grant Application

Deadline: Tuesday, May 31

As the deadline for awarding these grants approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to notify any remaining interested participants that Mini Grant applications will close on May 31, 2024. The application is available on the [Mini Grant page](#), where you can also find community spotlights for inspiration on how to use your funds. If your town has not yet applied for a Mini Grant, please reach out to TRORC for assistance. This grant is non-competitive; any covered municipality (a city, town, incorporated village fire district, or any other governmental incorporated unit except for school districts) who is applying for the first time will be awarded a Mini Grant. Many thanks to everyone who has already applied and deployed these funds to improve your community's energy resilience! So far, 18 towns and one village in our Region have been awarded mini grants. The 12 towns that haven't applied are: **Braintree, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Chelsea, Corinth, Newbury, Plymouth, Rochester, Royalton, Stockbridge, Topsham, and Tunbridge.**

VT Community Tree Planting Program is Now Open

Deadline: Tuesday, May 17 (Round 1)

Would your town benefit from having more trees? In coordination with Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, [Vermont Community Tree Planting Program](#) is now accepting applications for planting trees that will enhance tree canopy, improve water quality, boost public health, and increase equitable access to the many benefits of trees. TRORC will help support member municipalities with preparing the grant application, holding the grant contract, receiving and spending grant funds, managing contractor procurement, and submitting invoices & reports. Full details are also available on the [program website](#) along with a webinar happening this April 11 at 9:30 AM ([link](#)). Please contact Geena at gbaber@trorc.org for any tree planting ideas that your town may have.
