



Two Rivers-Ottauquechee REGIONAL COMMISSION



News & Notes January 2023



Barnard, VT | Photo by: John Knox

PROJECT UPDATES AND REMINDERS

New FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps are coming to towns across Vermont.

What does this mean for my town?

What actions should we take?

FEMA is currently conducting new watershed studies throughout the State, and these studies will inform the new flood maps which will be enacted over the next 3-5 years.

TRORC can assist towns on a first-come, first-serve basis in reviewing your flood bylaws to ensure they meet the standards of the National Flood Insurance Program, policies in the Town Plan, and requirements for increased disaster funding.

This process can take years. Plan ahead, start early.

Contact [Kyle Katz](#) on what steps your town may need to take in preparation for the new maps.

Email: (kkatz@trorc.org)
Phone: 802-457-3188 ext. 3005



Informational Resources Available on TRORC's Health Policy Clearinghouse

The Health Policy Clearinghouse is a searchable database of model policy language and best practices literature relating to a variety of health topics including: cannabis, active lifestyles, age-friendly communities, healthy schools and homes, healthy food, tobacco, alcohol, and much more. This information can be used in updating your Town Plan and Bylaws. Recently added resources include:

- An overview of potential development impacts of various kinds of cannabis establishments.
- Local license application forms and review policies created by Winooski and Hartford.
- Model policy language for regulating smoking in multi-unit housing.

Visit the [TRORC site](#) to explore and email Sarah Wraight at swraight@trorc.org with any questions.

Downtown Board Approves Plymouth Village Designations

On Monday November 28th, the Vermont Downtown Board unanimously approved Plymouth's Village Center Designations for Plymouth Union and Tyson. The Village Center Designation process recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional villages. Once designated, the community receives priority consideration for state grants (Municipal Planning Grants, Vermont Community Development Program) and other resources and support. Commercial property owners are eligible for tax credits to support building improvements.

TRORC staff was instrumental in helping Plymouth develop the applications for the program. With assistance from the Downtown Board's Planning Coordinator, Richard Amore, Plymouth was able to create Village Center areas consistent with the intent of the program. The Plymouth Selectboard sees Village Center Designation as an opportunity to encourage economic growth and vitality in Plymouth's village centers through tax credits for local businesses and priority consideration for state grants. Plymouth has accessed these funds in the past and may do so again to encourage economic development in the villages.

For more information, including how to apply for Downtown and Village Designation, please visit the [Department of Housing and Community Development's Community Revitalization](#) website.

If your community is interested in applying for Village Designation, contact Sydney Steinle at 802-457-3188 ext. 3006 or at ssteinle@trorc.org.



Echo Lake Inn, Plymouth | Photo by: Jay Kullman



Crossing at Christian St. in Hartford | Photo by: Matt Osborn, Town Planner, Town of Hartford 2022

2022 Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program Awards

Congratulations to the Town of Hartford and Town of Rochester who were awarded 2022 Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program Grants. The intent of this grant opportunity is to make important spot improvements that will make it easier for children to walk or bike to school. All project costs (design, construction, etc.) will be paid with Federal Safe Routes to School funds that do not require local match.

The Town of Hartford's approved project is improving the pedestrian crossings at Christian St. and Gillette St. in Hartford towards Dothan Brook Elementary School. The Town of Rochester's approved project is re-constructing a sidewalk to be ADA compliant on Bethel Mountain Rd from School St. to Brook St. and adding Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons on the crosswalk on Route 100 by Rochester Elementary School. TRORC staff is pleased to have worked closely with these two towns on their successful grant applications.

Meeting Notification: Pomfret

TRORC is currently under contract with the Town of Pomfret to update and prepare their Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Local Hazard Mitigation Plans enable towns to qualify for grant funds, and they make our communities safer. The first Pomfret Hazard Mitigation planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the Pomfret Town Clerk's office: 5218 Pomfret Rd., North Pomfret, VT 05053. The focus of the meeting will be to set the agenda and timeline for plan review, review top hazards, and to set mitigation goals and strategies.

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 Connor Rigney at crigney@trorc.org.



Old Pomfret Town Clerk Office, Pomfret, VT | Photo source: TRORC website

TRORC Capital Budgeting and Programming Training

TRORC held a Capital Budget and Program training on November 29, 2022. Capital Budgets and Programs are valuable tools for towns. This training was aimed at increasing Town capacity to create and maintain Capital Budgets and Programs. Attendees were familiarized with the basics of Capital Budgeting and Programming, how to begin and maintain the documents, the importance of reserves, and ties between Capital Budgets and Programs and Town Plans, among other concepts.

A video recording of the presentation is available on TRORC's [YouTube](#) channel and presentation materials are available under the heading "Capital Budgeting and Planning Training Program" on [TRORC's website](#).

For more information about Capital Budgeting and Programming, contact Sydney Steinle at 802-457-3188 ext. 3006 or via email at ssteinle@trorc.org.

TRORC UPDATES

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resolution

At this December's board meeting, the board approved this statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as an organizational policy:

WHEREAS, the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our service area, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission Board of Directors adopts the following policy language that will guide the operations of the organization:

TRORC respects and values all persons of every race, color, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, national origin, citizenship status, sexuality, gender identity or expression, family model, age, socio-economic status, ability, and all other identities and backgrounds. TRORC wants everyone to feel safe, welcome, and empowered in the communities we serve.

We celebrate diversity as critical to health and quality of life in our region; formally condemn harassment, abuse, racism, and discrimination in all of its forms; and commit to fair and equitable treatment of everyone in our communities. We will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, programs, operating procedures, and resource allocations reflect this commitment.

We commit ourselves to learning about and working to dismantle biases, prejudices, and systemic inequities, so that all individuals can live freely, express their identities and opinions, feel a sense of belonging, access the resources and opportunities they need to thrive, and meaningfully influence policies and decisions in our communities. We affirm that this work is ongoing and must be sustained and renewed by each generation.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Better Connections Planning Grants: Accepting Applications

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) are pleased to announce the Better Connections grant program is accepting applications. Bi-annually, the program grants approximately \$270,000 in planning funds to help cities and towns (outside of Chittenden County) build more livable, walkable, and welcoming communities. Interested parties are required to submit a [pre-flight form](#) electronically and schedule a pre-application interview by January 31, 2023. Grant applications are due February 17, 2023. Applications and program material are online at: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>

Please reach out to Richard Amore at richard.amore@vermont.gov with any questions.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Vermont Creative Futures Grant Program

The Vermont Arts Council is now accepting applications for Round 2 of its Creative Futures Grants to help the creative sector recover from economic losses due to the pandemic.

Grants of up to \$200,000 will be available to creative sector nonprofits and for-profit entities that can demonstrate economic harm caused by or exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Grant amounts, which will be based on 2019 (pre-pandemic) operating revenue, may be used to cover a wide range of regular operating expenses, including payroll and office expenses; rent, mortgage, and utilities; and costs associated with ongoing Covid-19 mitigation and prevention.

The creative sector economy is defined as the collective enterprises, organizations, and individuals whose products and services are rooted in artistic and creative content. Seven segments comprise Vermont's creative economy: culture and heritage; design; film and media; literary arts & publishing; performing arts; specialty foods; and visual arts and crafts.

Grants are offered in three rounds. **The deadline for Round 2 applications is Feb. 28**, and the final deadline will be in June 2023.

Applications that are not funded in one round may be re-considered in the next round. Refer to grant guidelines, the application preview, and the program FAQs on the grant page at vermontartscouncil.org/creativefutures.

WORK WITH US!

Office Assistant

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) in Woodstock, Vermont, is seeking a detail-oriented person to join our team. The Office Assistant will be responsible for handling office correspondence, file management, occasional fieldwork, mailings, creating reports, maintaining contact lists, and other duties as assigned by the Finance Manager.

More information, including how to apply, can be found [here](#).
