

# VAPDA

VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

## VERMONT'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS AT WORK

LAMOILLE COUNTY

RUTLAND COUNTY  
30,200 working residents

83% STAY



The Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies consists of Vermont's 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs).

In the absence of county government, RPCs play a crucial role in connecting communities and state government.

RPCs are political subdivisions of the State of Vermont, uniquely positioned to provide broad services to every Vermont municipality.

**Regional Planning Commissions are governed by Boards** made up primarily of locally appointed officials. These ties to local government help RPCs serve as a bridge between local, state and federal governments.

**Regional Planning Commissions have federal and state statutory responsibilities** in transportation, land use, emergency management, brownfields, housing, energy, and economic development.

**The work of Regional Planning Commissions is supported through a complementary combination of local, state and federal funding.** Local and state funding for RPCs helps maximize the recovery of federal dollars for our economy, our environment and our communities, and plays a key role in applying for grants that have broad benefits across each region.

## WE ARE VERMONT'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS



- ACRPC** Addison County Regional Planning Commission
- BCRC** Bennington County Regional Commission
- CVRPC** Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
- CCRPC** Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- LCPC** Lamoille County Planning Commission
- MARC** Mount Ascutney Regional Commission
- NVDA** Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- NRPC** Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- RRPC** Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- TRORC** Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
- WRC** Windham Regional Commission

**VAPDA**  
VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

52 Portland Street, 2nd Floor | PO Box 1637  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
802-888-4548  
www.VAPDA.org



## FROM AROUND THE STATE

**Addison County Regional Planning Commission** began work with VTrans and the City of Vergennes to study and find solutions for the issues created by heavy truck traffic within the City Center. The Planning and Environmental Linkages Study intends to look at the land use planning impacts of any proposed solutions to ensure that the transportation design component of the project increases the economic vitality of all areas studied.

**Bennington County Regional Commission** has continued to integrate land use planning and economic development work through a series of site assessment and reuse studies focusing on brownfield remediation, housing needs and opportunities, commercial and institutional uses, and public outdoor recreation. Two key sites include the former Southern Vermont College campus and the recently idled Energizer Battery manufacturing complex that is adjacent to Bennington's downtown.

**Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission** facilitated the Greater Barre Working Communities planning effort to create a nimble workforce development system that achieves economic stability and improved quality of life for single moms. The multi-sector team framed changes it could implement to modernize the workforce development system and support employers and employees. CVRPC then authored a successful grant application, resulting in a \$300k award to implement the team's ideas.

**Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission** outlined its commitment to racial equity and addressing systemic racism in its work. Efforts included signing on to the community declaration of racism as a public health emergency; assisting VTrans with a RAISE grant application to develop a transportation equity framework; working with VTrans to revamp its annual project selection and prioritization process to incorporate equity criteria; and, together with a VT-based equity consultant, undertaking an organizational equity audit, planning a regional summit, and working with municipalities, partners, and formal and informal community leaders to advance anti-racist practices.

**Lamoille County Planning Commission** helped the Town of Cambridge secure a MPG for the recently acquired Krusch Nature Preserve: 51 acres of mixed forest, meadow, and wetland that gives access to the Cambridge



State Forest. The MPG will help the Town develop a Management Plan for the Preserve, as well as interpretive signs to help visitors appreciate the varied landscape of the area. The Preserve is currently open to visitors, although some construction is needed before the official opening.

**Mount Ascutney Regional Commission** received a \$3.45M grant from the Department of Environmental Conservation for the demolition and remediation of the Jones and Lamson #1 building located on Clinton Street in Springfield – a 270,000 sq. ft. building formerly used for precision manufacturing. Once the site has been cleared, it will be redeveloped for commercial and industrial uses with the remaining portion of the building being used for offices and a possible museum. A bike path extension to the Edgar May Recreation Center will also be incorporated.

**Northeastern Vermont Development Association** received a \$600k EPA Assessment Coalition Grant. Coalition partners are the Towns of Lyndon and St. Johnsbury, and the City of Newport. We will inventory and prioritize sites, conduct Phase 1 and 2 environmental site assessments, and prepare cleanup and re-use plans. NVDA also obtained a \$1M grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission to close a pandemic-related budget gap in the Hardwick Yellow Barn. NVDA participated in the Restart Vermont Technical Assistance Program and provided more than \$80k in technical assistance to 32 NEK businesses.

**Northwest Regional Planning Commission** supported the region's recreational trail economy through implementation of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Marketing and Wayfinding Plan. This included installation of new trail kiosks with interpretive panels, signage, trail markers, two bike fixit stations with air pumps and two bike racks, all funded by a Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative grant. With

support from a Northern Border Regional Commission grant, NRPC assisted the Rail Trail Council with developing trail marketing materials.

**Rutland Regional Planning Commission** continued to grow its economic development planning programs with work on initiatives such as the re-design of Center Street in Rutland City, Otter Creek Communications Union District administration, brownfields redevelopment planning at five new sites, work on the West-Central Economic Development Strategy, enrollment of two new municipalities in the State of Vermont Village Center Program, broadband feasibility and deployment planning, and continued operation of the Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board.

**Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission** worked with two neighboring regional planning commissions on a comprehensive study of housing needs and solutions, an initiative titled Keys to the Valley. TRORC worked on the project website, keystothevalley.com, to provide the project's report, toolbox, and educational tools online.

**Windham Regional Commission** continued to measure the use of bicycle, hiking and ski trails during the pandemic to examine relative intensity of use in the years to come, and to inform outdoor recreation economy initiatives. Support for town access and use of ARPA funds got underway, and we began a series of webinars to help towns look ahead beyond the pandemic to community development strategies, conservation subdivision design, and historic preservation credits. Executive Director Chris Company was appointed to the VT Climate Council to represent municipal interests.

## Municipal Planning and Implementation



▲ Ash tree in Waitsfield.



RPCs provided 186 municipalities with planning and bylaw assistance.

Regional Planning Commissions serve as cost-effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont's municipalities and help communities improve town plans and bylaws through education and technical assistance.

RPCs have helped municipalities modernize bylaws and implement economic development, flood resiliency planning, energy and forest resources planning initiatives. Current and clear plans and bylaws create a vision for the community and guide smooth local and state permitting.



## Regional Planning

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. These plans form a single vision and guide local planning and investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

◀ Form Based Code site visit in Williston.



▲ Sidewalk construction in Underhill.



RPC staff assisted 153 municipalities with traffic counts, culvert and erosion point inventories and other transportation planning assistance.

## Transportation Planning

Through a contract with Vermont's Agency of Transportation (VTrans), RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort is a statewide framework for public involvement in planning improvements to Vermont's transportation system and land use patterns, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs).

Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state's transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support the local, regional, state and federal transportation network.

## Energy Conservation and Development



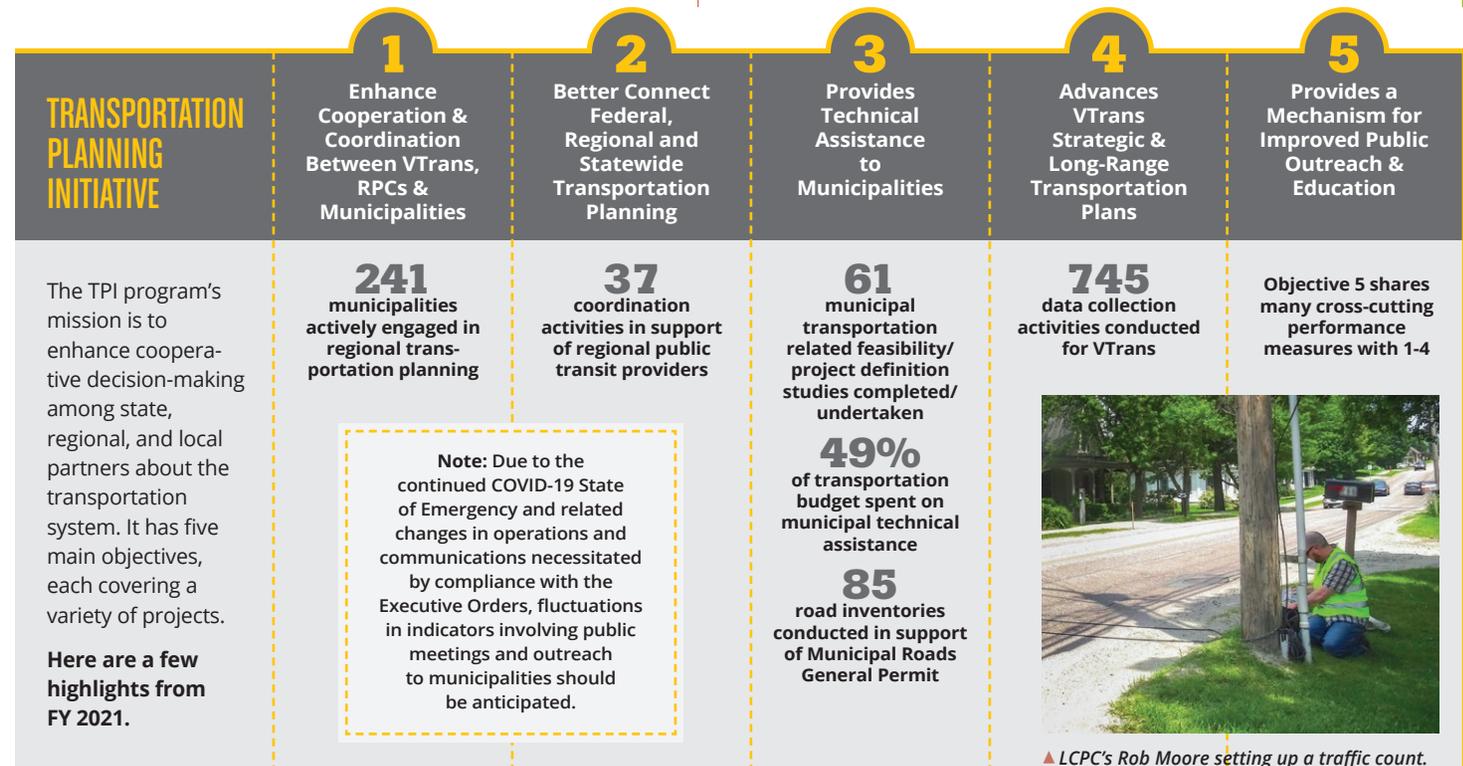
▲ Solar panels behind the Shelburne Museum.



RPCs assisted with the creation of enhanced energy plans in 84 communities.

A focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges.

RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project planning and implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to guide the permitting process.



### TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INITIATIVE

**Enhance Cooperation & Coordination Between VTrans, RPCs & Municipalities**

**241 municipalities actively engaged in regional transportation planning**

**Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning**

**37 coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers**

**Provides Technical Assistance to Municipalities**

**61 municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken**

**49%** of transportation budget spent on municipal technical assistance

**85** road inventories conducted in support of Municipal Roads General Permit

**Advances VTrans Strategic & Long-Range Transportation Plans**

**745 data collection activities conducted for VTrans**

**Provides a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach & Education**

**Objective 5 shares many cross-cutting performance measures with 1-4**



▲ LCPC's Rob Moore setting up a traffic count.

The TPI program's mission is to enhance cooperative decision-making among state, regional, and local partners about the transportation system. It has five main objectives, each covering a variety of projects.

**Here are a few highlights from FY 2021.**

## Economic and Community Development



▲ Middlesex village development.

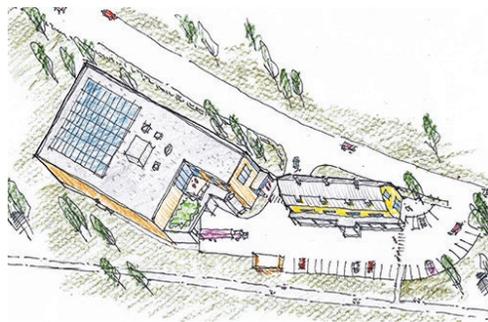
Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid land use planning. The community infrastructure and development patterns that RPCs help plan for and create provide the foundation and public support for private economic development.

RPCs work with municipalities and in partnership with local and Regional Development Corporations in several ways, including creating economic development sections in town and regional plans, helping municipalities plan for and develop critical infrastructure, and developing comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long-term economic prosperity.



RPC staff helped 139 communities write and administer grants.

## Brownfields



▲ The Yellow Barn in Hardwick.

Environmental site assessments and remediation planning allow properties to be sold or re-developed to benefit the local and state economy, improve public health, facilitate development in designated Downtown and Village Centers, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.



RPCs provided Brownfields assistance in 46 communities.

## Special Projects



▲ Silo murals by Sarah C. Rutherford in Jeffersonville.

RPCs often engage in special projects that address unique community needs in many different areas such as flood resiliency, economic development, and transportation.

Often, these special projects create opportunities to identify and leverage future funding sources and result in future infrastructure improvements.

## Geographic Information System Services

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies, private entities and non-profits with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.



RPC staff provided mapping services to 170 communities.



## Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Resiliency



▲ Storm damage assessment in Cabot.

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources.

RPCs provide staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, support to local emergency management directors and coordinators, Local Emergency Management Plan assistance, and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State's Public Safety Districts.

RPCs also help update floodplain and river corridor bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, arrange trainings and assist municipalities during disaster events.



RPCs assisted with emergency planning in 259 municipalities.

## Watershed Planning and Project Development



RPCs assisted with clean water activities in 175 communities.

The Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program is a Vermont Agency of Transportation program supported by RPCs. The program provides funding for municipalities to construct Best Management Practices on municipal roads to implement the state Municipal Road General Permit.

Last year, 141 municipalities constructed water quality improvements on more than 650 local road segments (approximately 40 miles); in FY 22, we anticipate 230 municipalities to participate.

◀ Culvert inventory in Roxbury.

NRPC

NVDA

LCPC

CCRPC

ACRPC

CVRPC

TRORC

RRPC

MARC

BCRC

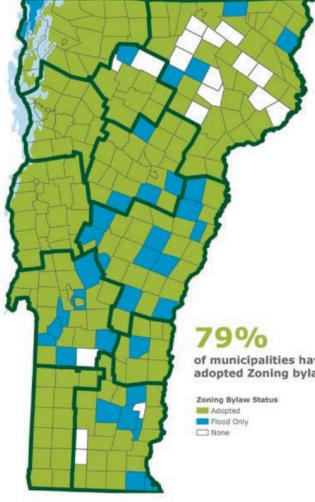
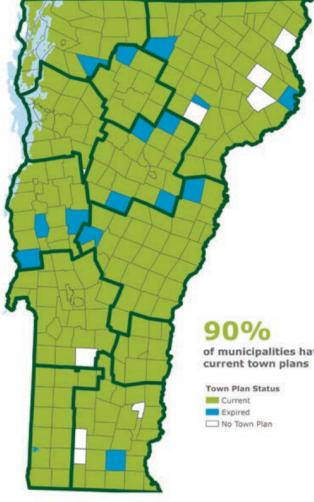
WRC

Assistance

- Bridge and Culvert Inventory
- Brownfield
- Clean Water
- Economic Development
- Energy Planning & Implementation
- Emergency Planning
- Grant Writing
- Healthy Communities
- Mapping
- Planning and Zoning
- Road Erosion Inventory
- Transportation Planning/Traffic Count

Designation

- Designated Downtown
- Designated Village
- Designated Growth Center
- Neighborhood Development Area
- New Town Center



# VERMONT'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS AT WORK