The Rutland Region is comprised of 27 municipalities in Southwest Vermont ranging in population from under 300 to over 16,000. The Region contains one regional center (Rutland City), with over 30,000 inhabitants, six sub-regional centers of economic activity and a series of smaller villages surrounded by agricultural and forest land.

The economy of the Region is diverse, with industries including GE, one university, two colleges, Killington/Pico Ski Resorts, renewable energy development and a wide variety of small businesses. The physiology of the Region varies dramatically as well, containing the peaks of Southern Green Mountains, which reach up to 4,000’ in elevation, the gently sloped farmland of the gorgeous Vermont Valley, the steep Taconic Mountains and Lake Bomoseen, the largest lake within the borders of the state and part of the Champlain Valley.

**MUNICIPAL PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION**

RPCs act as a cost-effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations, bylaw modernization, grant administration, and implementing newer requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. Highlights include:

- Worked with planning commissions in the towns of Ira, Chittenden, Hubbardton, Brandon, Proctor and Mendon to develop language for municipal plans and land use bylaws.
- Provided assistance to promote state land use goals, ensure consistency with Chapter 117 requirements and provide clear community standards regarding the siting of energy and telecommunications facilities.
- Updated flood hazard regulations in the Towns of Hubbardton, Danby and Brandon.
- Provided VCDP Implementation Grant Administration for the Towns of Proctor and Poultney.
- Reviewed approximately 35 Act 250 and Section 248 applications.
- Conducted five Enhanced Consultations.
- Worked with the towns of Castleton and Chittenden on Village Center Designations (both new and renewal).
- Wrote a successful $45,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant for the Town of Poultney to hire an economic development consultant.
- Worked with Mendon and Proctor on new water quality protection language in their municipal plans.
- Worked with Chittenden to secure an Ecosystem Restoration Program grant for wetland restoration.
- Served on a state task force to help develop local food access planning to municipal town plans.
REGIONAL PLANNING
RPC’s coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

- Used the Rutland Regional Plan as a guide to review Act 250 and Section 248 applications, grant applications for transportation and water quality projects, municipal planning and village center designation applications.
- The Rutland Regional Plan was used to guide municipal plan land use chapters and serves as an education tool and guide for municipalities to create healthy and economically resilient communities.
- The RRPC offers three conference rooms for use by local, regional and state organizations at no charge. Frequent users include Castleton University, Rutland Economic Development Corporation, Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Investment Board, VT DEC and a number of transportation-related groups. The ideas and information exchange resulting from the mix of various groups and participants is a valuable tool, making organizations and the region stronger.
- Provided regional presentations and workshops on topics such as economic development and the essentials of land use planning.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid land use planning. RPCs work with towns and in partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help to position Vermont for long-term economic gain.

- The Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board began contracting with the RRPC for administrative, technical and financial support for the organization.
- Through the RRPC/WIB partnership, the RRPC is actively engaging and connecting local schools and businesses through work in the Real Careers and TIPS programs.
- The RRPC and WIB hosted the Sophomore Summit and Your Journey Starts Here events designed at growing the workforce in the Rutland Region.
- Worked with municipalities to modernize town plans and bylaws to unlock the long-term growth potential associated with traditional development patterns.
- The RRPC assisted local municipalities to plan projects aimed at revitalizing designated villages and downtowns. One example is the work the RRPC has undertaken with the Town of Proctor, using a brownfields site as key in the plan’s development.
- The RRPC assisted the Towns of Castleton and Chittenden with their village center designations. The Town of Tinmouth will work with the RRPC this year to explore the possibility of designation.
- The Executive Directors of the RRPC, Rutland Economic Development Corporation, Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce, Rutland Redevelopment Authority and Rutland Downtown Partnership meet monthly to discuss current and future projects with regional impacts.
- Wrote a successful $45,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant for the Town of Poultney to hire an economic development consultant.
- Economic Development Chapters were updated in the Proctor, Chittenden, and Mendon municipal plans.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER RESILIENCY**
RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff support to the State Emergency Operations Center and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State’s four Public Safety Districts. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and FEMA-required hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans, and assist as needed in special circumstances such as Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters. Highlights include:

- Provided technical assistance and outreach to all towns in completing Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMPs), including offering an LEMP training session.
- 22 of our 27 municipalities have adopted LEMPs.
- Provided extensive assistance to several towns with preparing single jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans, through a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant. 17 or our 27 municipalities have FEMA approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Completed a needs assessment survey to identify training and/or exercise needs in our region. 21 or our 27 municipalities completed the survey.
- Hosted bi-monthly roundtables for local emergency management directors and coordinators October through June to disseminate pertinent information, to share best practices and to provide a platform for municipalities to connect around a common mission.
- Coordinated three additional trainings in our region on the FEMA Public Assistance Program, the Incident Command System, and the Interface between Incident Command and the local Emergency Operations Center.
- Updated the regional public works mutual aid agreement.
-Supported the planning efforts of the Chittenden Reservoir Emergency Planning Team.
- Participated in annual exercises at the Rutland Regional Medical Center and Rutland Regional Airport to strengthen emergency preparedness.
- Collected and communicated local damage information from municipalities after six significant storm events affected the region, in coordination with Vermont Division of Emergency Management, VTrans and Agency of Natural Resources. This includes the April 15 flood event, which became a Federally declared disaster.
- Three RRPC staff continued training to serve in the State Emergency Operations Center.

**ENERGY CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT**
A renewed 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 implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process. The passage of Act 174 created another component with its optional enhanced energy planning. In order to give local communities more say in the siting of renewable energy generation projects, state statute now provides for optional enhanced energy plans at the regional and municipal levels.
Energy issues have dominated the Rutland Region recently, stirring healthy debates and leading towns to update land use and economic development policies. The RRPC played a pivotal role in this process over the last year, significant projects included:

- Assisted all 27 towns with municipal enhanced energy planning by providing energy data analysis and renewable energy maps. The RRPC provided specialized technical assistance to seven towns – Rutland Town, Wallingford, Brandon, Tinmouth, Proctor, Pawlet and Mendon – so that these municipalities have all of the components needed to meet the standards for enhanced energy planning pursuant to Act 174.

- Two Rutland Region towns now have enhanced energy plans with Certificates of Energy Compliance from the Department of Public Service – Benson and Sudbury.

- Assisted the towns of Rutland Town, Brandon, Wallingford, Proctor and Mendon to create new energy chapters in their municipal plans. Clearer community standards were developed to guide the Public Utilities Commission (formerly the Public Service Board) during Section 248 project review.

- Worked with the RRPC Regional Committee and Board to review 20 Section 248 petitions and submitted comments to Public Utilities Commission (formerly the Public Service Board). A majority of the projects were for solar electric generation facilities and telecommunications towers.

**WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans and tactical basin plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- Assisted VT DEC Watershed Coordinator Angie Allen with review and outreach for an updated Tactical Basin Plan for the Otter Creek Watershed. This tactical basin plan helps address the Vermont Clean Water Initiative and the TMDL for Lake Champlain. Reinstated the RRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee to assist Angie and staff with the Tactical Basin Plan.

- Staff continues to train the region’s municipalities on the provisions of the Clean Water Initiative, including several upcoming mandatory permits and funding opportunities.

- As part of the Clean Water Initiative, RRPC staff is working directly with Proctor and Mendon on increased protection designations for area waterways. This work is being done through the towns’ Municipal Plans.

- Staff is working with Shrewsbury, Brandon and Danby to include River Corridor protections and the latest state river corridor mapping data.

- Assisted 20 towns in the region with the VTDEC Grants-in-Aid Program. These funds help communities get an early start on some of the Best Management Practices that will be required for the upcoming Municipal General Roads Permit. In year three of the grant program, staff is working with 21 municipalities to implement BMPs; eight of those towns also will be receiving funding to purchase equipment.

- Updated a comprehensive Municipal Protectiveness list of policies and regulations to highlight the accomplishments of and opportunities for additional water quality efforts.

- Under an EPA/VT DEC 604b grant, staff assisted VT DEC with its data management of Clean Water Act projects.
- Partnered with the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD) to promote flood resiliency in the Flower Brook watershed which includes Pawlet, Danby and Tinmouth. This watershed was greatly impacted in Tropical Storm Irene. This is funded by the High Meadows Fund.
- Partnered with PMNRCD to administer a new VT DEC grant – CWBG – to install stormwater runoff infiltration structures at West Rutland School.
- Provided outreach assistance for two Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grants awarded to the PMNRCD. Both are for Stormwater Master Planning; one for Lake Champlain, the other for the Castleton River Headwaters.
- Wrote and was awarded an Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grant for Chittenden’s Wildcat Road. The U.S. Forest Service also will be a partner for this in initial design work.

**BROWNFIELDS**

Vermont RPCs have sought and been awarded over 12 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed, or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs, and increase housing opportunities.

The Rutland Region Brownfields Reuse Program (BRP) has existed for 15 years and has received approximately $2.5 million in funding from the US EPA to conduct community-wide assessment activities and redevelopment planning. Funding for this work has been reinvested in the Region and leveraged other funding sources, making the program an essential land use and economic development tool for municipalities. Highlights include:

- The RRPC was awarded a $300,000 EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant for Hazardous substances.
- The RRPC continues work on a remediation and redevelopment plan for the former Berwick Hotel site in downtown Rutland. The site, known locally as “the Pit”, has served as a parking lot in the heart of the city since 1973, when the original building burned. ESA work and redevelopment planning has this site on the verge of redevelopment into a multi-story, mixed-use development, which will expand economic development opportunities and add to the vibrancy of downtown Rutland.
- Phase I and Phase II assessment work at the former Lynda Lee Fashions manufacturing facility in Rutland City, is setting the stage for a redevelopment of this historic building and site by the Housing Trust of Rutland County. The future residential, commercial and civic uses included in the development will further the revitalization of the City’s Northwest Neighborhood.
- Partnering with the Town of Proctor and Preservation Trust of Vermont, the historic Vermont Marble Company facility in Proctor has received two rounds of Phase II ESA work and Corrective Action planning. This work set the stage for a property transfer to the Vermont Marble Museum, a non-profit, which will continue to operate the museum and redevelop the site for other commercial and possible residential uses. Brownfields work at the site was also a driving factor in leveraging a $30,000 planning grant from the VCDP to create the Proctor Prosperity Plan, which expanded on work at this site to identify economic development opportunities and strategies in the village core.
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through a contract with VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, 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 local, regional, state, and federal transportation network advancement. The RRPC remains focused on working with its municipalities to establish effective multimodal networks, which will serve as a pillar for the development of strong villages and downtown centers, increasing the economic viability of the region at large.

Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities

- Worked with municipalities actively engaged in regional and municipal transportation planning.
- Held 6 Rutland Region Transportation Council (RRTC) meetings.
- Worked with 2 non-municipal representatives actively engaged in the RRTC.

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Began updating the transportation chapters of the Rutland Regional Plan
- Continued membership on Marble Valley Regional Transit District Board of Commissioners.
- Continued membership on the Rutland Airport Committee.
- Coordinated quarterly meetings of regional E&D Public Transit Advisory Committee.
- The RRTC worked with VTrans to prioritize regional transportation projects.
- Provided transportation-related comments on 2 Act 250 and 1 Section 248 application.
- Assisted VTrans with the Public Transit Policy Plan update.
- Established two new regional committees- the Rutland Walk/Bike Council and the Rutland Airport Committee.
- Began work on the Transportation Resiliency Planning Toolkit (TRPT) for the Otter Creek (Headwaters to Furnace Brook) Watershed which includes 14 Rutland Region Towns.

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- Held 3 Road Foreman Meetings that focused on Town Road and Bridge Standards, Municipal Roads General Permit, Infrastructure Planning, and more.
- 54% of the transportation budget was spent on municipal technical assistance.
- Completed 7 road erosion and culvert inventories, three traffic counts, two Park & Ride Counts, and quarterly bicycle and pedestrian counts on four locations across the Rutland Region.
- Assisted municipalities with applications and technical support for the Better Roads Program, Better Connections Program, Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Grant Program, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.
- Assisting Town of Killington with the Killington Road Master Plan.
Hosted a Road Erosion Inventory Training at the RRPC. Assisted the Towns of Mendon and Proctor with Transportation Section updates to the Town Plan.

Assisted Towns of Proctor and Poultney with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Grants.

Objective #4: Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

- Conducted 6 data collection activities for VTrans
- Coordinated activities with municipalities and VTrans.
- Assisted 16 municipalities with transportation related grants.
- Assisted MVRTD with public transit planning and application for the Electric Bus Pilot Program.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- Town and Regional Planning – Worked with the towns of Ira, Chittenden, Mendon, Hubbardton, Shrewsbury, Danby, Proctor, Pittsford, Fair Haven and West Haven to create and/or update municipal plan and zoning maps. Created Village Center Designation maps for Castleton, Chittenden and Tinmouth. Updated the Future Land Use Map for the Rutland Regional Plan. Assisted local landowners with work on properties in the Current Use program.
- Bridge and Culvert Inventories – RRPC GIS staff worked with eleven town road departments to collect culvert data using the commission’s GPS and then completed the inventory, mapping, and updates to www.VTCulverts.com for: Brandon, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Ira, Mendon, Mount Holly, Pawlet, Pittsford, Proctor, Wells and west Rutland.
- Transportation Mapping – Provided mapping support for several transportation related town grants. Continued to work on identifying and inventorying town short structures for the region. Added and updated bridge and culvert inventories, as well as performing road erosion inventory assessments for many towns in the region.
- Emergency Management – In support of ongoing emergency management planning and in an effort to inventory and categorize all hazards and potential hazards, RRPC created a regional map of vulnerable sites and areas requiring mitigation, which can be used by all 27 towns. RRPC participated in several training sessions at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- Resiliency Support – Provided several towns with maps of their special flood hazard areas and river corridors. Also worked with a few towns to map site specific flood hazards.
- Energy Plans – Continued to work on energy maps for the towns of Benson, Brandon, Mount Holly, Rutland Town, Sudbury and Wallingford.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

Administration of the RRPC’s programs, policies, and finances continue to be managed effectively and efficiently. Highlights include:

- Updated the RRPC Employee Handbook, Bylaws and Policies.
- Successful completion of FY 2018 Financial and Final Reports, as well as semi-annual reports for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; that included the status of
performance measures, budget expenses, and other information.

- Continued to implement recommendations of the Strategic Plan, including financial and management structure.
- Provided an RPC presence by serving on local boards such as WIB, REDC, Chamber, The Bus and Southern Vermont Rutland Region Airport Committee.
- Completed FY18 Audit which resulted in “No findings” and was distributed to requesting granting agencies.
- Leveraged ACCD funds to provide match for grants from VTrans, VEM and EPA, which enabled the RRPC to cover indirect costs incurred to expand work into diverse areas of planning.
- Increased RRPC visibility through serving on statewide committees, attending legislative events, newsletters and increased presence on social media. Efforts have been channeled into our brand identity, promotional materials and website.

‘AT WORK’ MAP

The map depicting the range of services provided by the RRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.