The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC) is a compact of ten (10) municipalities in east-central Vermont. It was founded in 1966, and is a political subdivision of state government organized under 24 V.S.A. Sub-Chapter 3. The Commission now serves the towns of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor. The SWCRPC’s activities and programs are governed by a ten-person Board of Commissioners; each appointed by the legislative body of his or her member town, with assistance from up to three “at-large” Commissioners as appointed by the Board of Commissioners. In addition, the Board has the responsibility of hiring staff to carry out the goals and policies of the SWCRPC.

The primary intent of the SWCRPC and its advisory committees has always been to assist with and advocate for the planning and development activities of its member towns. The SWCRPC exists primarily to provide technical assistance to its member towns; assist in mediating inter-jurisdictional planning and development issues that arise between member communities; facilitate discussion and understanding between local and state entities; develop plans, policies, strategies, and procedures for addressing issues that are regional in scope; assist communities with downtown revitalization and community development projects; annually compile, review, and prioritize regional transportation improvement projects for submission to the Agency of Transportation; and to serve as an information resource for member towns and residents.

**MUNICIPAL PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION**

RPCs act as a cost-effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, facilitating transition to Development Review Boards, and implementing new requirements for economic development and flood resiliency planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Provided a range of services to assist with municipal plan updates for Ludlow, Reading, West Windsor and Windsor.
- Helped planning commissions to prepare zoning bylaw updates in Reading, Springfield, and Windsor.
- Assisted with local efforts to implement municipal plans and supporting plans, including in Springfield and Windsor.

**REGIONAL PLANNING**

RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.
• The Regional Plan was amended on June 25, 2018. We continue to refine draft updates to the Land Use Chapter, and began to prepare updates to the Utilities and Facilities Chapter.
• Efforts this year to implement the Regional Plan included the following activities:
  - Reviewed all Act 250 applications and Section 248 petitions as each relates to goals and policies in the Regional Plan.
  - Assisted in the development of a multi-jurisdictional outdoor recreation plan for Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor.

BROWNFIELDS
Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments and clean-up 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.

• Provided brownfields assistance for 10 properties in 2 towns.
  o Springfield: Park Street School, 1620 Park Street, Woolson Block, Jones Center, One Hundred River Street, and Jones and Lamson.
  o Windsor: Goodyear, Windsor Railyards, Windsor Armory, and Windsor Resource Center
• The SWCRPC continues to work with Springfield Regional Development Corporation on the clean-up of various properties and with the Town of Springfield as Administrator for their Brownfields EPA Assessment Grant Program

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong 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.

• Supported downtown revitalization efforts in Springfield and Windsor, and village revitalization initiatives in Chester, Ludlow, Weathersfield and West Windsor.
• Continued to assist with the multi-year process to develop an environmental review for the redevelopment of the Jones and Lamson site in Springfield.
• Completed an analysis of the availability and access to primary aspects of health care for all populations.
• Supported Springfield’s redevelopment efforts for the Park Street School and Woolson Block buildings and Weathersfield to bring a public facility up to ADA compliance

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
Through contract with the 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.

**Objective 1**

*Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions and Municipalities*

- # of TAC meetings held: 7
- # of non-municipal TAC members actively engaged in transportation planning: 7
- # of municipalities actively engaged in transportation planning: 10
- # of RPC coordination activities with municipalities and VTrans: 8

**Objective 2**

*Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning*

- # of regional transportation plans that are current (within 8 years): 1
- # of Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation: 1
- # of Section 248 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation: 2
- # of coordination activities in support of regional public transit providers: 4
- # of VTrans committees that involve RPC staff participation: 4
- # of regions participating in Project Prioritization: 1

**Objective 3**

*Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities*

- # of municipalities participating in road foreman meetings annually: 5
- # of municipalities assisted with transportation related grants: 9
- % of budget spent on municipal technical assistance: 45%
- # of municipal transportation inventories conducted: 5
- # of municipal transportation related feasibility/project definition studies completed/undertaken: 1
- # of municipalities assisted with transportation element of municipal/town plan: 3
- # of road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and using other funding sources: 5

**Objective 4**

*Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long Range Transportation Plans*

- # of data collection activities conducted specifically for VTrans: 78

**Objective 5**

*Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education*

See Performance Measure/Objective descriptions

The RPC engaged with bicycle advocates in the area to identify bicycle routes and develop a bicycle route guide to encourage residents and visitors to Ride Windsor County.

**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 to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees 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 assisted as needed in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other declared disasters.
• Ten municipalities in the region (100%) currently have adopted hazard mitigation plans. Seven municipalities in the region (70%) currently have an updated local emergency plan.
• Assisted 9 towns with updates to their Local Emergency Management Plans this year.
• Worked with the Town and Village of Ludlow and the Town of Springfield to update their Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.
• Provided technical assistance with the buyout of a flood-damaged property in Weathersfield and assisted with potential applications in Ludlow.
• Assisted Ludlow with the Commonwealth Avenue stormwater project.
• Continued to provide guidance to the Town and Village of Ludlow with flood hazard review, as requested.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES
In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC’s provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

• Highlights of activities:
  o Creation of a pilot Tier II hazardous materials site webmap.
  o Prepared maps for municipal plans, zoning bylaws and other projects.
  o Uploaded all zoning district maps into the Vermont Open Geodata Portal.
  o Integrated “Collector for ArcGIS” into regular fieldwork activities, including MRGP related erosion inventories.

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.

• Participated in the review process for 8 energy projects (Section 248).
• Facilitated numerous educational sessions for local officials on Act 174 and enhanced local energy plans.
• Issued a Certificate of Energy Compliance for Ludlow.
• Assisted the towns of Chester, Reading, Springfield and Windsor to refine their enhanced energy plans.
• Assisted the towns of Cavendish, Weathersfield and West Windsor to develop draft enhanced energy plans.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed 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.

• Worked with the towns of Reading, West Windsor and Windsor to implement recommendations from the Mill Brook Stream Geomorphic Assessment including, but not
limited to, Mill Brook water quality monitoring and removal of the Volunteer Fire Department Dam in West Windsor.

- Supported the efforts of 6 towns to complete projects under the Grants-in-Aid program bringing 24 priority road segments up to Municipal Roads General Permit Standards.
- Assisted the Town of Springfield to secure or seek funding for:
  - Completing engineering designs for the Lincoln Street stormwater mitigation project.
  - Implementing stormwater improvements at the Transfer Station.
  - Completing a stormwater master plan, including 8 conceptual design plans for the highest priority projects.
  - Engineering design in support of removal of the Valley Street Dam.
- Worked with the Town of Andover to manage the Horseshoe Acres flood mitigation and fish passage restoration project.
- Provided grant writing assistance to the Town of Windsor for a large in-stream culvert upgrade on Weeden Hill Road.
- Provided grant writing assistance to the Town of Ludlow to complete a stormwater master plan and 12 conceptual design plans for high priority projects.
- Provided grant writing assistance to the Town of Windsor for the Paradise Park stormwater mitigation engineering design project.
- Provided assistance to the Town of Weathersfield with managing the Baltimore Road culvert upgrade project.
- Continued to assist municipalities to better understand flood resiliency and to consider adoption of model ANR river corridor bylaws, including West Windsor and Windsor.
- Administered the first round Clean Water Block Grant of $1,500,000 from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to support 22 clean water projects throughout the state.
- Awarded an additional $1,500,000 grant from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to support state-wide implementation of water quality improvement projects over the next two years.
- Hosted a stream reclassification public forum.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- Held a presentation on the Working Communities Challenge Initiative at the East Central Vermont Economic Development District spring workshop in Randolph. The Working Communities Challenge is a grant program geared towards funding cross-sector leadership teams to build strong economies and vibrant communities.

**ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING**

The SWCRPC is funded by performance and project contracts with federal, state and local levels of government, foundation support, and contributions from member municipalities. SWCRPC’s FY 2019 budget was approximately $1,047,373. Core funding provided by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development of $199,576 leveraged $352,644 in additional federal sources.

SWCRPC has an annual independent audit conducted by Certified Public Accountants. A single audit was not necessary for the past fiscal year. No significant findings nor material weaknesses have been identified in recent years.
SWCRPC serves 10 municipalities and operates with a Board of Directors that develop and implement policy and oversee a staff of 10.

‘AT WORK’ MAP
The map depicting the range of services provided by the SWCRPC to member municipalities is included on the next page.