

Two New Designations!

Economic Development District is Finally a Reality

East Central Vermont CEDS Region



On December 19, 2013, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) approved the designation of the East Central Vermont Economic Development District. The East Central Vermont Development District is composed of the Springfield Regional Development

Corporation, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission, and the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation. The designation will allow communities within the District to apply for economic development funding for infrastructure, business development, planning, and a host of other economic development programs.

The organizations that created the East Central Vermont Economic Development District have been working to receive this designation for over six(6) years; finally seeing their work come to fruition is rewarding and greatly appreciated!

Weathersfield Establishes a PACE District



Weathersfield has become the second municipality in the region, along with Cavendish, to establish a PACE district. Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) district designation was approved by voters at Weathersfield's 2014 Town Meeting. This designation establishes a voluntary program for residents to help finance energy efficiency and renewable

energy home improvements. Residents may apply for PACE funds to make these home improvements, and then pay it back through a municipal assessment on their property tax bill in accordance with 24 V.S.A. Chapter 87. One of the key obstacles to making home energy investments is the up-front costs; the PACE program is designed to make improvements affordable. For other towns considering or interested in learning more about PACE designation, please see <http://www.encyvermont.com/for-our-partners/PACE-For-Town-Administrators>.

Don't forget to check us out on Facebook and also our website for the most up to date information.

www.swcrpc.org

www.facebook.com/SWCRPC

Spring 2014 Edition

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Legislative Update

Post Town Meeting Break Crossover deadlines for bills to move from one Chamber to the other will occur on March 14th unless Leadership changes the date. In the Senate, bills must be reported out of their last committee of reference by March 14th and out of Appropriations and Finance by March 21st.

Growth Center/ Benefits Bills (H.809, H.823). H.809, as passed by the House, has been assigned to Senate Economic Development, Housing and General – they likely won't get to this until after they finish their work on **S.220**, including discussions around enterprise zones which provides incentives for industrial parks. House Natural Resources and Energy, is scheduled to finish up its work on H.823 (Growth Center benefits) bill this week.

PSB Telecom Sunset Provision (H.693). Still in House Commerce -- no testimony or committee work scheduled this week, so far. Suspect that this may pop up in other legislation.

Water Bills (H.526/H.586/H.650). House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources is taking up the shorelands bill ([H.526](#)) as passed by the Senate on Tuesday, while they also continue to review and markup this year's water quality bill (H.586)—which is also up for consideration in House Ag this week.

Chapter 117 (S.168). VLCT's "tool box" of statutory changes was held up on the Senate floor over ongoing confusion regarding the requested technical correction to the required frontage language under Section 4412(3) as it pertains to Class 4 roads.

Energy (H.702, S.201, S. 191). S.201 which gives greater deference to Regional Plans, was voted out of Senate Natural Resources and Energy and has since joined the net metering bill (H.702), as passed by the House, in Senate Finance. Their companion bill, [S.292](#) (energy siting—property values, compensation), remains in committee. The committee has also scheduled some time and a possible vote this week on their solar facility setback bill ([S.191](#)). This bill would require that solar generation plants comply with municipal setback and screening requirements.

Act 250/Primary Ag Soils (H.448). Testimony is taking place the week of March 10th, it is unclear whether the bill will make it through crossover.

State Flood Rules/Flood Bill ([H.676](#)). This essentially administrative bill extending the state's flood rulemaking process as passed by the House. As passed, it makes the following change to Section 4413(a) under Chapter 117:

(2) Except for State-owned and –operated institutions and facilities, a municipality may regulate each of the land uses listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection for compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program and for compliance with a municipal ordinance or bylaw regulating development in a flood hazard area or river corridor, consistent with the requirements of subdivision 2291(25) and section 4424 of this title. These regulations shall not have the effect of interfering with the intended functional use.

VTrans Fair Share Bill (H.740). Testimony was taken a number of weeks ago and generated a lot of questions. The bill attempts to apportion a per trip fee for projects that generate a significant amount of traffic. The present system of last one in pays for transportation improvements by most development and transportation officials. The word in the hallways of the statehouse is that a pilot program may be started to try and determine if the process is feasible.

Thanks

Great appreciation goes out to Sharon Murray and the Vermont Planner's Association for their weekly updates on legislative activity.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

DisasterLAN Training!

Is your town interested in hosting a free, interactive training on DisasterLAN, the statewide disaster management software? The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) is willing to come to your town and train your towns emergency operations center staff and first responders in DisasterLAN. This software program allows towns to submit resource requests and monitor a statewide situation in the event of a disaster or emergency, e.g. Tropical Storm Irene.

The intended audience for the training includes:

- Emergency Management Directors
- Town Managers
- Town Clerks
- Zoning/Planning Officers
- Town Treasurers
- Public Works Directors
- Selectboard Members
- Fire Chiefs
- Police Chiefs



For more information, please contact John Broker-Campbell at 802/674-9201 or jbcampbell@swcrpc.org.

Mill Brook Watershed Update



In the Fall of 2013, SWCRPC staff, in partnership with Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, completed a Phase 1 Stream Geomorphic Assessment along the Mill Brook and major tributaries in Reading, West Windsor, and Windsor. The Phase 1 data collection was used to identify current stream conditions and areas of significant damage, many of which will require additional study during the summer of 2014.

If you have any questions on this project or would like to be a member of the project steering committee, please contact John Broker-Campbell at jbcampbell@swcrpc.org.

Local Emergency Operations Plan Reminder

Now that town meeting has passed and new roles within your town have been filled, please encourage your town to update and adopt the newly revised Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). The LEOP has replaced the Basic Emergency Operations Plan as the primary emergency contact information and emergency planning tool for your town. This plan provides the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) and your town's first responders with critical information to be used in the event of an emergency. The plan template can be found at http://vem.vermont.gov/local_state_plans/local or by contacting John Broker-Campbell at jbcampbell@swcrpc.org.

Do you know who the Emergency Management Director is in your town? Or the LEOP for your town?

Save the Date - Regional Highway Safety Forum - May 12



Save the date for the Regional Highway Forum on Monday, May 12, 2014. The event will be held in Bellows Falls and is a collaboration between Southern Windsor County RPC, Windham Regional Commission and Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans). Nine people died in our member towns and 85 were seriously injured between 2009 and 2013. These are our friends and neighbors, and it requires a mountainous effort on the part of numerous groups and individuals to bring this to a stop. Please consider attending the Regional Highway Safety Forum because you are an important piece of the partnership between Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and EMS (the 4 Es) that is needed to stop these injuries and deaths. The Forum is a chance to put our heads together and create a safer southern Windsor County Region. More details will be coming in the next month. For more information contact Katharine Otto at kotto@swcrpc.org.

Choo Choo - What's happening with rail?

In the last few months there has been a flurry of activity and meetings around rail. In January the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNERI) project held its first public meeting in White River Junction. Currently the initiative is focusing on a study to examine the opportunities and impacts of more frequent and higher speed intercity passenger rail service on two major rail corridors known as the Inland Route and the Boston-to-Montreal Route. The route would travel along the Connecticut River Valley – including through Brattleboro, Windsor and White River Junction. The project website is <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Planning/Main/CurrentStudies/NorthernNewEnglandRailStudy.aspx>

VTrans is starting to update the State Rail Plan. An inventory of the state's existing rail system has been completed and goals and objectives have been drafted. VTrans will seek public review of both topics at two public information meetings planned for late March:

March 24 at 6:30 pm: Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St, Rutland, VT

March 25 at 6:30 pm: Community Room, Brattleboro Savings & Loan, 221 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT

For more information on either of these projects, please contact Katharine Otto at kotto@swcrpc.org.

Fun Facts about Vermont railways

Q: True or False: A lot more people are riding Vermont's rails.

A: True: While ridership fluctuates from year to year, in the last 10 years there has been an overall trend of rising rail use...from a low of 57,121 passengers in 2005 to a high of 100,829 in 2013.

Q: True or False: The Vermonter, the train that runs between St. Albans and Washington, D.C. travels more miles in Vermont than in any other state on the route.

A: True: The train travels through eight states yet thirty percent (185 miles) of its 611-mile route is in Vermont.

Q: How many intercity passenger rails stations are there in Vermont?

A: Eleven: 2 on the Ethan Allen (Rutland and Castleton) and 9 on the Vermonter (St. Albans, Waterbury, Montpelier, Randolph, White River Junction, Windsor, Bellows Falls and Brattleboro), with 1 stop in Claremont, NH.

(From the Vermont State Rail Plan, Bulletin #1, March 2014)

TRANSPORTATION

Way To Go Week May 12-16



It's time for the annual "Way To Go" Commuter Challenge! Way To Go is a week long challenge for commuters to find alternatives to driving alone to work, whether taking the bus, riding a bike, walking, participating in a ride share, telecommuting or using the Park and Rides. Way To Go has been taking hold across the state over the last few years. In 2014 it will be the week of May 12th through the 16th.

There are several good reasons to consider trying commuting alternatives during Way To Go week:

- reduce money spent on fuel
- reduce transportation pollution
- improve your health
- and win prizes!

Sign up at www.waytogovt.org for a chance to win some great prizes. Also check out www.swcrpc.org for more information about local commuting options and events in and around southern Windsor County. For more information contact Katharine Otto at kotto@swcrpc.org.

Summer Fieldwork

Every summer SWCRPC completes a variety of inventories and counts – including sidewalks, culverts, bridges, roads, signs, traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians. Please be aware that these counts may be taking place in your town and feel free to say hello if you see us in the field!

Additionally, towns can borrow two handheld GPS units from the RPC to complete their own fieldwork. Please let Katharine Otto at kotto@swcrpc.org know if you have any requests for fieldwork or would like to use the GPS units.



BROWNFIELDS

Big Plans!

The Southern Windsor County Brownfields Reuse Program has several exciting projects planned for this coming spring! Assessment of the Bryant Grinder Building in Springfield will resume thanks to the continued support of the U.S. EPA (the SWCRPC was awarded a 2013 Hazardous Materials Assessment Grant) and assessment of the southern portion of the former Jones and Lamson plant will begin this spring. Additionally, the SWCRPC awarded a cleanup grant from its Revolving Loan Fund to Springfield Medical Care Systems for removal of contaminated soil at the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center.

That work is also scheduled to begin this spring. For more information please contact Dan Potter at dpotter@swcrpc.org.



New Universal Recycling Law - Act 148



With the passage of the Universal Recycling law, Vermont has taken an ambitious step towards reducing the amount of materials that end up in the landfill. Mandatory recycling will require that the same materials can be recycled across the state and will be collected alongside trash. This will allow all Vermonters the opportunity to recycle instead of sending valuable materials to the landfill.

Vermonters are recycling only half of the materials they could be recycling. Throwing out recyclables, food scraps, and leaf and yard debris is a waste of money and shared resources. Diverting these resources from the landfill and using them instead of burying them will: lower Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions (estimated 38% improvement) and increase recycling (est. increase from 33%-60%) and reduce the need for an additional landfill.

What is the timeline of the law for residents?

- July 1, 2015: Mandated recyclables are banned from landfill
- July 1, 2016: Leaf and yard debris and clean wood are banned from landfill
- July 1, 2020: Food scraps are banned from landfill

Please see www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/Act148.htm for **a lot** more information

Household Hazardous Waste Collections for District Residents



Saturday, May 10

Springfield Transfer Station 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Ludlow Transfer Station 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

If you have items with labels that say any of the following, bring them to the collection:

CAUSTIC, CAUTION, CORROSIVE, POISON, FLAMMABLE, WARNING, DANGER, TOXIC

But **DO NOT** bring batteries, asbestos, radioactive material, empty containers, fireworks, tires, medical waste, yard creosote, or ammunition.

This year, for the first time, we will accept latex (water-based) paint as well as oil-based paint, stains, etc.

Visit www.vtsolidwastedistrict.org for more information

Springfield Hospital launches “Health Transit”

HealthTransit

Springfield Medical Care System’s Community Health Team recently received a grant from the Holt Foundation to increase public awareness about the existing transportation services in their communities, and to offer practical and

accessible options to transportation that improves the health and wellbeing of the people they serve. This new program is called “Health Transit”. The effort is a creative community collaboration to identify and bridge gaps in transportation that includes Connecticut River Transit (“The Current”), local taxi providers, Senior Solutions, SWCRPC, and a wide variety of other health and human services providers in the Springfield area. For more information about SWCRPC’s involvement contact Katharine Otto, or if you think you may need to take advantage of the new service, contact Springfield Medical Care System’s Community Health Team at (802) 886-8988.

East Central Vermont Consortium

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission and SWCRPC presented the following chapters at the last East Central Vermont Consortium meeting: Housing (including the Fair Housing Equity Assessment), Climate, Energy, and Habitat. These plans will be open for public comment until approximately March 11th and are available for review on www.ecvermont.org. For more information please contact Dan Potter at dpotter@swcrpc.org.



How well do you know your Region?

Which of the ten towns in our Region was first to receive its charter?

Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor and Windsor.

Bonus: In what year?

The historic birch tree from the last newsletter is located on Stone Chimney Road in Reading, VT. It is the largest birch tree that grew from the same root. Unfortunately, not still alive but still standing, it is located next to the old Stone Chimney Historical site.

What happened at your Town meeting in 2014?

Help us to keep our contact information accurate by letting us know who the newly appointed officials in your town. Contact Chris Titus at ctitus@swcrpc.org.

There’s been a lot of work done to catch up on the website and learning about our new design. Have you checked it out? You can find it at <http://swcrpc.org/>. We would love to have any feedback or suggestions that you might have regarding the site. Contact Chris Titus at ctitus@swcrpc.org or Katherine Otto at kotto@swcrpc.org.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

CDBG Disaster Recovery Grants

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/cdbgdr

Due: Deadline is ongoing and reviewed monthly
 From: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development
 What: To help communities after a major federal disaster declaration.

Vermont Community Development Grants

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp/applicants

Due: Deadline ongoing
 From: Agency of Commerce and Community Development
 What: Housing, economic development and other community development projects to benefit primarily low-to-moderate income persons.

Rural Business Enterprise Grants

www.rurdev.USDA.gov

Due: April 1, 2014

Community Facilities Grant and Direct Loan

www.rurdev.USDA.gov

Due: No application deadline

Class 2 Roadway and Structures Program Grants

Due: in the Spring through the VTrans District Maintenance Offices

Lists of other grant opportunities

Federal Grants www.reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/federal-grant-opportunities

Brownfield Funding Opportunities

<http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/strongcommunities/cpr/Brownfield%20Funding%20Agencies%20able.pdf>

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development Funding and Incentives Opportunities

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/tb2/DEHCD

Historic Preservation Funding Directory

http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/grants

Cultural Facilities Grants (VT Arts Council)

www.vermontartscouncil.org

Due: May 1, 2014

Project Grant (VT Arts Council)

www.vermontartscouncil.org

Due: May 22, 2014

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program: applications are anticipated to be due in July 2014.

Municipal Planning Grants: next grant round is anticipated for Fall 2014.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

18th Regional Planning Commission meeting at noon, **Springfield Town Offices**

18th Safe Routes to School Annual meeting, www.saferoutes.vermont.gov

19th Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting at 6:00 p.m., RPC Conference Room, Ascutney, VT

24th State Rail Plan Update Informational meeting at 6:30 p.m., Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St, Rutland, VT

26th State Rail Plan Update Informational meeting at 6:30 p.m., Community Room, Brattleboro Savings & Loan, 221 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT

April

8th East Central Vermont Consortium meeting at 9:30 a.m., Hotel Coolidge, 39 South Main Street, White River Junction, VT

9th Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC 3) meeting at 6:00 p.m. Location TBD

15th Brownfields Steering Committee meeting at 11:30 a.m., Springfield Town Hall

15th Regional Planning Commission meeting at noon, Springfield Town Hall

16th Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting at 6:00 p.m., RPC Conference Room, Ascutney, VT

May

12th Regional Highway Forum in Bellows Falls, VT

12th-16th "Way To Go" Commuter Challenge

14th Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC 3) meeting at 6:00 p.m., Location TBD

20th Brownfields Steering Committee meeting at 11:30 a.m., Martin Memorial Hall, Route 5, Ascutney, VT

20th Regional Planning Commission meeting at noon, Martin Memorial Hall, Route 5, Ascutney, VT

21st Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting at 6:00 p.m., RPC Conference Room, Ascutney, VT