



March Newsletter



The ACRPC Newsletter contains Addison County announcements, events, grants, and trainings for the upcoming month. Please contact mshropshire@acrpc.org with questions.

ACRPC Update

Following the release of the Vermont [Climate Action Plan](#) and [Comprehensive Energy Plan](#), it is important to understand how our work at a local level translates to the goals set by the State. To that end, ACRPC has developed energy scorecards to report on the progress made by towns and across Addison Region in achieving energy targets set by the enhanced energy planning (EEP) process. The regional and municipal scorecards can be found on the [Energy Page of the ACRPC website](#) under Energy Scorecards.

The most recent energy data available from [Efficiency VT](#), the [VT Energy Dashboard](#), and the Department of Motor Vehicles was used to track progress across four categories:

1. **Electricity Efficiency** - total electrical usage in KWh by residential and commercial users
2. **Transportation and Land Use** - Number of EV and Hybrid vehicles registered
3. **Thermal Efficiency** - number of heat pumps and proportion of weatherized homes in each town
4. **Renewable Energy Generation** - total MWh of renewable energy produced

For each category, you will find the energy target set either by the town or the region, a short report on progress, and suggested actions for continued improvement. The regional scorecard also includes some of the actions ACRPC has taken to improve energy efficiency in the region.

Along with the scorecards, the [energy webpage](#) also houses the data used to evaluate each town as well as useful resources on funding opportunities, energy maps, project ideas, and more. Look for Additional information and resources on energy efficiency shared in regional meetings such as the upcoming Efficiency VT municipal building efficiency webinar scheduled for March 22, at 5:30.

For more information on the scorecards or energy planning, please contact the ACRPC energy planner, Maddison Shropshire at mshropshire@acrpc.org or 802-388-3141 ext-7.

Events

March Calendar

Date	Time	Meeting
March 9th	7:00 pm	ACRPC Full Commission Meeting
March 16th	6:30 pm	TAC Meeting
March 17th	7:00 pm	ACSWMD Meeting
March 23rd	6:00 pm	Green Justice Zones Forum
March 23rd	6:30 p.m	ACRPC Executive Meeting

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Announcements

ARPA Updates and Reminders

The US Treasury issued the [Final Rule for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#), along with an accessible and [helpful overview document](#). The finalized regulations give municipalities much more spending flexibility under the “Lost Revenue” category. All recipients in our region can now classify any portion or the entirety of their awards as Lost Revenue, without having to do any of the calculations formerly required under the interim draft rule. Funds that are categorized as “lost revenue” can be spent on “government services,” which includes any service traditionally provided by a government.

There are still a number of restrictions and accounting implications to consider, and VLCT is encouraging all recipients to hold off on ARPA spending until further guidance has been developed. Waiting until after April 30th to begin spending will also make your town’s first progress report much easier to manage. While we wait for more guidance, this is a good time to be doing outreach in your community to gather input on project ideas and spending priorities. The ACRPC is happy to assist with facilitating community dialogues.

Towns and villages that received local ARPA allocations are required to submit their first project and expenditure reports by April 30, 2022. The US Treasury recently issued a user guide for how to navigate the reporting portal. [CLICK HERE](#) for a concise summary of the Final Rule developed by VLCT.

For more information, please visit [VLCT's website](#). If you have any questions about ARPA regulations or would like help with community outreach, please contact Andrew at alroe@acrpc.org, 802.388.3141 ext 3.

Green Justice Zones Forum

Wednesday, March 23 from 6-7:30 p.m.

What is green justice, and how can it inform planning and community development in Vermont? A Green Justice Zone is the concept of making investments in sustainability and equity in neighborhoods that have been disinvested in and are overburdened with pollution, and/or have higher exposure to risks associated with climate change. These initiatives use data mapping, community design and a participatory budgeting process to support community revitalization in communities who have experienced the most harm from the current climate crisis. Vermont’s 11 regional planning commissions have partnered with Rights and Democracy to explore the concept and how it can be applied

in our state. Guests include representatives from the Green Justice Zone efforts in the city of Providence, which has begun implementing its Climate Justice Plan.

Update on the Vergennes Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

The Vergennes PEL Study will evaluate transportation alternatives that reduce the impact of large truck traffic on VT Route 22A and Downtown Vergennes, while seeking ways to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality for residents in the City and surrounding towns.

The Policy Committee meets on March 7th to approve the Purpose and Needs Statement for the study. The Statement has already been reviewed by the Technical Committee, which offered some minor revisions. In addition, the Project Management Team is planning spring workshops: one dedicated to residents of the Otter Creek Trailer Park, one in-person meeting for the general public, and one virtual meeting for the general public. Details to follow in April.

Clean Water Service Provider Update

The Clean Water Service Provider is a new venture in Vermont designed by the legislature to more efficiently deliver resources to projects that improve water quality. The Addison County Regional Planning Commission was selected as the CWSP for the Otter Creek Basin and has since established the Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC) to prioritize potential projects as they become available. The Council is made up of the following representatives:

List BWQC members:

Representatives from Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCDs)

- Nanci McGuire - Rutland NRCD
- Pam Stefanek - Otter Creek NRCD

Members representing Regional Planning Commissions

- Arabella Holzapfel - Addison County RPC
- Barbara Noyes-Pulling - Rutland County RPC

Members representing watershed protection organizations

- Kate Kelly - Lewis Creek Association
- Ellen Cronan - Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative
- *Alternate - Andrea Morgante - Lewis Creek Association*
- *Alternate - Chris Robbins - Addison County River Watch Collaborative*

Member representing local/statewide land conservation organizations

- Steve Libby - Vermont River Conservancy

Members representing municipalities in the basin

- Hilda Haines - Danby
- Gioia Kuss - Weybridge

The first round of funding is anticipated in July, with the new fiscal year. We envision a process whereby the CWSP will solicit potential projects, screen them for appropriateness, and score them based on anticipated pollution reductions they achieve. The CWSP is limited to funding projects that reduce defined pollutants, particularly phosphorus, and that would not otherwise be required by permit. Project solicitation and scoring would take place over the summer.

Once projects have been scored we would convene a meeting of the Basin Water Quality Council, likely not before September and quarterly thereafter. At that meeting the BWQC's duty would be to review and rank the projects for implementation. The CWSP would be responsible for administering projects.

Save the Date! - Walk Bike Summit

In partnership with Vermont Agency of Transportation, and along with a number of other participating organizations and sponsors, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission, in concert with the Walk-Bike Council of Addison County will host the statewide Vermont Walk/Bike Summit at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury, VT on May 6, 2022. Find out more on their website [HERE](#).

The Brandon Artists Guild 2022 is celebrating Vermont!

Vermont: In the Village will run from March 4th through May 1st. Opening Reception on Friday, March 4th from 5 to 7 at the Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center Street, Brandon, Vermont.

Members will share their perspectives on the quintessential charm, historic architecture, mountain views, delightful village greens, local festivities, and inviting places to dine and shop in small Vermont villages, exploring the warm character that continually draws visitors to a simpler, more peaceful atmosphere.



Catherine Palmer, colored pencil
"Friday Mornings in Bristol, Vermont"

Pollinator Pathway Launch Event

Pollinator Pathway of Addison County (PPAC) announces the launch of its creation with a series of free public webinars on pollinators, native plants, and rewilding! Please join us to learn about this exciting new project connecting our communities! The kick off event was on Tuesday, March 1, 7:00 PM, with Donna Merrill, founder of the Pollinator Pathway Northeast. Find a recording of this event on [YouTube HERE](#). Additional events can be found in the Tools and Trainings section below.

To learn more about the Pollinator Pathway project, visit pollinator-pathway.org. Join the community by filling out [THIS FORM](#).

Mount Independence Featured as Top Iconic Landmark

The [Mount Independence](#) State Historic Site in Orwell is included as one of seven iconic landmarks to visit on a road trip in a recent “*Only in Your State*” an online trip planning resource. The President Calvin Coolidge Historic Site in Plymouth is one of the other landmarks featured. Read more [here](#).

Congratulations to the two Addison County recipients of the 2022 Caring for Canopy grant awards.

The Towns of Middlebury and Orwell are recipients of the Caring for Canopy Grant. Middlebury will use the grant to develop and submit a landscape plan to VTrans to support tree planting along state route 125 in response to the removal of several large shade trees. The Town of Orwell will apply the grant towards Maintenance and inventory of the town green's existing trees, and planting new trees on the green. To learn more about the program [CLICK HERE](#).

Nominate your Tree Hero!

Each year VT UCF and the Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Council sponsors the [Vermont Tree Steward Awards](#) to recognize our state's urban and community forestry champions. Nominations in the four categories below are due on Thursday, March 31, 2022.

- Hamilton (limited to Vermont Tree Wardens)
- Leader
- Unsung Hero
- Volunteer Group/Community

Grants and Funding

Community Grants

Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Available Grant Programs

Following the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, the federal administration has provided the following information on currently available or planned infrastructure programs. This list includes links to agency websites, application timing, and descriptions. Highlighted programs were selected based on their size and cross-cutting objectives. Using these available sources of funds, cities can begin to plan to build in-line with President Biden’s economic, equity, climate and resilience, Made in America, and labor goals. The White House will also be releasing a comprehensive guidebook of all available funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the coming weeks.

For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

AARP Livable Communities Grant

The AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. This year, applications will be accepted for projects to improve public spaces; housing; transportation; civic engagement; diversity, equity and inclusion; support efforts to build engagement for programs under new federal laws; and other innovative ideas that support people age 50 or older.

Deadline: Applications due by 5 p.m. (ET) **March 22**

Learn more [HERE](#) and contact our community planner, Katie Raycrot-Meyer for more information at kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org

Better Places Releases New Program Resources

Last Thursday, DHCD held the Better Places launch [webinar](#) which had robust participation with over **240 folks participating representing 115 Vermont communities**. To further support those interested in placemaking, a huge number of resources and tools have been compiled to help communities reimagine and reconfigure their streets, parking areas, and public spaces during COVID-19 and beyond.

Greening Schools on Arbor Day Program

Due April 1st: Applications for a free tree for schools in Chittenden and Addison Counties through the Greening Schools on Arbor Day Program. [Learn more here](#).

Transportation Grants

New Funding Through Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF)

The DTF is intended to support safe, multi-modal and resilient transportation systems that support the downtown and village center economic development and revitalization efforts. DTF projects may apply for \$20,000 to \$140,000 of “add on” clean water funding for eligible storm water implementation projects.

Application Deadline: March 7, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

Please contact [Gary Holloway](#), the Downtown Program Manager at 802-522-2444 if you have questions or need assistance with the DTF application.

Energy Grants

USDA Pilot Energy Program

The Department is making up to \$10 million available to help people living in rural towns develop community renewable energy projects that will help them cut their energy costs and contribute to the nationwide effort to reduce pollution that contributes to climate change.

For more information: [CLICK HERE](#)

Letter of Intent Due: On or Before April 19, 2022

Submit Completed Applications: July 18, 2022

EV Charging for Residents of Multiunit Housing

A \$1 million grant program was launched to provide funding to owners of affordable and non-profit multiunit housing who would like to provide electric vehicle charging for residents. The application deadline is April 1, 2022. [CLICK HERE](#)

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Funding

Look for upcoming information from the State and your RPC about how to apply for the renewed EECBG funding following the passing of the federal Infrastructure Act. For more information on eligibility and how this funding can be used [CLICK HERE](#).

Clean Water Grants

2022 Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) is pleased to announce this Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2022 Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant initiative. Selected grantee(s) ("block grantee(s)") will solicit proposals to subgrant funding to project implementers and then oversee these sub-agreements. Up to \$597,193 in the State Fiscal Year 2022 clean water budget is available for the initial award to support this block grant program and the associated dam removal design and implementation projects. The scope of work and deliverables are further outlined in this Request for Proposals.

- Release Date: February 11, 2022
- Questions Due: February 22, 2022, 12:00 pm
- Proposals Due: March 7, 2022, 4:00pm
- [View Request for Proposals](#)

Tools and Training

Community Development

AIAVT Affordable Housing Charrette Event

AIAVT (American Institute of Architects Vermont) is Hosting a Panel Discussion and Charrette event focused on the topic of Affordable Housing in VT on Friday, March 25th from 12:30pm-5:00pm. Sign up [here](#).

Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference in St Johnsbury on June 9th

Learn about St. Johnsbury's secret ingredients to success as well as other statewide success stories and dive into complex challenges around housing, main street vitality, and the rural economy. Find out more information [here](#).

Digital Access: Key Elements for Inclusion of Disabled People

Inclusive Arts Vermont has partnered with the Vermont Arts Council to offer a series of workshops on improving digital access to arts programming for the inclusion of disabled people. There are nine workshops altogether. All workshops will be held on the first Tuesday of the month, through July 2022. Recordings will be posted on our website after the event. [Learn more and register here](#).

Rural Futures Roundtable

Presented by the Center On Rural Innovation this Roundtable explored the ways technology is shaping rural economic development. How have rural communities experienced the process of digital economic development? What challenges did they face? What types of unexpected opportunities did they encounter? And what types of economic forces impacted their efforts? Learn how rural communities are managing digital economic development across the country through case studies and policy briefs by visiting the CORI website [HERE](#).

Natural Resources

Pollinator Pathway Webinar

Join the Pollinator Pathway of Addison County on March 10th at 7pm for a talk with Emily May of the Xerces Society on the ecology of our local pollinators and how to support them by planting patches of diverse, pollinator-attractive plants native to

Vermont. Learn about the diversity of native pollinators in Vermont and how you can help protect these important insects right here in Addison County!
Register for the event [HERE](#).

Community Wildlife Program at Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Trainings

Please join us for one of these informative webinars or in-depth training!

Follow these links to see the description below.

- [Climate action-planning: What should towns do to address climate change?](#)
- [Reviewing your Town Plan & Regulations: Lessons Learned from our Comprehensive Review](#)
- [Reinvigorating your Conservation Commission:](#)
- [BioFinder Drop-in Help Sessions](#)
- [Environmental Leadership Training Unit 1](#)
- [Environmental Leadership Training Unit 2](#)

Registration and more information is available on our [Trainings](#) page where you can also find our library of previously recorded sessions. Contact Jens Hilke, jens.hilke@vermont.gov for more information.

Workshop Series: Habitat Connectivity and Biodiversity in the Champlain Valley

Sponsored by The Vermont Master Naturalists Program, Middlebury Area Land Trust, and Otter Creek Audubon.

- Saturday, May 21 st, 2022- Backyard Bird Habitat and Connectivity with Mark LaBarr of Vermont Audubon.
- Wednesday, June 8 th, 2022- The Bigger Picture: Habitat Connectivity and Biodiversity
- Mapping of The Champlain Valley Online workshop via Zoom with Monica Pryzperhart of Vermont Master Naturalist Program.

Energy

Municipal Building and Small business efficiency webinar with Efficiency Vermont

Join us on Tuesday, March 22 · 5:30 – 7:00pm to learn about the services Efficiency VT can provide to help your town improve the electric and thermal efficiency of municipal buildings. We will be joined by our Community Engagement Coordinator, Brad Long, to understand how municipal buildings and small businesses can pursue greater efficiency through the suite of support available through Efficiency VT.

Find the meeting link here: <https://meet.google.com/ewd-cjiz-ftj>

Contact Maddison Shropshire at mshropshire@acrpc.org for more information.

VECAN 2022 Workshop Series

- GreenSavingSmart – An Overview of the New Statewide Financial & Energy Coaching Program. Wednesday, March 2nd, 12:00-1:30 p.m.
[Register Here.](#)
- The Results Are In! A Post-Survey Session for Energy Committees to Learn, Connect and Collaborate. Wednesday, March 16th, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
[Register Here.](#)
- Rewiring America Town Hall with Mayor Miro Weinberger and Burlington Electric Department. Wednesday, March 30th, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
Registration to come, [look here for updates.](#)

Find past Workshop Recordings [HERE.](#)