

# Natural Resources Committee

## DRAFT Minutes

*Oct 14, 2015*

---

**Committee Members:** Barrie Bailey, Diana Carter, Nick Causton, Colin Davis, Peter Grant, Stan Grzyb, Wendy Sue Harper (Chair), Arabella Holzpfel, Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

**Present:** Nick Causton, Wendy Sue Harper, Arabella Holzpfel, Ed Payne, Paul Wagner

**Staff:** Kevin Behm

**Guest:**

---

Wendy Sue opened the meeting at 6:00. The October 14th minutes were approved. (Nick motion, Paul 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Wendy Sue referred to the Agenda and began a discussion and review of the Draft Regional Plan Implementation section.

Members of the Committee thought that the priority actions in the Implementation Plan should directly reflect the Recommended Actions in each section of the Natural Resource element. In some cases, implementation priorities were drafted that paraphrased regional plan Recommended Actions and they were left intact, and in other cases implementation priorities were replaced with actual Recommended Actions from the regional plan. A citation was provided after the text to help the ReWrite Committee identify the action item.

The Committee felt that clearly linking the implementation priorities to the recommended actions would make the plan more readable and consistent. The revised Draft Implementation Plan is attached.

The Committee adjourned at 7:20.

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Purpose of this section is to describe in summary the work that ACRPC will do to implement the goals contained in each section of this Regional Plan. This section does not include all actions ACRPC will take. Instead it focuses on the priorities from each section identified in the plan and confirmed by ACRPC's committees, staff and workplans.

ACRPC constitutes a community development organization for the Region that, in conjunction with other state and local partners:

1. Creates policies and plans to guide and implement local and regional development and conservation goals.
2. Envisions and develops the community infrastructure necessary to promote and improve the region and its municipalities;
3. Identifies and supports conservation or sustainable use of regional or local natural resources; and
4. Participates in regional land use decision making processes (Act 250/Section 248) for projects with "significant regional impact" to promote the general good of the Region and its citizens.

Within this broad framework, ACRPC adopts the following implementation priorities for each of the planning areas this Plan addresses.

## **A. Population and Housing**

### **Population**

1. Track the demographic characteristics of the region's population;
2. Maintain historic demographic information for comparison to current trends;
3. Project future population change for each community in the region; and
4. Provide information to the region and its municipalities that in a manner that promotes planning for demographic changes.

### **Housing**

1. Work with municipalities to collect and disseminate housing-related information for the region. The Data Bank could track housing statistics like sales and permits, link to information on grants and educational opportunities, and provide current information on the availability of housing units, especially for low-income, elderly or special needs households;
2. Assist interested municipalities with developing ordinances for accessory apartments, zero-lot line developments, parking requirements, cluster subdivisions and density bonuses. If asked, the commission would review municipality's existing ordinances to help identify opportunities to improve their housing policies; and
3. Promote and help implement public investments in water, sewer and roads in the region's villages and downtown areas as part of the local planning process to improve opportunities for affordable housing.

## **B. Natural Resources**

### **Water Resources**

1. Work with the Agency of Natural Resources to educate the region's municipalities and citizens about the Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load ("TMDL") setting goals for phosphorus reduction within the Otter Creek Section of Lake Champlain;
2. Support the work of the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative to collect and disseminate information about water quality in Addison County;
3. Identify priority projects within each of the river sub-basins in the region that will improve water quality within the basin and Lake Champlain including:
  - Identify priority areas for green infrastructure to clean stormwater prior to it entering the regions rivers and lakes;
  - Work with VTrans and municipal road foremen to identify priority road projects to mitigate impacts on water quality; encourage proper maintenance and sizing of bridges, culverts and other structures to accommodate flow from storm events and to mitigate flood hazards. [NRC Water #10]
  - Assist municipalities to develop protection measures for their surface and groundwater resources through land use controls such as, stormwater management districts, flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas, shoreline and riparian buffers, and sourcewater protection areas; and
  - Work with Addison County's farm and forestry community to promote and implement "Required Agricultural Practices" ("RAPs") and "Best Management Practices" ("BMPs") for forestry.

### **Working Lands, Agricultural and Forestry Resources**

1. ~~Promote~~ Create regional and municipal plans and regulations that recognize the value of the Region's working landscape and seek to preserve that landscape and the right to raise and harvest agricultural and forest products for future generations;
2. Support the work of land ~~trusts~~ trusts and other voluntary conservation efforts in the Region;
3. Support Statewide tax incentives like the current use program to preserve large tracts of ~~usable commercial~~ agricultural and forest land;
4. ~~Support the creation of value added agriculture and forest products businesses within the Region; and~~
5. ~~Encourage strengthening and diversification of existing agricultural and forest enterprises, including agricultural and forestry support services.~~
6. Work with Addison County Economic Development Corporation and other partners to promote the economic viability and growth of agricultural and forestry in support of Vermont's working landscape. [NRC Agriculture #7]
7. Support efforts to manage invasive species. [NRC Forest #10]

### **Wildlife, Native Plants and Natural Communities**

1. Revise the Significant Regional Resources map within the regional plan identifying resources of regional significance;
2. Promote regional and municipal plans and regulations that recognize the value of wildlife, native plants and natural communities and seek to preserve each in viable population sizes within the Region and its municipalities;
3. Participate in land use applications (Act 250/Section 248) that impact regionally significant resources as identified in the Addison County Regional Plan;
4. ~~Support the conservation of important natural communities within the Region; and~~
5. Work to preserve large blocks of contiguous habitats, especially those that support east/west travel corridors.
6. Provide data and maps to help towns recognize and address significant plant, wildlife, and natural community habitat areas in town plans and other planning proceedings. [NRC Wildlife #2]
7. Assist municipalities in developing priority systems for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat areas, native plants and important natural communities. [NRC Wildlife #6]

### **Scenic Resources**

1. Support village and downtown designation efforts designed to provide financial incentives that support historic preservation and mixed uses, including affordable housing;
2. Use ACRPC's mapping resources and expertise to encourage communities to identify areas of high scenic value through an inclusive public process;
3. Ensure that new commercial scale telecommunication towers, wind energy towers, solar facilities and other commercial scale energy generation sites and transmission corridors conduct proper siting analyses designed to encompass the lifecycle of the infrastructure that address wildlife habitat, soil conditions and impacts on agricultural and forestry resources;
4. Encourage lighting plans and designers to address sky-glow and energy efficiency in all development proposals;
5. Encourage municipalities to consider the lighting guidelines set forth in "*Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities*" in their zoning bylaws.

### **Air Quality**

1. Promote transportation uses and policies that encourage public transportation and transportation alternatives that limit the combustion of fossil fuels;
2. ~~Support~~ Recommend the local adoption of energy codes and standards that promote energy conservation; and
3. ~~Support~~ Encourage citizen initiatives, like those of the Addison County Relocalization Network ("ACoRN") and municipal energy committees to educate, promote and implement energy conservation ~~initiates~~ initiatives and programs.
4. Consider the relative locations of jobs and households when reviewing development proposals in view of the transportation impact on air quality. Encourage mixed-use developments incorporating commercial and residential uses in village centers and downtowns. [NRC Air #7]

## **Mineral and Earth Resources**

1. Support the reasonable use and extraction of earth resources within the Region with conditions requiring proper site mitigation at closure and to mitigate operational impacts like noise and trucking.
2. Review town plans and zoning bylaws to insure the municipal intent regarding gravel extraction and mineral resources is clear and specific. [NRC Earth #3]
3. Develop a groundwater resource map layer to overlay on existing and proposed mineral resources and extraction sites. [NRC Earth #4]

## **C. Economy**

1. Continue to actively work with partner organizations like the Addison County Economic Development Corporation and the Addison County Chamber of Commerce to plan and implement economic development strategies for the region;
2. Seek funding to assist with the identification, remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Addison Region;
3. Assist communities seeking downtown or village center designations; and
4. Utilize ACRPC's mapping resources to promote and publicize the region's historic, cultural, artistic, recreational and natural resources and tourism-based businesses.

## **D. Transportation**

1. Maintain a strong Transportation Advisory Committee ("TAC") to provide local and regional prioritization of state-owned transportation infrastructure. Local and regional Priorities include implementing cost-effective system maintenance and improvements that promote system safety, preservation, and hazard mitigation;
2. Provide local and regional input into State transportation modal plans;
3. Work with local road foreman to help document, prioritize and implement municipal transportation priorities;
4. Collect data and conduct traffic studies to inform future planning and prioritization work;
5. Engage in project development planning for municipal and regional projects; and
6. Work as project managers for local transportation projects that promote transportation alternatives and safety, specifically for bicycles, pedestrians and public transportation.

## **E. Utilities Facilities and Services**

### **Water Supply, Wastewater and Solid Waste**

1. Work with the Region's small water supply and wastewater systems to develop long-term plans for capital budgeting for infrastructure;
2. Help interested municipalities create plans to develop and finance water, wastewater or stormwater infrastructure necessary to preserve and/or expand their village centers;
3. Provide and help create mapping resources for source groundwater protection; and
4. Work with and support the Addison County Solid Waste District to ensure all citizens have access to adequate waste disposal and recycling facilities.

## **Energy**

1. Create a framework for regional planning and review of generation and transmission projects, including solar, wind, biomass, gas, and electric; and
2. Continue to provide and support organizations that provide educational material that promotes energy efficiency and conservation.

## **Communications technology**

## **Health and Safety**

## **Education**

## **Historic Cultural and Municipal and Recreational facilities**

## **F. Future Land Use**

Implementation regional centers and villages:

1. Work with the Region's municipalities to structure their land use areas and relations implementing them to clearly define and articulate village areas surrounded by rural areas;
2. Encourage residential development primarily in community centers and villages;
3. Work with Addison County Economic Development Corporation to incent business to locate in downtowns and village centers;
4. Promote, plan for and construct public infrastructure like water and wastewater systems, sidewalks, bike lanes, stormwater, energy and communication systems that make locating in a regional center or village desirable; and
5. Support value added agricultural/wood products manufacturing in villages and downtowns to provide markets for products from the working landscape.

Implementation working lands and conservation areas:

1. Support the efforts of the Vermont Land Trust to conserve appropriately located agricultural and forestry lands;
2. Support the delineation boundary of the Green Mountain National Forest;
3. Work with the Region's municipalities to structure their land use areas and regulations implementing them to clearly define and articulate regulations protecting rural and conservation areas;
4. Promote Freedom to Farm policies within this plan and municipal plans in the Region;

5. Support taxation and other state policies that provide incentives to preserve working blocks of agricultural and forestry land; and
6. Work with Addison County Economic Development Corporation to encourage value added farm and forest product production in areas close to production.

## **G. Resiliency and Emergency Management**

1. Continue to work with DEMHS to plan for disasters in local communities and to serve as administrators facilitating information gathering during and after a disaster, both at the local level and at the statewide level in the EOC;
2. Work with municipalities and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (“LEPC”), number 8, to develop a regional network of emergency services offering mutual aid to one another;
3. Work with municipalities to develop local All Hazard Plans for each community to identify local potential hazards and Emergency Operation Plans (“EOPs”) to identify the people and resources available to respond in the case of an emergency; and
4. Work across planning disciplines to include transportation and natural resources planning in decisions regarding emergency management to increase the resiliency of systems and infrastructure.