

the Monthly Update

a newsletter of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission

November 2000

Downtown Reinvestment Fund

The legislature approved a "one-time" \$1 million appropriation for FY2001 to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) to be used for grants for physical improvements in designated downtowns. The funds will be made available in two separate rounds, with applications due in December 2000 and April 2001.

The first round will target rehabilitation of vacant or underutilized commercial and mixed use buildings, with only one application made from each designated downtown. The second round will fund the same type of activities, with the addition of public parking, pedestrian and streetscape projects. In the second round, downtowns can submit two applications, one for rehabilitation and the other for public improvement projects. No downtown may request more than a total of \$150,000 from this fund.

To be eligible for these and other downtown development funds, the project must be within a Downtown Development District as established under the Downtown Development Act. Districts are designated for three years at a time and application for designation can be made monthly to the Downtown Development Board.

For more information on designation or funding contact Vermont Downtown Program Coordinators Joss Besse (828-5212 – jbesse@dca.state.vt.us) or Jane Lendway (828-3042 – jlendway@dca.state.vt.us) or the ACRPC.

Assistance Available for Local Emergency Plans

ACRPC will be receiving an Emergency Management Partnership Grant starting October 1. Part of this grant will be used to help towns complete an emergency plan, which they are required under Vermont law to have in place.

A quick way to meet this requirement is to write a Rapid Response Plan. ACRPC staff will be writing these plans for towns over the next year to make sure that they have one of these simple, easy plans in place.

Please call Tim Bouton to schedule a meeting on

Meetings & Events

November

- 8 ACRPC Commission Meeting, Kirk Alumni Center, 7:30PM
- 11 Veterans Day
- 15 ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting, Painter House, Middlebury, 7:30PM
- 22 ACRPC Executive Committee Meeting, ACRPC Office, Middlebury, 7PM
- 23 Thanksgiving, Office closed
- 24 Office closed

December

- 14 ACRPC Commission Meeting, Location TBA, 7:30PM
- 21 ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting, Painter House, Middlebury, 7:30PM
- 25 Christmas, Office closed
- 27 ACRPC Executive Committee Meeting, ACRPC Office, Middlebury, 7PM

Staff Update

I am pleased to welcome two new staff members who joined the ACRPC in October; Garrett Dague as Transportation Planner and Brandy Saxton as a Planner/Grant Writer.

Garrett Dague previously worked for the New York State Department of Transportation and recently was an Associate Planner with Chenango County Planning Department in central New York. He has a B.A. in Environmental Science from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Plattsburgh and an M.A. in Urban and Regional Planning from SUNY Albany.

Brandy Saxton recently completed graduate degrees in Landscape Architecture and Public Administration from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and Syracuse University. She has focused on design and planning issues in rural communities.

I am confident that Garrett's engineering background and planning skills and Brandy's planning and design skills will substantially benefit the Commission and its member towns. Please come in and meet Brandy and Garrett or call so we can put their skills to work for you.

To receive this newsletter by email, send a request to bsaxton@sover.net.

Committee Appointments

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Staff: Garrett Dague

Chair: John Emerson

Dan Baker

Willem Jewett

Rick Good

Tom Yager

others as appointed by towns

Act 250 Committee

Staff: Adam Lougee/Kevin Behm

Chair: Fred Dunnington

Ellen Kurrelmeyer

David Smith

Thea Gaudette

Tom Yager

Kent Wright

Judith Kowalczyk

Local Government Committee

Staff: Kevin Behm/Adam Lougee

Chair: Thea Gaudette

Ed Payne

Joseph Kelley

Jon Albers

Jeff Dunham

Ed Hanson

Don Shall

Natural Resources Committee

Staff: Kevin Behm/Adam Lougee

Chair: David Raphael

Alan Karnatz

Harvey Smith

Tom Yager

Housing/Economic Development Committee

Staff: Brandy Saxton

Chair: *to be filled*

Bob Bernstein

David Smith

Bill Sayre

George Foster

Linda Stearns

David Raphael

Karl Neuse

Peter Grant

Jim Peabody

National Flood Insurance Program Update

Municipalities enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) need to be aware of a change in the program. For those municipalities participating in NFIP that allow buildings in the floodplains, a new elevation certificate is now required. Starting October 1, 2000 municipalities must use these certificates and may no longer simply accept letters from engineers.

The new certificates were designed based on comments received by surveyors, engineers, architects and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials.

The revised Elevation Certificate is now on the FEMA website. After accessing the FEMA website (www.fema.gov), go to the NFIP Site Index, select the Flood Insurance Library, then select Forms Room. The very first item in the Forms Room is the Elevation Certificate.

The new forms may also be ordered through Karl Jurentkuff, Vermont's flood insurance program coordinator (241-3759) or from ACRPC.

Report on Housing in Addison County

The National Low Income Housing Coalition recently released *Out of Reach*, a report on housing costs and affordability across the nation. Vermont is ranked as one of the least affordable states in the country, clearly showing that the state's good economy has left thousands of Vermonters behind.

Their findings indicate that in Addison County, fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit is \$598. Forty-eight percent of renters in Addison County are unable to afford a two-bedroom unit at that price.

The housing wage in Addison County is \$11.50. This is the amount a worker would have to earn per hour in order to be able to work 40 hours per week and afford a two-bedroom unit.

The study indicates that rising rents and a lack of decent, safe and affordable units are creating a housing

Town Policy on Roads, Bridges and Culverts

ACRPC and the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) are working with towns to adopt standards or policies on roads, bridges and culverts, including private driveway culverts. During floods, town highways can be significantly damaged, often as a result of undersized culverts and infrastructure designed for the traffic loads of the early 1900s.

Adopting standards and policies can assist communities in protecting infrastructure, avoiding costly repairs, preventing hazardous conditions and protecting water qual-

ity. The standards and policies will also make communities eligible for upgrades to inadequate infrastructure that fails as a result of a presidentially declared disaster. Under new regulations, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can only pay to replace the old infrastructure, not to upgrade it, unless a town has adopted standards specifying an upgrade policy for all infrastructure improvements.

For more information on how your town can create standards and policies, contact your local VTrans District