



REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

# ACRPC *update*

october 2005

## *commission calendar*

OCTOBER	7	Planning and Zoning Forum Location: Cortina Inn, Mendon Info: <a href="http://www.vpic.info">www.vpic.info</a>
	12	7:30 p.m. ACRPC Full Commission Meeting Location: Kirk Alumni, Middlebury Coll. Agenda: Regional Plan Hearing
	26	7:00 p.m. ACRPC Executive Board Meeting Location: ACRPC Office
	28	9:00 a.m. 2005 VT Planning Celebration Location: Capital Plaza Hotel, Montpelier Info: <a href="http://www.vermontplanners.org">http://www.vermontplanners.org</a>
NOVEMBER	9	7:30 p.m. ACRPC Full Commission Meeting Location: TBA
	16	7:00 p.m. ACRPC Transportation Advisory Comm. Location: TBA
	30	7:00 p.m. ACRPC Executive Board Meeting Location: ACRPC Office

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission will hold the second of two public hearings on October 12, at 7:30 p.m. at Middlebury College's Kirk Alumni Center on the proposed amendments to the Utilities, Facilities and Services section of the Regional Plan and the readoption of the entire plan.

The draft Utilities, Facilities and Services section is available online at [www.acrpc.org](http://www.acrpc.org) or from the ACRPC office.

Meetings are open to the public.

Minutes are available on-line at [www.acrpc.org](http://www.acrpc.org).

For further information, contact ACRPC at 388-3141.



### Ribbon Cutting for ACTR's New Bus Shelter

On September 28, Governor Douglas and other local officials cut the ribbon opening the newly installed Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) bus shelter. The shelter was created thanks to grants from the Vermont Department of Transportation and matching funds donated by the Middlebury Rotary.

The shelter looks great, matches the roofline of the newly restored town hall theatre across the street and should help to keep ACTR's patrons dry at its main stop on the Green in downtown Middlebury. Buses stop about once per hour on weekdays and Saturday. Bus schedules are available at signed bus stops throughout the service area and online at [www.actr-vt.org](http://www.actr-vt.org).

## Vergennes Route 22A Intersection Study

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission is currently sponsoring a Feasibility Study investigating alternatives that will help address traffic congestion and safety problems (vehicular and pedestrian) in the area around the intersection Route 22A - MacDonough Drive intersection in Vergennes. The study area is roughly bounded by Canal Street to the west, and it extends up into the middle of downtown.

Route 22A is a Designated Truck Route, and sees very heavy truck traffic. A recent analysis of the intersection determined that a signal is warranted; however, the steep grade approaching the intersection creates a problematic situation for trucks having to stop and start at a changing light.

A public meeting was held on September 22 at Bixby Library for the purpose of presenting information gathered to date and to hear any concerns or feedback that the local residents and businessmen might have.

Joe Segale of Resource Systems Group presented a brief description of the existing problems, as well as projected levels of service over the next 20 years. He also discussed some advantages and disadvantages of signalization. Visibility and safety issues resulting from current parking and access on South Water Street were of particular interest to the public attendees.

One of the primary problems with signalizing the intersection is the problem it poses for tractor-trailers stopped at a red light in the northbound lane. Joe said that there is technology out there that could help alleviate this problem should a signal prove to be the best solution to the problem. The goal of the study is to look at possible alternatives and come up with a "best" solution to the intersection problem.

For information regarding the presentation and concerning the project in general, visit the RSG website at: <http://www.rsginc.com/vergenes> or contact Richard Kehne at ACRPC, 388-3141.

## Cornwall Bike-Ped Study

At the request of the Town of Cornwall, ACRPC sponsored a feasibility study looking at potential bike/ped routes between Cornwall and Middlebury. Possible routes were identified and investigated for feasibility and cost.

The consultant, Erik Sandbloom, PC, is currently preparing the final report. It will discuss all of the alternatives, cost estimates for each segment, and it will recommend a preferred alternative. For more information, contact Rick Kehne at 388-3141.

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## Reinventing Easements

Jeff Pidot presented a report he wrote, which was published by the Lincoln Land Institute, at the recent NNECAPA (Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association) Annual Conference.

He stated that no recent happening in land conservation rivals the rapid deployment from coast to coast of conservation easements. Beyond tax and other public subsidies, a driving force fueling this phenomenon is the perception that conservation easements are a win-win strategy in land protection, by which willing landowners work with private land trusts or government agencies to provide lasting protection of the landscape. Conservation easements are welcomed as achieving land conservation goals without regulation, without adversity, and often, it is thought, without government.

In *Reinventing Conservation Easements: A Critical Examination and Ideas for Reform*, Jeff Pidot asks: Are the increasing numbers of unsupervised land trusts and conservation easements throughout the nation good for our (and their) future? What kinds of reforms should be considered to create a greater level of confidence in this popular conservation instrument?

This policy focus report is one in a series of Lincoln Institute publications that addresses timely public policy issues relating to land use, land markets, and property taxation.

While this report advances the view that such reforms are needed, it is intended to stimulate critical thinking and provide an array of perspectives rather than to dictate particular solutions. The underlying premise is that conservation easements should be evaluated and governed in the context of conservation-easement time, which is not the present but the long-term future. Otherwise, we may simply leave to future generations a legal chaos involving many thousands of conservation easements whose terms, holders, and locations may be difficult to determine, and whose public benefits ultimately could be lost.

Copies of this report are available at the ACRPC office or they may be ordered on at [www.lincollnst.edu](http://www.lincollnst.edu).

## Secretary Terrill to Attend November TAC Meeting

The Secretary of Transportation, Dawn Terrill, will be coming to the November TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) meeting to speak about the newly adopted Federal Transportation Bill, SAFETEA. She will be discussing its impact on transportation funding as it affects Vermont and she will be fielding any questions that our TAC members may have.

The meeting will be held on November 16 and the general public is invited and encouraged to participate. The meeting location will be announced in November's newsletter. If you are interested in attending, contact Rick Kehne at 388-3141, or e-mail him at [rkehne@sover.net](mailto:rkehne@sover.net).