

# ACRPC

*update* October 2015

## Vergennes Experiments with Walk/Bike Demonstration Project

Under their Strong Communities, Better Connections grant, the City of Vergennes had two public events on September 25th and 26th as part of their Downtown-Basin Master Plan project. The consulting firm, Toole Design Group, along with the Vergennes Mayor, Bill Benton, and members of the project's steering committee led walking tours and a bike/walk demonstration project. The latter involved temporary chalk spray paint, bike lane stencils and lots of orange cones. Five foot bike lanes and pedestrian bump-outs were dimensioned and marked out. The event went

smoothly and all involved were surprised at just how much room there was to incorporate improved walk/bike connections. For more information on this project, please visit: [www.vergennes.org](http://www.vergennes.org)



## Commission Calendar

October 2015

14	6:00pm	Nat'l Resources Committee Meeting
	6:15pm	Plan Rewrite Committee Meeting
	7:30pm	Full Commission Meeting
15	7:00pm	ACSWMD Meeting
21	7:00pm	TAC Meeting
28	5:00pm	LEPC Meeting (State Police Barracks - New Haven)
	6:30pm	Executive Board Meeting
Nov. 5	4:30pm	Act 250/248 Committee Meeting

Meetings are held at ACRPC, 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, and are open to the public.

## Public Service Dept. Releases Public Review Draft of Comprehensive Energy Plan, Seeks Public Input

The Public Service Department (PSD) has released the Public Review Draft of the 2015 Comprehensive Energy Plan and will be holding a series of five public hearings around the state in October to seek reaction and comments on its draft Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan. In addition, comments are welcome in writing via the comment form at the CEP project website, <http://energyplan.vt.gov> until November 9, 2015. In particular, the PSD is interested in hearing from the public about what they've gotten right, what they've gotten wrong, and what's missing from the draft plan.

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# Grants, Events & Workshops

This draft 2015 CEP reaffirms and expands upon the ambitious long-term goal of obtaining 90% of the state's total energy needs from renewable sources by mid-century. When combined with the statutory goal of 25% renewable by 2025 (10 V.S.A. § 580(a)), this draft CEP proposes the following set of goals:

- Reduce total energy consumption per capita by 15% by 2025, and by more than one third by 2050
- Meet 25% of the remaining energy need from renewable sources by 2025, 40% by 2035, and 90% by 2050.
- Three end-use sector goals for 2025: 10% renewable transportation; 30% renewable buildings; and 67% renewable electric power.

The plan also emphasizes the importance of efficiency and conservation. The focus on strategic electrification reinforces the shift toward distributed energy resources that support our grid, increase resilience, and lower infrastructure costs.

The draft CEP builds on the state's accomplishments since the previous plan was completed in 2011. Some of those accomplishments include:

- passage of Act 56 establishing a Renewable Energy Standard;
- the Thermal Efficiency Task Force and two Clean Energy Finance Summits;
- updated building energy codes and a Vermont residential building energy label;
- pilots of new financing programs including the Heat Saver Loan;
- signing of the multi-state Zero Emission Vehicle memorandum of understanding;
- expansion of the Standard Offer program while lowering the cost of new contracts by more than 60%;
- expansion of net metering to 15% of peak load and an ongoing process to design a sustainable net metering program; and
- expansion of solar net metering and standard offer projects in the ground by 10× since 2011.

Meanwhile, electric rates in Vermont have increased only 4.2% since 2011, which is slower than overall

inflation, while New England average rates rose 11.9% and U.S. average rates have increased 5.7%.

The public hearings will run from 6-8 pm and light refreshments will be served. Dates and locations for the hearings are:

- Oct. 7: Lyndonville (Lyndon State College, Moore Community Room)
- Oct. 13: Essex Junction (Essex High School, cafeteria)
- Oct. 21: Montpelier (Vermont College of Fine Arts, Noble Hall)
- Oct. 26: Westminster (Bellows Falls Union High School, auditorium)
- Oct. 29: Rutland (Rutland Regional Hospital, Community Health Education Center)

The hearings are hosted by the Vermont Department of Public Service, in partnership with the local regional planning commission. For more information on the CEP, for more detailed directions to the public hearing locations, or to comment on the draft plan, visit: <http://energyplan.vt.gov>.

## **Seminar Invitation – Thriving Communities: Building a Vibrant, Inclusive Vermont**

This seminar will offer usable perspectives on providing housing choices, transportation options, and employment opportunities for a range of people at different levels of income; and on building economically vibrant, inclusive communities in Vermont.

Thriving communities welcome a mix of people, regardless of race or ethnicity, and they embrace diversity. These communities include younger and older people, people with different abilities and people with children, families with rising incomes and families on fixed incomes. They promote a mix of land uses and building types, creating opportunities for economic growth, essential services, stable businesses, agriculture, and tourism.

The seminar is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the statewide Thriving Communities campaign. They hope to engage both policymakers and

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interested citizens in this discussion concerning the future potential of your towns and neighborhoods.

Presenters include:

- Ted Wimpey (moderator): Brief Introduction – Inclusiveness=Building Economically Thriving Communities
- Julie Campoli: Density Done Well
- John Emmeus Davis: Diversity Done Well – Promoting Housing Choice

Dates and Locations for seminars are:

- Tuesday, October 13, 6:30-8:00pm: Ilsley Public Library, 75 Main Street, Middlebury
- Thursday, October 15, 6:30-8:00pm: Norwich Public Library, 368 Main Street, Norwich
- Monday, November 30, 4:00-5:30pm: NVDA, 36 Eastern Ave, St. Johnsbury

For more information, visit: <http://www.thrivingcommunitiesvt.org/>

## **Last Call: Transportation Alternatives Program Grants - Applications Due October 16!**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation is pleased to announce that they are now accepting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). This year, roughly 50% of the TAP funding is reserved for Environmental Mitigation projects relating to stormwater and highways.

The Program provides funding for the following eligible activities:

(A) Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation;

(B) Construction, planning, and design of projects that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.

(C) Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.

(D) Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.

(E) Community improvement activities, including rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities, vegetation management practices to improve road safety, control invasive species, and provide erosion control, and certain archaeological activities.

(F) Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and abatement activities and mitigation to address stormwater management related to highway construction or runoff; and reducing vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or restoration and maintenance of connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

(G) The Safe Routes to School Program.

If you have questions or your town is interested in applying for TAP grant funding, please contact ACRPC Transportation Planner Josh Donabedian for

assistance with your application: [jdonabed@acrpc.org](mailto:jdonabed@acrpc.org), 802-388-3141

For more information or to download an application, visit: <http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/bureaus/mab/local-projects/transportation-alternatives>

All grant applications are due in hand or by email by 1:00pm on Friday, October 16, 2015 to: [Scott.Robertson@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Robertson@vermont.gov)

## **2015 Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference: October 19-21 at Jay Peak Resort**

The 2015 Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference will be held on October 19-21 at the Hotel Jay Conference Center at Jay Peak Resort.

The goal of the conference is to provide participants with best practices, lessons learned, practical application of concepts, innovative technology practice, and to advance partnerships in emergency response among communities and the state. The conference is sponsored by the Vermont Department of Public Safety's Divisions of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and Fire Safety and draws emergency management professionals from across Vermont to attend educational sessions, hands-on workshops, and two

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full days of conference presentations, keynotes, and plenary sessions.

There is no cost for the conference. For more information, visit: [http://vem.vermont.gov/home/prep\\_conferences/](http://vem.vermont.gov/home/prep_conferences/)

Questions about the conference can be directed to Richard Cogliano at [richard.cogliano@vermont.gov](mailto:richard.cogliano@vermont.gov) or 802-241-5097.

For registration assistance, contact JoAnne Huie at [joanneh@allclearmg.com](mailto:joanneh@allclearmg.com) or 336-802-1800.

## **Working Lands Enterprise Board Announces Upcoming Grant Availability**

The Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) is pleased to announce the availability of over \$500,000 in grant funds for the 2016 program year. The application period opened on October 1, 2016, with grants targeting essential, catalytic investments in Vermont's farm and forest economy. Grants will be available to Vermont agriculture and forest sector businesses, as well as service providers that provide the critical technical assistance needed for business growth.

The two investment areas are as follows:

### *1. Business Investments*

Projects may include, but are not limited to: Infrastructure (project-specific planning, permitting, and/or engineering/architectural plans; and/or building and equipment costs); Marketing (accessing new markets and securing new customers); Research and Development (testing new systems or technologies or developing innovative solutions). Projects focused on scaling up to meet new market opportunities are encouraged. Working capital is an eligible use of funds.

### *2. Service Provider Investments*

Projects should show direct impacts on Vermont Working Lands businesses. Types of technical assistance provided may include: Scaling up; Market development, marketing plans, and sales; Business and financial planning; Succession plan-

ning; Access to capital; Manufacturing efficiencies or process flow.

The Working Lands funds are administered by the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB), an impact investment organization whose mission is to grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy, from individual enterprises to industry sectors. The WLEB began operations in August 2012 and to date has awarded over \$3 million in grant funds to 110 grantees, leveraging an additional \$4.3 million of matching and outside funds. The WLEB looks forward to continuing this impressive track record in Fiscal Year 2016.

An Applicant Information Sessions is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14th and will be held as a webinar. Letters of intent are due Friday, December 4th.

For more information, visit <http://workinglands.vermont.gov/>, or contact Noelle Sevoian, Working Lands Specialist, at [Working.Lands@vermont.gov](mailto:Working.Lands@vermont.gov) or 802-585-9072.

## **Downtown and Village Center Tool Kit**

Vermont's downtowns and village centers define Vermont's identity and brand and play a key role in our economy. These centers have been the heart and soul of Vermont for generations. The state targets incentives and aligns its policies and programs to both revitalize and attract new development to designated downtowns and village centers. This new publication describes strategies and examples of actions that can be taken to support and enhance these special places.

For more information about the design toolkit or downtown/village center design please visit: [http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities) or Contact Richard Amore with any questions at [richard.amore@vermont.gov](mailto:richard.amore@vermont.gov) or 802-828-5229.