

Addison County
Regional Planning Commission



ACRPC's Monthly Newsletter

February 2024



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ACRPC UPDATE

Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Update for Addison County Region

In total, over 600 buildings applied for free MERP Assessments. Addison Region towns have been approved for 47 building assessments to date, equaling about 10% of the State's approved assessments.

While a majority of Addison Region buildings are still waiting for assessments, BGS does have cost estimates based on progress across the State. Of the 47 assessments granted, 8 buildings have or will receive Level 1 assessments at an average cost of about \$3800. The remaining 39 buildings are granted

Level 2 assessments at an average cost of almost \$8,000.

In sum, the Addison County communities have received an estimated value of \$330,000 in free assessments.

These assessments qualify buildings for application to the \$500,000 MERP Implementation funds to complete the recommended energy retrofit projects. This program does not require matching funds and can be used as a match for other programs. Up to 20% of the granted implementation funds can be allocated to ADA accessibility projects in the building.

Finally, 16 of our 21 towns have applied for and received MERP Community Capacity grants of \$4000 for energy outreach and education. Applications for these \$4000 grants will remain open through 2024.

Contact Maddi Shropshire (mshropshire@acrpc.org) for support.



Otter Creek Basin Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) Update

ACRPC serves as the Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) for the Otter Creek Basin, an area that encompasses 936 square miles! The CWSP has been assigned a target phosphorus reduction allocation of 83 kg per each Formula Grant from DEC.

So far we've released three funding calls for proposals, and received 19 applications. Of these applications ten were for implementation projects, four were for design, three were for project identification and assessment, and two were for project development.

The Otter Creek CWSP is on track to meet the phosphorus reduction targets set forth in the initial Formula Grant. Implementation projects include five riparian plantings, a forestry project, a lakeshore restoration project, erosion control on a private road, and a dam removal. Collectively, these projects are anticipated to yield over 100 kg/yr of phosphorus removal, with just two projects accounting for more than 70% of that total.

After three rounds of funding we are developing a clearer picture of the world of potential projects, potential partners, and the scale of benefits possible.

If you want to learn more, or have a project in mind, don't hesitate to contact [Deron Rixon](#) or check out our [CWSP Webpage](#).

Congratulations to 5 Addison County Towns Awarded Urban & Community Forestry Grants!

The Vermont Urban and Community Forest Program (VT UCF) recently announced the recipients of their 2024 grant season. In total, twenty-eight recipients will receive over \$710,000 in grant funding to support a wide variety of urban and community forestry stewardship projects across the state.

The towns of **Ferrisburgh** and **Panton** are 2 of 9 Vermont communities to receive funding through the VT UCF Communities Caring for Canopies program. This is VT UCF's traditional annual grant program and provides funding for a variety of activities to strategically move a local tree program forward.

Bristol, **Middlebury**, and **Vergennes** have all received Urban and Community Forestry grants. These grants are funded through an unprecedented one-time allocation from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, this category will support work to increase and maintain a healthy urban canopy and access to nature.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



February TAC Meeting Looks at Middlebury Area Projects

On **February 21st at 6:30pm** the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission will meet and hear from VTrans Project Manager Taylor Sisson. Taylor oversees a number of impending projects in the Addison County area including the Exchange St. roundabout, scope refinement for US7/Monroe/Charles Ave intersections in Middlebury, and a VT125 Safety Improvement Scoping Project in Cornwall and Middlebury.

TAC meetings are open to the public, and participation may be either virtual, via Google Meet, or in person at the ACRPC office.

[Join Virtually](#)



2024 Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets Listening Session

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, alongside many statewide partners, invite those involved with agriculture in Vermont to participate in our 2024 listening sessions.

The listening sessions are an opportunity for producers, processors, distributors, and service-providers to give feedback on topics such as the impacts of severe weather, grants and programming, industry needs, and more.

These sessions are a continuation of listening sessions that began in 2023 – two in-person for Windsor, Chittenden and Washington counties, one hybrid for Orleans and Essex counties, and one virtual statewide session. In each session legislators, Agency employees, producers, and service providers came together to discuss important topics including farmer and farmworker housing, disaster relief needs, and climate resiliency and planning.

ADDISON COUNTY SESSION:

On **February 13th** at the **Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society** from **5pm to 7pm**.

**Child care services will be provided by ACORN during this event*

[Learn More](#)

GRANT & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Community

Better Places Grants

Is your community thinking about expanding parks and green spaces, enhancing a lively main street, initiating public art projects, or establishing community gardens? If yes, consider applying for a Better Places Grant, supported by the VT Department of Housing & Community Development, VT Department of Health, and VT Community Foundation. This statewide

Energy

Charge Vermont DC Fast Charger Funding

The state-funded, Green Mountain Power administered, Charge Vermont program has announced the launch of their DC fast charging competitive application process.

This program offers funding up to \$160,000 per location and pre-applications are due **February 29th**

grant program welcomes project submissions on a **rolling basis**.

[Learn More](#)

AARP Vermont Accepting 2024 Community Challenge Grant Applications

AARP Vermont invites local eligible non-profit organizations and governments to apply for the 2024 AARP Community Challenge grant program. These grants fund quick-action projects that help communities become more livable in the long-term by improving public spaces, transportation, housing, digital connections, and more. Applications are due by **March 6th** and projects must be completed by **December 15th 2024**.

[Learn More](#)

[Apply Here](#)

2024.

The program is open to customers of all electric utilities in Vermont but funding is limited so don't wait!

[Learn More](#)

Electrify Your Fleet Program

The VTrans has launched their Electrify Your Fleet program, offering organizations the opportunity to apply for up to twenty \$2,500 incentives. The Electrify Your Fleet program aims to transition from fossil-fueled transportation, addressing carbon emissions and promoting cleaner options. Priority is given to historically underserved communities. Eligible vehicles include electric, hybrid, bicycles, motorcycles, and snowmobiles. Participants must hold the vehicles for 24 months and demonstrate emission reduction. Learn more here and apply here!

Due: Jun 2024

[Learn More](#)

Emergency Management

Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF)

This is a voluntary program that will prioritize projects in communities and/or for homeowners with greatest economic need and projects that mitigate repetitive loss among low-income and marginalized portions of the population. **Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis.** Priority will be given to buyout projects following the July 2023 flooding in Vermont.

[Learn More](#)

Assistance to Firefighter (AFG) Grants

The AFG Program provides financial assistance directly to eligible fire departments, nonaffiliated emergency medical service (EMS) organizations, and State Fire Training Academies (SFTAs) for critical training and equipment.

The following equipment items for Fire Department and Regional Fire Department applicants are a High Priority:

- Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s)

- Basic Hand Tools (Structural/Wildland)
- Hose (Attack/Supply)
- Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) Monitoring Equipment
- IDLH Protection for Investigators (This is single-use respiratory protection)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Washer/Extractor/Dryer (Turnout)
- Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Pack/Cylinder
- Thermal Imaging Camera (Must be NFPA 1801 compliant)
- Portable Radios (must be P-25 compliant)
- Vehicle Mounted Exhaust Systems
- Skid Unit
- Air Compressor/Fill Station/Cascade (fixed or mobile)

The grants can also cover replacement of damaged/unsafe/unrepairable PPE including Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) regardless of age. Micro grants are now up to \$75,000 and have the best/better chance to be approved.

Contact ACRPC's Emergency Management Planner, [Andrew L'Roe](#) for application assistance.

[Learn More](#)

Questions about Updating Your Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) form the foundation for a municipality's long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, restoration, and repeated damage. Having an approved and current LHMP is often the final step for gaining a 12.5% state ERAF reimbursement rate (in addition to 75% of cost reimbursement from FEMA) as well as qualifying for many VEM and FEMA-funded hazard mitigation grants.

The state of Vermont annually applies for funding from the FEMA BRIC program and reaches out to Municipalities with soon-to-expire LHMP's. If the Municipality accepts the funding (it requires a 25% match of cash or time), they can hire a consultant that facilitates the creation or update of the LHMP and submits it to the state and FEMA for approval. LHMP's are valid for 5-years after FEMA approval.

[Learn More](#)

Transportation

Better Connections Program

The Better Connections program provides technical assistance and funds to local communities to help them achieve their goals and plan for growth. The program funds planning efforts to increase multi-modal transportation options and to improve land use, water quality, public health, and economic vitality in Vermont communities. The interagency program provides targeted municipal assistance to:

- Help communities identify and

Natural Resources

The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Appalachians Grant Program

The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Resilient and Connected Appalachians Grant Program (RCA) offers funding opportunities for non-profit organizations, municipalities, and other partners to engage in conservation efforts in the Appalachians—a center of climate resilience and a critical migration corridor for wildlife. The RCA offers grants of up to **\$50,000** to support projects that result

- prioritize their goals and projects;
- Develop an action-oriented plan to achieve the goals and move projects directly to implementation; and
- Link the communities to a growing network of public and philanthropic partners to help them implement their priority projects.

Applications Due: Feb 17, 2024

[Learn More](#)

in the permanent protection of Resilient and Connected lands in focal landscapes.

The Nature Conservancy invites applications for projects that result in fee or easement acquisitions of Resilient and Connected lands within focal landscapes. If the project is outside of these eligible areas, but has outstanding conservation, climate adaptation and/or community benefits please contact CCCFund@tnc.org to discuss.

Due: February 24, 2024

[Learn More](#)

Want to get in touch or
ask us a question?

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