

ACRPC Monthly Newsletter July 2025



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Presentation of Updated Regional Energy Plan

A draft of the new regional energy plan for the Addison County Region will be presented at the ACRPC's Full Commission meeting on July 9th. Key highlights from the new plan include updated energy planning goals for the region such as addressing energy justice and cost burden, preventing and preparing for climate change through energy planning, and enhancing regional energy security through demand reduction and increased domestic generation and storage.

The new plan also includes updates on changes in energy consumption and generation in the region, energy targets for the years 2035 and 2050, and recommendations from the regional energy committee on how to meet those targets. It includes maps that illustrate opportunities for and constraints on future energy development in the Region. Finally, as a part of a new State-level initiative to incorporate the conservation of forest blocks into energy planning, analysis was conducted to examine whether the Region could meet its required renewable energy generation targets without disturbing forest blocks. We are pleased to report that the region possesses sufficient land area in prime siting locations for wind and solar projects to meet our generation goals without substantially disturbing forest blocks.

If you have any questions regarding the new Regional Energy Plan, then they may reach out to the RPC's energy planner, Jolyon Larson, at jl Larson@acrpc.org for comment.

July Full Regional Planning Commission Meeting

The upcoming ACRPC Full Commission meeting is

Wednesday, July 9
at 7:00pm

Please make sure your municipality has (re)Appointed your RPC Delegates and Alternates for the 2025-2026 term starting July 1st!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Act 181 & Future Land Use Planning



ACRPC staff have met with nearly all municipalities in the region and are wrapping up a draft of the regional Future Land Use map. Throughout the summer ACRPC will continue meeting with communities and doing outreach. We appreciate all of your work to provide feedback and refine the maps to help guide future growth and development in Addison County!



If you represent a group or contingency interested in future land use planning and the work of the regional planning commission and would like a presentation on the proposed changes under Act 181, please reach out to Danelle Birong (dbirong@acrpc.org) and we will schedule a time to meet with you. Please also look for our displays at the Middlebury, Bristol and Vergennes Farmer's Markets.



Visit our Act 181
Website

New Grant Awarded for Municipal Energy Planning in the Region

The City of Vergennes was recently awarded funding to undertake a new and exciting energy planning project in our region. Titled "Enhanced Energy Planning for Addison County Municipalities," the funding that Vergennes received will support the development of a new enhanced energy plan for the City as well as new plans for the municipalities of Bristol, Ferrisburgh, Middlebury, New Haven, and Ripton. Envisioned as an opportunity for collaborative, intra-regional energy planning, the project is a unique opportunity for the participant municipalities to revisit the energy goals, priorities, and preferences of their communities, together, to conduct co-learning with one another, and to, ideally, develop municipal enhanced energy plans that are both distinct from and cohesive with one another.

Several community outreach events will be planned for each participating

municipality, and these events will be crucial for obtaining additional local perspectives on what should and should not be included in these plans.

If you would like to participate in one of these meetings, know of someone who should be included as a participant, or have any other questions regarding this project, then please reach out to the ACRPC energy planner, Jolyon Larson, at jl Larson@acrpc.org.

Updated Zoning Administrator's Handbook

Zoning is the most common land use tool in Vermont. Based on a town plan, zoning encourages the appropriate development of land in ways that the voters and local officials have approved.

The Zoning Administrator's **handbook** provides an understanding of some basic principles of zoning administration and enforcement and their application to a wide range of problems likely to be encountered.

A new edition of the Zoning Administrators Handbook was updated with the assistance of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission with funding from the VT Department of Housing and Community Development.

2025 Zoning Administrator
Handbook

Vermont's Open Meeting law changes

Transparency is an essential element of open and democratic government. In Vermont, one of the primary means of providing transparency are the State's open meeting law,

The Vermont Legislature made permanent changes to the Open Meeting Law In Act 133 (2024) and Act 51 (2025). On June 9, 2025 several changes took effect:

- Require the posting of meeting recordings when the minutes are posted, as opposed to when the minutes are approved
- Change the definition of "undue hardship"
- Add an exception to the law's recording requirements for non-advisory public bodies' site inspections or field visits
- Allow meeting notices to be posted in a neighboring town if there are not enough public places within the municipality's borders
- Require meeting agendas to include sufficient details on the specific business to be discussed and details on proposed executive session, if included
- Add a requirement to vote to exit executive session (not just enter it)
- Add two allowances for executive session (one being cybersecurity if jeopardizing public safety)
- Defines "disturbs any lawful assembly or meeting of persons" for purposes of managing meetings, consistently with our past guidance.

For more information, please see the VLCT website.

VLCT Open Meeting Law Update Information

Vermont Evaluation of Rural Technical Assistance (VERTA)

Vermont's rural communities face growing challenges, including aging infrastructure, complex regulations, limited municipal capacity, and economic decline. While technical assistance (TA) providers exist, rural towns struggle to access the support they need.

In alignment with Act 181, Section 67, the VERTA project, led by UVM's Center for Rural Studies and in partnership with the State of Vermont's Department of Housing and Community Development through the support of UVM's Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships, is evaluating Vermont's current municipal technical assistance system and developing recommendations to improve its effectiveness and accessibility.

In a few weeks, ACRPC will be hosting a focus group with members from municipalities that are knowledgeable about and experienced with the technical assistance for community and economic development. This broad term is inclusive of assistance (funding, human, and knowledge resources) for such items as public infrastructure (wastewater, sidewalks, roads, etc.), housing development, climate resilience and disaster preparedness, historic preservation, disaster recovery, workforce and economic development, and more.

We are in the process of gathering key community members for this focus group so that we can schedule meetings in **early August**. If you would like to participate, please reach out to Danelle Birong (dbirong@acrpc.org).

Your voice is essential to ensuring the recommendations reflect real Addison County community needs!

[VERTA Website](#)



How do you Moosalamoo?

ACRPC is gathering information on the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area in the Green Mountain National Forest, located in Ripton, Goshen, Salisbury, and Leicester. The area contains:

- 16,000 acres of pristine National Forest land
- 70+ miles of trails
- Multiple campgrounds with picnic and day use areas
- Opportunities for hiking, biking, boating, fishing, nordic skiing, horse-back riding
- Beautiful lakes, overlooks, forests and more!

Complete our survey about the Moosalamoo National Recreation area:

<https://tinyurl.com/MoosalamooNRA>

for a chance to win a \$50 gift card to Blueberry Hill Inn and Outdoor Center or a \$20 gift card to another local business!

No knowledge of the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area is required to complete and participate!

Vermont Municipal Officials and Staff Lake Champlain Boat Trip 2025

Tuesday, July 15th, 2025, from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM.

Meet for departure by 12:45 PM at the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Lab (3 College Street, Burlington, VT).

Lake Champlain Sea Grant at the University of Vermont invite **Vermont municipal officials and staff** aboard the University of Vermont research and education vessel, the R/V Marcelle Melosira for an educational boat trip. This includes, but not limited to, town managers and members of municipal governing boards (e.g., department heads, planning, zoning, and conservation boards). Municipal officials will see the region from a different angle and learn about flood resiliency and water quality impacts on Lake Champlain.

Pre-registration is required for this event.

[Register Online Here](#)

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

ACRPC is finalizing several Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) for Addison County municipalities

Several municipalities are finishing plan drafts to submit to FEMA this month and request public feedback:

- **Town of Salisbury**
- **Town of Bridport**

Those draft plans, and other recent plans from Addison County are posted

on the ACRPC website.
If you have comments or questions,
please reach out to Andrew L'Roe,
alroe@acrpc.org



ACRPC Hazard Mitigation Plan
Website

GRANT & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2025 Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program

VTrans has released a call for proposals for grants to fund bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program goal is to provide safe and convenient facilities for those Vermonters who desire alternative transportation opportunities. Funding is available for large and small scale construction and for scoping studies.

Applications are due July 11th

Bicycle & Pedestrian Grant
Information

2026 Mobility and Transportation Innovation (MTI) Grant Program

The MTI program is designed to support innovative strategies and projects that improve mobility and access to services for transit-dependent Vermonters, reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These grant funds will specifically support the expansion of travel demand management projects that encourage less carbon-intensive means of travel.

Funds Can Be Used For:

- Match funds for other TDM grant awards

- TDM program delivery costs
- Microtransit Planning and Implementation
- Capital and operational expenses

Grant applications are open to municipalities, local or regional planning agencies, transit agencies, school districts or schools, non-profit organizations, and citizen groups focused on providing public transportation resources.



Applications due 4:30pm Monday September 22nd, 2025

Grants applicants will be notified of project selections in October 2025

[MTI Grant Website](#)

Transportation Planning Grants

Do you have a transportation or traffic-related problem affecting your community? The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) is requesting a list of transportation planning studies to fund in Addison County. (Note: these funds cannot be used for construction projects.) The TAC will evaluate all requests at their regularly scheduled August meeting. Projects will be funded through the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI).

The TPI is designed to foster greater involvement in the transportation planning process by local citizens and officials. Each year, the ACRPC sets aside a portion of the annual TPI funding received to hire consultants to perform various transportation studies in the county on behalf of our member municipalities, a consortium of municipalities, or a regional organization. Grant awards are contingent on ACRPC receiving funding from VTrans. Submit requests for funding to your TAC delegate or to ACRPC by **Tuesday August 12, 2025**

Examples of transportation planning studies include:

- Intersection studies
- Road realignment studies
- Feasibility assessment for sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure
- Conceptual design for new infrastructure
- Asset management plans
- Infrastructure siting assessments

If you have questions about whether your project would be eligible, please reach out to Mike Winslow (mwinslow@acrpc.org; 802-578-9999) to discuss

Park and Ride Facilities

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) is soliciting proposals for the improvements of small Park and Ride Facilities in Vermont communities. Vermont Legislature has provided funding to support the encouragement of local communities to develop small municipally owned and maintained Park and Ride Facilities. The 2026 Municipal Park and Ride Grant Program has been funded with \$150,000.00. These facilities will assist in the effort of reducing the number of single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) on the roadway, which in turn helps to reduce vehicle pollutants and traffic congestion.

The proposed facility must be located on Municipal, State, or leased property on or near a State Highway, available to commuters daily year-round, provide parking for a minimum of ten vehicles, and will be owned and maintained by the local municipality. The grant funding is available for engineering and construction activities only. Maintenance of existing lots is not an eligible activity under this program. If public transit is present nearby, collaboration with the provider is strongly encouraged. In order to maximize available funding, awarded grants will require a local share of 20%. Please note that grant awards are made in two payments; the first half of the grant award will be available after construction of the project has begun and invoices total at least half of the grant award, with the second half paid after the project is completed and accepted.

If your community has an interest in developing a Park and Ride Facility and would like to receive a grant to do so, please fill out the application online at the address below and submit it electronically prior to **August 26, 2025**. Communities that were unsuccessful in the past are encouraged to reapply. Developed plans are not necessary. A scoring process is used to determine which towns will receive funding. Additional grant and development information will be provided to interested communities who have submitted applications. You can find the application and information online at the following website:

Park and Ride Information



Village Trust Initiative (VTI), second application round

Your village is an essential part of both your community, Vermont's identity, and its future. The Village Trust Initiative is a new program offering expertise and funding to help 20 small towns create or bolster a local community trust organization and take on a transformational revitalization project in the village. These projects could be the revitalization of a general store, the creation of a community center, improvement of accessibility of an old town hall, or renovation of a large historic home into village-scale housing. There are many possibilities, so bring your creativity and vision to the table!

The Village Trust Initiative is offered by the Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV) in partnership with the **Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)** and

the **Vermont Community Foundation (VCF)**. They'll be holding a Zoom webinar on June 9th at noon with information about the program and application process

Applications for the 2025 Village Trust Initiative Community Cohort will open July 7th and are due **September 5th at 5pm**. To learn more and apply, visit: ptvermont.org/village-trust-initiative or contact Kaziah Haviland at kaziah@vtrural.org.

Village Trust Initiative
Website

Community Tree Fund

These grants support modest yet impactful initiatives that contribute to the health and vitality of Vermont's urban and community forests. The Community Tree Fund is a collaborative effort between the **Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO)** and the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program (VT UCF).

Eligible Projects

- Small scale tree planting projects in Vermont, typically 1-10 trees (depending on type of tree stock)
- Tree planting location must be identified in application.
- Preference will be given to projects planted on public land. Projects on private land are allowed if there is a demonstrated public benefit.
- Projects may address a specific need, such as increasing shade, improving air quality, beautifying spaces, or fostering community engagement.
- Municipalities, non-profits, and volunteer led groups may apply.

Proposed project must cost less than \$2,000. The fund will support:

- Tree purchase and delivery.
- Tree irrigation supplies (mulch, watering devices, etc.).

Selected projects will not receive direct payment. VELCO and VT UCF staff will purchase tree(s) and facilitate delivery. Excluded expenses include: payment of services to individuals or organizations for planting, mileage, or time.

Community Tree Fund VT U&CF
Webpage

Opportunities



Build a Better Project
Training Series



Addison County
Town Clerks & Offices

Would your office benefit from

Dates and topics:

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 –
Developing Project Schedules

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 –
Building a Budget

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 –
Recovering from Setbacks

[VLCT info & registration](#)

having access to a large-format scanner to digitize new land use maps and other large items for your municipality?

The ACRPC is considering ways we might provide **shared resources and shared costs.**

If you are interested potential use of a scanner and/or can think of other shared resources that would support your municipal office, we want to hear from you!

Please email Rebecca at relder@acrpc.org with your interest and ideas.

Want to get in touch or ask us a question?

[Send Us A Message](#)

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All programs of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission are ADA accessible.

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