Community Infrastructure

The Addison Region's community infrastructure encompasses the physical facilities, systems, and cultural resources that enable residents to live, work, and thrive in their communities. This infrastructure includes physical infrastructure like water and wastewater systems and essential services such as healthcare, education, public safety, and communications technology. It also includes the historic sites, cultural institutions, recreational facilities, and governmental buildings that define the character and quality of life in the Region. These interconnected systems and resources support the daily needs of residents, nurture public health and safety, preserve the region's heritage, and create opportunities for community engagement and cultural enrichment.

This chapter examines the current state of the Region's community infrastructure and identifies strategies to maintain, improve, and expand these critical resources to meet present and future needs. As the region continues to evolve, ensuring that infrastructure investments align with patterns of growth, support economic vitality, and enhance community resilience will be essential. The goals, policies, and recommended actions in this chapter are designed to guide municipalities, service providers, and regional partners in planning for infrastructure that serves all residents equitably while preserving the distinctive character and quality of life that define the Addison Region.

Water Supply

WATER SUPPLY REGULATIONS

The Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division (DWGPD), reporting to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) under the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), regulates public water supply systems to ensure compliance with drinking water quality standards. Its purpose is to safeguard public health and the environment—now and for future generations—by overseeing Vermont's drinking water systems, preserving the quality and availability of the state's groundwater, and regulating wastewater disposal to prevent contamination. The Division fulfills this mission through a combination of education, outreach, technical assistance, and regulatory oversight.

Robert Frost Bridge, Ripton

The regulations for water supplies differ depending on how the system is classified, initially starting with public and non-public delineations. The Vermont Water Supply Rule, most recently updated effective January 1, 2026, further defines different types of systems.[1] In addition, it outlines all facets of water supply standards, including but not limited to permitting, water quality, facility and operational requirements and construction and isolation standards for wells.

In 2007, Vermont began to require permits for new non-public water systems, modifications, or replacements under the "Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules" to ensure that the necessary isolation distances are maintained between potable water supplies and on-site septic systems.[2] Well drillers must be licensed with the State and follow proper protocol, including submitting well completion reports and including well tags for identification ease.[3]

As the Region's public systems continue to age, ACRPC recognizes the importance of planning and improving drinking water infrastructure. Public water infrastructure, often combined with public wastewater systems, constitute the most critical infrastructure needed for Vermont and the Addison Region to meet their housing targets. Public water supply support housing density. Without them, given the rules and isolation distances required between wells and septic systems, it is impos-

sible to achieve density beyond a few units. In order for the Addison Region to achieve its housing targets, it will need to increase the capacity and reach of its municipal water systems. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) offers affordable financing to public water systems for both planning and infrastructure projects that enhance public health protection and support compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.[4] The loan program is funded annually through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) capitalization grant, a State match appropriated through the Capital Bill, and repayment of prior loans. The capacity of this system and other financial providers, like the Vermont Bond Bank, will need to be increased to repair aging systems and build new infrastructure. In addition, there are many small municipal water supply systems that may need technical assistance. In 2025, the Regional Planning Commissions in partnership with the Vermont Bond Bank kicked off a project to identify and assist small municipal water districts with topics ranging from electronic document storage to capital and succession planning.

PUBLIC MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEMS

There are currently 6 public municipal water systems in the Addison Region. A Vermont municipal water system is a public water system that is owned or controlled by a municipality (including water districts and fire districts) and provides drinking water to the public through pipes or other constructed conveyances, serving at least 15 connections or 25 people daily for at least 60 days a year. It includes all collection, treatment, storage, and distribution facilities used for the system.[5]

Middlebury Town Water System

The Middlebury Town Water System supply is sourced from three gravel wells located at the base of the Green Mountains.[6] The Town's water system includes approximately 54 miles of pipeline and around 2,300 service connections including residences, commercial, and industrial customers along with some additional customers in Weybridge and New Haven equaling roughly 6,000 year-round customers and 2,500 Middlebury College students.[7]

A 2017 sanitary survey conducted by the State identified that the existing Chipman Hill water storage facility was insufficient to meet the Town's average daily water demand. As a result, the State mandated that the Town increase the storage capacity of its municipal water system resulting in a newly constructed 1.3-million-gallon reservoir that will be completed in 2026 to complement the existing 1.5-million-gallon reservoir.[8]

In 2024, the water system experienced a significant uptick in maintenance activity, with 42 water main breaks and 12 curb stop or service line repairs—well above the typical annual average of 12 to 15 incidents. A major system failure occurred in January when a frozen hydrant thawed, triggering a severe water hammer that led to 33 additional main breaks over a six-week span. Despite these challenges, the system delivered approximately 421 million gallons of water for the year, a decrease from 449 million gallons in 2023, partly due to the extensive repairs that were carried out.[9]

Vergennes-Panton Water District

The Vergennes-Panton Water District was established in 1966 and currently serves the City of Vergennes, Panton, and portions of the towns of Ferrisburgh, Addison,

and Waltham.[10] The distribution system includes nearly 26 miles of District-owned waterlines, 28 miles of private waterlines and 3 miles of water line owned by the Ferrisburgh Fire District.[11] The system has 2,140 connections, of which over 2,100 are residential; it services a population of approximately 5,100.[12]

Water from Lake Champlain is drawn, treated, and pumped from a facility in Panton. The water plant filters and pumps out to the public an average of 593,000 gallons per day and an average of 18,200,000 gallons per year. The district utilizes a storage tank that holds 750,000 gallons and is approximately 40 years old.[13]

In early 2025, residents of Vergennes and Panton approved bonds and/or loans totaling up to $3.52 million to replace nearly a mile of the most problematic water mains in the Vergennes-Panton Water District, located in both Vergennes and Ferrisburgh. Construction is slated to start in 2026.[14]

Tri-Town Water District

The Tri-Town Water District began operating in 1965 and serves the towns of Addison, Bridport, and Shoreham, covering the largest geographic area of any of the Region's systems.[15] The system draws water from Lake Champlain at a facility in the Town of Addison. The district has two reservoirs; one in Addison that holds roughly 625,000 gallons and another in Shoreham with a capacity of an estimated 1,000,000 gallons.[16]

The system has 1,800 residential connection and services a population of approximately 3,800. The Tri-Town and Vergennes-Panton systems are inter-connected, allowing them to have potential to serve as back-up systems for each other.[17]

The Tri-Town Water District continues to add customers onto existing lines and make improvements to the infrastructure. However, residents on East Street in Bridport are unable to tap on at this time due to an inadequately sized water main and elevation changes, which lead to pressure and flow issues in the neighborhood. Tri-Town will continue to look for funding to assist with this improvement.

Bristol Water Department

The Bristol Water Department serves Bristol's village area.[18] There are 695 connections, the vast majority of which are residential, and serve about 2,103 residents.[19]

The system is supplied by a local spring referred to as the "New Haven Spring", an approved groundwater source, on the south bank of the New Haven River. The water is pumped to the reservoir tank off Mountain Terrace Extension. The system's current reservoir holds approximately 650,000 gallons.[20]

As most of the system was installed in or around 1905, over 100 years ago, bond votes have been put forth to the community for improvements. In recent years, the town engaged an engineering firm to conduct a study of the entire water line distribution system, leading to the recommendation of replacing about 30,000 feet of the 1905 water line. In 2022, Bristol voters approved a bond to fund the replacement of the Pine Street water line which was completed in 2023. In November 2024, voters approved the Bristol West water line replacement projected to be completed in 2026-2027. Two additional phases are planned after completion of the Bristol West project.[21]

East Middlebury Fire District #1

Fire District #1 in East Middlebury, establishing service in 1936, serves approximately 642 residents with 260 residential service connections, along with a handful of businesses and community buildings.[22] The system is supplied by two gravel wells in the East Middlebury village area and by shallow springs along Route 125,

although the latter are currently inactive. The system not only provides potable water service to its customers, but also a fire protection benefit within the boundaries.[23]

In an emergency it would be possible to supply the East Middlebury system by connecting fire hoses to the Middlebury Town water mains. A permanent connection does not exist because the Middlebury water system operates at a different reservoir level and higher pressure and because the East Middlebury Fire District has preferred to remain separate.

Specific to infrastructure, the fire district has submitted several related grant applications in recent years and has potential future projects listed with the DWSRF program. East Middlebury has received funding for a hydraulic analysis and Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) related to their system and for a lead line survey.[24]

6. Ferrisburgh Fire District #1

Ferrisburgh Fire District No. 1 (FFD #1) was formed in 1989 to bring water from Vergennes-Panton Water District to Ferrisburgh. It owns a system of water transmission pipelines within the Town of Ferrisburgh, specifically north to the Rokeby Museum and the Ferrisburgh Fire Station. There are currently 107 members/connections. As Vergennes-Panton Water District owns the water and FFD #1 owns the waterlines, Fire District members receive two bills. This is the only public "municipal" water district in Ferrisburgh. While others in this town have access to water from Vergennes-Panton Water District, those connections are owned by private associations.

NON-MUNICIPAL PUBLIC COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS

A public community drinking water system is a public water system which has the ability to serve at least 25 individuals or 15 residential connections
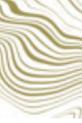
through a common distribution system. Community water systems in Vermont include condominium associations, mobile home parks, co-housing associations, and homeowners' associations. There are a number of shared community water systems serving residents throughout our Region.[25]

SCHOOL WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

All elementary schools in the Addison Region are required to have their own water supply systems, nearly all of which get water from on-site wells. Important issues for these school systems include source protection, the need for technical assistance in meeting state regulations, and funding the continued operation or upgrades of their systems.

Under Act 66 enacted in 2019, all Vermont school districts, supervisory unions, independent schools, and childcare providers are required to test their drinking and cooking water for lead every three years. If lead levels are found at or above 4 parts per billion (ppb), the affected tap must be taken out of service immediately, and corrective actions must be taken to reduce lead levels below the action threshold.[26]

OTHER PUBLIC SYSTEMS

There are many additional water systems in the Addison Region that meet the state's definition for public water supplies. Most of these are campgrounds, motels, and restaurants that are not hooked up to a community water supply. There are also a number of National Forest Service facilities in and around the Green Mountain National Forest and several state parks in the region with public water systems.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater description and challenges are addressed in the Natural Resource Chapter.

Except for those areas served by the public systems that draw water directly from Lake Champlain, most residents of the Addison Region rely on groundwater for their potable water supply. Parts of the region that are not served by public water systems have private or shared wells and springs. According to Vermont Well Completion Reports, there have been 7,316 wells drilled in the Addison Region since 1966. Most serve

domestic water systems (81.5%) and most are drilled to bedrock (73.4%).

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Groundwater supplies are recharged through precipitation and run-off percolating down through the soil to aquifers. Shallow, dug wells and springs tap groundwater before it reaches the aquifer, while drilled wells take water directly out of the aquifer. Therefore, springs and dug wells are more susceptible to drought or contamination. Water travels through areas with sand or gravel soils more quickly than through denser clays, affecting the rate at which groundwater is recharged. Due to topography and soils, the recharge and source protection areas for a significant amount of the Region's water supply is within the Green Mountain National Forest or along its edge.[27]

In the Addison Region, there is little specific information on the quantity and location of groundwater resources. State environmental protection rules have required that well drillers file reports, which include data such as well yield, well depth and depth to bedrock. The new state water and wastewater rules require more accurate information on well locations be reported. However, a regional assessment of groundwater based on the information in the filed reports has never been done. Additionally, aquifer mapping examining the underlying geology of the region has not been done.

Drought

In recent years there have been several periods of drought in the Addison Region affecting groundwater. Lack of rain and snow cover during 2001 caused a drop in both surface water and groundwater levels. In the Region, many springs and shallow wells went dry. In the summer of 2025, 95% of the County experienced severe drought, leading to historically low water levels in Lake Champlain and Otter Creek, and low and dry wells, stressing both farms and residents.

Drought affects the region's rural areas most severely and poses a threat to the the region's water supply. In mountainous communities, many households get their water from springs or shallow, dug wells. Drought also impacts farming operations, potentially causing crop loss. Farms in the Addison Region are generally not equipped to irrigate fields. Periods of drought, especially during times of high temperatures, also lead to

increased household water usage for activities such as watering lawns and filling swimming pools, thus increasing demand at a time when there is little to no recharge of groundwater supplies.

Groundwater Contamination

Contamination of groundwater is another threat to potable water supply. In the Addison Region, potential sources of contamination include leaking fuel storage tanks, improperly stored road salt, old dump sites or illegal dumping of waste, failed on-site septic systems, and improperly stored or spread farm wastes. Several Addison Region towns have had to supply drinking water to nearby residents when improperly stored road salt has contaminated their wells.

Contamination of groundwater can be in the form of high bacteria levels, excessive amounts of nitrates, petrochemicals, pesticides or herbicides, and elevated amounts of elements like lead, arsenic, or sodium. Once contaminated, groundwater is extremely difficult to treat and, in some cases, may not be safe to drink for many years. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Waste Management Division tracks potential sources of groundwater contamination. There are over 80 sites in the Addison Region currently listed on the active hazardous sites list. A large percentage of these are locations of abandoned or leaking underground storage tanks. These sites are in various stages of monitoring and remediation.

While public water supply systems generally have source protection plans and regularly test their water, very few private well owners are certain about where the groundwater recharge area for their water source is located and very few have their water tested annually.

Wastewater

WASTEWATER REGULATIONS

The Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) oversees the state's programs and regulations relating to wastewater treatment and disposal, as well as stormwater discharge. Under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program, all facilities that discharge pollutants from any point source into the waters of the United States are required to obtain a permit. All wastewater treatment facilities in Vermont need a water pollution control permit from DEC.

The Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) establishes phosphorus discharge limits for wastewater facilities located within the Vermont portion of the Lake Champlain watershed. The TMDL was first established in 2002 and reissued in 2016. Wastewater discharges account for less than 10% of total phosphorus discharge to the Addison County portion of the lake.

Additionally, Middlebury and Vergennes have combined sewers in at least part of their sewer system. Though these are subject to DEC's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) policy, the TMDL does not include a separate allocation for phosphorus loads from CSOs in Addison County. Both communities have Long Term CSO Control Plans as part of their permits and report annually on CSO discharges.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

Absence of wastewater treatment presents a significant impediment to denser development of the Region's villages. Four municipalities in the Addison Region currently have wastewater treatment facilities: Middlebury, Vergennes, Shoreham, and Orwell. Two additional domestic systems serve Basin Harbor Club and Button Bay State Park. Additionally, a limited portion of Bristol's downtown is served by a community septic system, and the Town of Addison has a small system that serves the "Four Corners," the intersection of Routes 22A and Route 17. Together the municipal systems serve approximately 2,800 households or 22% of Addison Region households.[28] Expansion of community wastewater systems to other villages in the Addison Region will be integral to the Addison region meeting its housing goals.

Figure 1: Large Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Regulated Facility	Design Flow (mgd)	2016 Permit Load (mt/yr)	TMDL Waste-load Allocation (mt/yr)
Middlebury	2.200	1.823	1.823
Orwell	0.033	0.228	0.228
Salisbury Fish Hatchery	1.310	0.181	0.181
Shoreham	0.035	0.242	0.242
Vergennes	0.750	0.621	0.621

Middlebury Wastewater Treatment Facility

The Town of Middlebury is served by a municipal sewer system that covers the downtown area and a portion of Route 7. The sewer system serves a somewhat smaller area than is covered by the municipal water system. There are approximately 1,550 residential and around 390 non-residential connections. Middlebury's facility went online in 1999, replacing an older plant. The facility utilizes sequencing batch reactors, has a system for phosphorus removal, and uses ultraviolet radiation for disinfection. The facility discharges into Otter Creek and has a permitted limit of 2.2 million gallons per day. In 2024, the facility treated approximately 378,180,000 gallons of domestic and industrial wastewater, averaging 1,036,110 gallons per day, roughly 38% of design capacity.[29] The Middlebury treatment facility is currently permitted to discharge over 1.823 metric tons of phosphorus annually under the Lake Champlain TMDL.

Vergennes Wastewater Treatment Facility

Vergennes currently has a lagoon wastewater treatment system with a filter to remove phosphorus and chlorination for disinfection. The City is in the process of upgrading their facility with construction scheduled to begin in 2026 and last two years. The system discharges into Otter Creek. The facility serves the entire city and some customers in the Town of Ferrisburgh. In total, there are approximately 1,145 residential and 90 non-residential connections. The current plant has permitted capacity of 750,000 gallons per day and an average annual flow of over 330,000 gallons per day. The facility has an uncommitted reserve capacity of over 405,000 gallons per day. The Vergennes facility is permitted to discharge 0.621 metric tons of phosphorus per year under the Lake Champlain TMDL.

Community Septic Systems

Community septic systems provide a vital solution for Vermont towns where aging or inadequate wastewater infrastructure threatens housing stability and environmental health. By pooling resources, these systems allow neighborhoods to maintain safe, affordable housing while protecting water quality. They are particularly valuable in rural areas where individual septic systems may fail due to soil conditions, age, or cost barriers, ensuring residents can remain in their homes without facing displacement or financial hardship.

Shoreham Wastewater Treatment Facility

Shoreham's wastewater treatment facility began operation in 2001. The gravity collection system serves around 55 residences and 15 non-residential connections in the village center. The facility is an in-ground recirculating sand filter with a permitted flow of 35,000 gallons per day. The effluent is disinfected with ultraviolet radiation and discharged underground into Cedar Swamp. The average annual flow is 9,000-12,000 gallons per day. Shoreham has an uncommitted reserve capacity of nearly 24,000 gallons per day. Under the TMDL, Shoreham has a phosphorus limit of 0.242 metric tons. In lieu of dedicated phosphorus removal at the facility, Shoreham implemented a town-wide, non-point source phosphorus reduction program.

Orwell Wastewater Treatment Facility

Orwell has a lagoon wastewater treatment system, which serves approximately 65 households and a handful of businesses and community buildings in its village center. The system uses chlorine to disinfect the effluent before it is discharged into the south fork of East Creek. Currently, the facility does not remove any phosphorus from its effluent. The Orwell facility has a permitted capacity of 33,000 gallons per day. The average annual flow is about 14,000 gallons per day. Orwell has an uncommitted reserve capacity of over 21,000 gallons per day. In the TMDL, Orwell's phosphorus load is set at 0.228 metric tons annually.[30]

The existing capacity of these four systems can serve as a catalyst for housing development within their growth area.

Bristol Community Septic System

Bristol's downtown has a large septic system that serves 34 properties on Main Street, East Street, South Street, and Prince Lane.[31] Vermont Utility Management Services operates the system on a contract basis. The system is essentially two large conventional in-ground septic systems. It is regulated by a state wastewater permit, similar to other on-site septic systems. It is not considered a wastewater treatment facility like the previous systems. Currently, there is little additional capacity in this system.

Other Domestic Wastewater Treatment Facilities

The Basin Harbor Club has a wastewater treatment facility consisting of septic tanks and a lagoon. The system has a permitted flow of 52,400 gallons per day. Button Bay State Park has a wastewater treatment facility with a permitted flow of 5,000 gallons per day. The system consists of septic tanks, a sand filter, and chlorination for disinfection. The Town of Addison constructed a performance-based mound system in 2020 with a capacity of 4,300 gallons per day. The system serves the Town Clerk's Office, the Historic Town Hall, the Addison Fire Station, and the Addison Baptist Church.

Other Wastewater Treatment Facilities

There are five industrial facilities in the region that pre-treat waste before sending it to the municipal wastewater facilities. One, Simmonds Precision, discharges to Vergennes; the other four discharge to Middlebury: Whistle Pig, VT Hard Cider, Agri-Mark, and the Middlebury Resource Recovery Center. Agri-Mark has a permitted flow of 450,000 gallons per day, accounting for 44% of the Middlebury facility's average flow. In 2023, the business received funds to improve their wastewater pretreatment infrastructure.

The Salisbury Fish Hatchery's wastewater facility has a design flow of 1.31 million gallons per day. Their TMDL allocation of phosphorus is 0.181 metric tons per year. The facility discharges to a tributary of Halnon Brook.

## ON-SITE WASTEWATER SYSTEMS / SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Only a small percentage of the Addison Region's land area is served by municipal wastewater treatment facilities. Structures outside those service areas are dependent on individual, on-site septic systems to treat wastewater. Wastewater systems, commonly known as septic systems, treat wastewater from homes and businesses, ultimately returning clean water to the local groundwater supply. A properly functioning system holds solids, scum, and grease in a septic tank, while directing the liquid portion to a leach field, where it encounters an oxygen-rich environment that supports microbial activity to help purify the water. The final stage of treatment occurs as the water filters through the soil, which naturally removes remaining impurities and restores it to a potable state. In Vermont, the State Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division collaborates with engineers and system designers to identify optimal locations and designs for wastewater systems, ensuring the long-term health of the state's groundwater resources. The regional office serving Addison County is based in Rutland.[32]

Vermont was the last state in the nation to require state-wide permits for all properties. The Clean Slate Act went into effective in 2007 for wastewater systems and potable water supplies specific to: con-

Lindale Community Septic Project

Addison Housing Works led the initiative to replace failing septic systems in the Lindale Mobile Home Park, a neighborhood where residents faced serious risks of losing their homes due to wastewater issues. The project created a shared, modern septic system that preserved affordable housing, safeguarded public health, and protected local waterways. The new system is a 20,000 gallon-per-day system that is fully compliant with the state Agency of Natural Resources' Indirect Discharge Program permitting requirements and will safely serve the park for decades to come, ensuring adequate wastewater treatment before it reaches Addison County waterways.

Recognized statewide for its innovation, the Lindale project demonstrates how community-driven infrastructure investments can stabilize vulnerable housing, strengthen neighborhoods, and serve as a model for other Vermont communities facing similar challenges.[53]
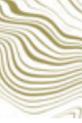
struction of new buildings including single family residences; construction or modification of a wastewater system and/or potable water supply; new connections to an existing wastewater system and/or potable water supply; subdivision of land; and repair or replacement of a failed wastewater system and/or potable water supply. The Vermont State Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division collaborates with licensed designers and engineers to ensure these systems are properly located and designed, helping to safeguard the health and sustainability of Vermont's groundwater resources.[33] Previous to 2007, Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Program only issued permits for any such systems with flows less than 6,500 gallons per day.[34]

Soil condition, site condition, depth to bedrock or water table are a few of the determinants defining what type of wastewater system one may need, such as conventional, mound, or innovative/ alternative systems. Large areas of the Addison Region, mainly in the lakeshore towns, have heavy clay soils. It is also common in these areas for the seasonal high-water table to be close to the surface during the spring.[35] Due to these reasons, a mound system is often required which can be much more costly than a conventional soil-based system leading to an increase in overall building expenses. This plan urges DEC to continue to colaborate and adapt with the engineering community to permit new systems that can operate safely, economically, and efficiently.

DISPOSAL OF SEPTAGE AND SLUDGE

Septage is the residue remaining in on-site, individual septic tanks. Septic tanks are periodically pumped and the septage removed. In the Addison Region, the Middlebury Wastewater Treatment Facility is the only system that accepts septage. In 2004 Middlebury took in 2,429,050 gallons of septage; equivalent to 2,429 homes not served by the Middlebury Municipal Sewer that were still served by the Middlebury WWTF.[36]

Solid Waste

In 1968 the Vermont State Legislature passed legislation that required every municipality to provide for the proper disposal of solid waste. At that time, the Addison County region hosted ten operating disposal sites and dumps. Municipalities, businesses and individuals disposed of all types of waste in these dumps, then burned it periodically. These waste disposal practices created concerns about air pollution, groundwater contamination, and human health.

To protect public health and the environment, state legislation required that all municipal dumps be turned into lined sanitary landfillsand required waste to be compacted and contained with an approved daily cover material. Municipal dumps began closing during the 1970s as disposal shifted towards regional and private market solutions for solid waste management.

By the early 1990s, five unlined municipal landfills remained active in the Region. VT Act 78, passed in 1987, required these unlined landfills to close by 1992 or obtain an exemption to accept less than 1,000 tons of trash per year. Currently, all unlined landfills in Vermont have closed.

The 21 municipalities of Addison County have joined together to create the **Addison County Solid Waste Management District (ACSWMD)**, and accept the ACSWMD's solid waste planning and management efforts as their own.

The New England Waste Services of Vermont ("NEWSVT") landfill is currently Vermont's only operating lined landfill and receives approximately 80% of the state's solid waste. A few large solid waste management companies operate most of the collection and transportation infrastructure. While independent municipalities, solid waste alliances and solid waste districts are still responsible for solid waste management, most utilize private sector services and facilities to meet this responsibility.

VERMONT MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Vermont's Materials Management Plan (MMP), formally referred to as the State Solid Waste Plan, was last adopted in 2024. Statute requires the State's MMP to be revised every five years. It also requires that municipalities manage solid waste in conformance with the MMP. As the State's independent municipalities, solid waste alliances and solid waste districts (Solid Waste Management Entities, or "SWMEs") develop their solid waste implementation plans, they must decide on the actions they will take to meet the goals and targets of the MMP.

The new MMP's goals expand on the sustainability goals that anchored the last plan and also emphasize climate resiliency, educational outreach and economic justice.

The MMP goals are to:

☑ maximize overall waste reduction and minimize disposal.

☑ promote sustainable materials management.

☑ reduce toxicity of waste and the quantity of toxic products used.

☑ reduce greenhouse gas emissions through better materials management and promote climate change resilience; and

☑ promote equity, accessibility, and environmental justice.

In the press release for the MMP, Josh Kelly, DEC Solid Waste Program Manager stated, "In light of the flooding in 2023 and 2024, there are new priorities related to disaster planning and response to better prepare for future natural disasters." He continued, "There are also sections connecting climate change and equity to waste management."[37]

Under the MMP, outreach is a priority. Web-based resources will be proactively available to the public and connections will be made with libraries, schools, municipal offices, businesses, and transfer stations to build better community awareness around waste reduction, recycling, and waste management.

Horse-drawn trash collection, Bristol

ADDISON COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

The Addison County Solid Waste Management District (ACSWMD) was established by charter in 1988. ACSWMD's Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) guides the management of solid waste for its 21 member municipalities and includes two adopted ordinances, a Waste Management Ordinance and an Illegal Burning and Disposal Ordinance, which provide implementation and enforcement of the SWIP. The ACSWMD is a union municipal district, 501(c)(1), funded primarily through tipping fees at its Middlebury transfer station and a per ton surcharge on all municipal solid waste (MSW) and construction & demolition debris (C&D) generated within the ACSWMD that is destined for disposal. Other revenues include donations or fees from special events, revenue sharing from the sale of recyclables, state or federal grants, reimbursement from manufacturers as part of an extended producer responsibility (EPR) law, and sales of items like compost bins.

The ACSWMD completed and received approval of its most recent SWIP in October 2025 and currently operates pursuant to that plan. The District manages a transfer station in Middlebury for the collection of MSW, C&D, single stream recyclables, mattresses, appliances, scrap metal, fire extinguishers, food scraps, maple sap tubing, leaf & yard waste, clean wood waste, tires, asphalt shingles, drywall, books, textiles, cooking oil, documents for shredding, asbestos, and plastic film.The District also collects special wastes such as electronics, used oil, oil filters, batteries, light ballasts, propane cylinders, and items containing mercury. The District's HazWaste Center is co-located at the transfer station for collection of household hazardous wastes and Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) wastes. Although the transfer station accepts all waste items except for bagged trash and bagged single stream recyclables from residents, it is designed primarily to serve licensed waste haulers and local businesses. Private haulers provide curbside collection services in the ACSWMD, and bring MSW,C&D, recyclables, food scraps and special wastes to the transfer station.

Waste haulers who operate in the ACSWMD are required by state law and District Ordinance to be licensed. Haulers who offer trash collection must also offer collection of single stream recyclables. Haulers must also offer

curbside collection of food scraps to businesses and residential properties. The transfer station is a registered collector under Vermont's EPR laws for electronic waste, mercury lamps, mercury thermostats, household batteries, household hazardous waste, and architectural paint.

All ACSWMD residents have access to a local drop-off that offers Saturday or every other Saturday service. Per state law, all solid waste facilities (including vehicles parked at those facilities) that collect trash must offer collection of single stream recyclables, food scraps, and leaf and yard waste (at least seasonally). See **Figure 3** in Appendix X.

In 2024, the District opened its Regional Residential Drop-Off in New Haven, which currently accepts household trash, recycling, yard waste, and food scraps from residents within all 21 of its member towns. The District continues to track participation rates and gauge the evolving level of need for additional services to be provided at the New Haven drop-off, which may necessitate the completion of an already designed and permitted expansion of the facility. This expansion would allow for the collection of other materials such as electronic waste, books, scrap metal, and tires and would likely require financing through a general obligation bond.

ACSWMD waste collected at the Middlebury transfer station is transported to the NEWSVT landfill in Coventry. ACSWMD does not plan to site or own a landfill during its current SWIP term, but intends to maintain reliable weekday and Saturday drop-off options for residential bagged trash and recyclables. A concurrent goal of the SWIP is to provide ongoing education to the District's households, schools, and businesses about waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.

In their 2025 SWIP, ACSWMD estimated a 2024 MSW disposal rate of 2.26 pounds per person/per day, up slightly from the 2.17 pounds per person/per day estimated in 2023. It also noted the overall 2022 MSW diversion rate was 54.24%. ACSWMD has exceeded the state's 50% diversion goal since 2006. While Vermont did not include a specific waste diversion target its 2025 MMP, ACSWMD considers waste diversion tracking as an important planning tool and will continue to calculate its diversion rate moving forward.

Read the ACSWMD 2025 Solid Waste Implementation Plan - ACSWMD[38]

Communications Technology

Access to reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic vitality, educational opportunity, healthcare access, and quality of life in the Addison Region. Modern telecommunications systems—particularly high-speed internet—enable businesses to compete globally, students to access educational resources, residents to receive telemedicine services, and communities to stay connected and informed. Over the past two decades, the Region has worked to address the digital divide through innovative regional collaborations, with significant progress now being made to bring fiber-optic broadband to every corner of the Addison Region.

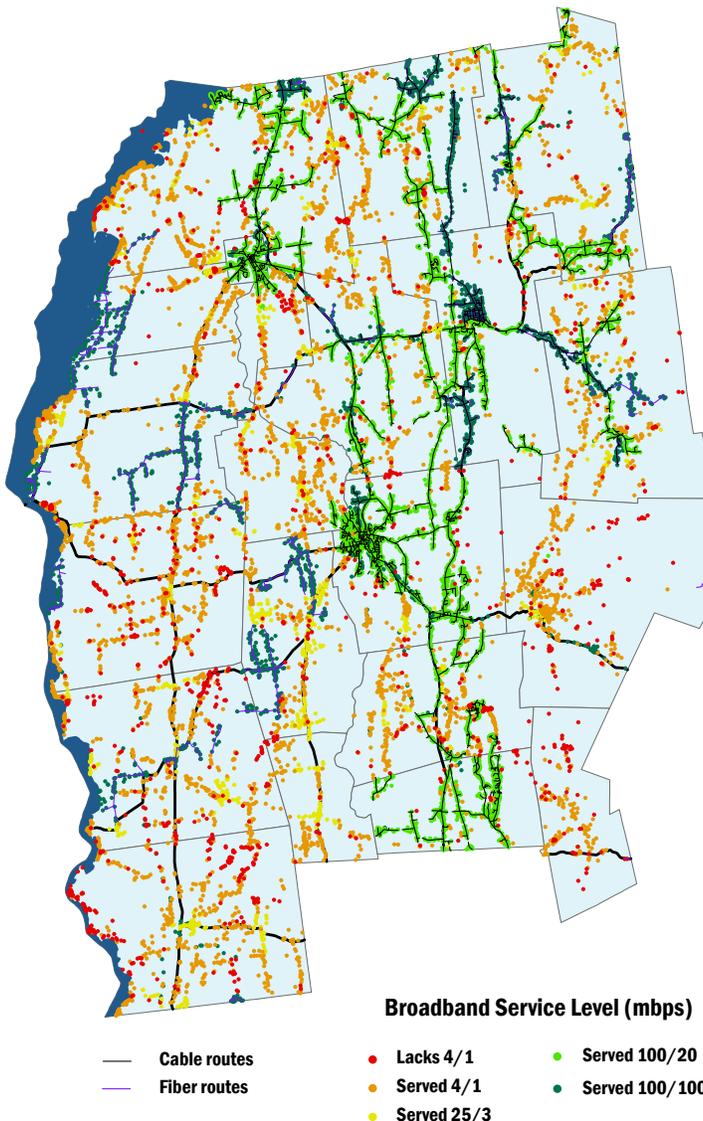### BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS

Like many rural areas, Addison County has faced persistent challenges with broadband access. According to Vermont Department of Public Service data from 2022, approximately 23% of Vermont locations (nearly 70,000 business and residential addresses) lacked access to broadband service at or above 25/3 Mbps (the federal definition of broadband at that time). Outside of Chittenden County, only 15.6% of Vermont buildings had access to service at 100/100 Mbps, the modern standard for high-speed broadband. These gaps were particularly acute in rural areas like Addison County, where low population density made it unprofitable for private telecommunications companies to extend fiber-optic networks.

High-speed internet service in the Addison Region is provided by a mix of private telecommunications companies and the community-owned Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband. Traditional providers including Comcast, Consolidated Communications (Fidium Fiber), Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, and Verizon serve portions of the Region with cable, fiber-optic, and DSL connections, primarily in more densely populated areas and along main transportation corridors. However, many rural areas and less densely populated communities have lacked access to fiber-optic service. Maple Broadband was established specifically to fill these gaps, focusing its network deployment on underserved and unserved locations where private providers have not extended high-speed infrastructure.

Maple Broadband and the Communications Union District Model

In 2015, the Vermont Legislature passed legislation enabling the creation of Communications Union Districts (CUDs), codified at 30 V.S.A. Chapter 82. CUDs allow towns to join together as a municipal entity to build communications infrastructure, organized similarly to water and solid waste districts. CUDs cannot levy taxes; they fund operations through grants, loans, donations, and service subscriptions. In 2020, twenty Addison County towns formed the Addison County Communications Union District (ACCUD), operating as Maple Broadband, to ensure every on-grid address in member towns has access to high-speed fiber-optic broadband service.

Map 1: Broadband Service Levels

Broadband Service Level (mbps)

— Cable routes	● Lacks 4/1	● Served 100/20
— Fiber routes	● Served 4/1	● Served 100/100
	● Served 25/3	

Maple Broadband partnered with Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) to build and operate the fiber network. Construction began in October 2022, with service launching in February 2023. By April 2024, the district had deployed 143.5 miles of fiber passings in 1,647 locations in Cornwall, Orwell, Shoreham, Whiting, Salisbury, and Middlebury, and began Phase Two construction covering 68 miles and 1,468 passings in Vergennes, Ferrisburgh, Waltham, Monkton, and New Haven. The district continues expanding to reach all underserved locations in its member towns.

As a community-owned, not-for-profit provider, Maple Broadband offers competitive pricing compared to private providers, with transparent rates, no contracts, no data caps, and no hidden fees. This community ownership model allows revenues to be reinvested in network expansion and maintenance rather than generating shareholder profits, providing cost savings to customers while extending service to areas that would otherwise remain unserved.

### Federal and State Funding for Broadband Expansion

To date, Maple Broadband's construction has been funded through federal ARPA funding, state grants, and local ARPA contributions. The Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) administers funding and provides technical support to CUDs. For its next construction phase Vermont received $228.9 million from the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program to expand broadband access, with Maple Broadband selected as a provisional subgrantee. The state aims to complete broadband deployment by 2028, with nearly 90% of BEAD funds designated for fiber-optic infrastructure.

The creation of Maple Broadband also spurred significant private investment in the Region. WCVT, Maple Broadband's partner, will receive and invest over $20 million in the Addison Region upgrading its DSL lines to fiber. Fidium Fiber, Comcast/Xfinity, and Go Net Speed have also spent millions improving their systems.

With improved broadband connectivity enabling access to advanced digital tools, artificial intelligence (AI) represents an emerging technology that could significantly expand capacity and economic development opportunities for Addison County if applied safely and appropriately. It is important for ACRPC to work with regional and state partners to develop and provide education on AI best practices for residents and municipal staff. Additionally, data centers are estimated to consume anywhere between 6.7% to 12% of all U.S. electricity consumption by 2030.[39] ACRPC will need to incorporate AI infrastructure demands—including electrical grid capacity, water resources, and potential impacts on utility rates—into future regional planning. This will ensure technological advancement does not compromise existing community services and resources.

Map 2: Cell Reception

Antenna

Tower

Cellphone Reception

Excellent

Good

Patchy

Poor

Little to None
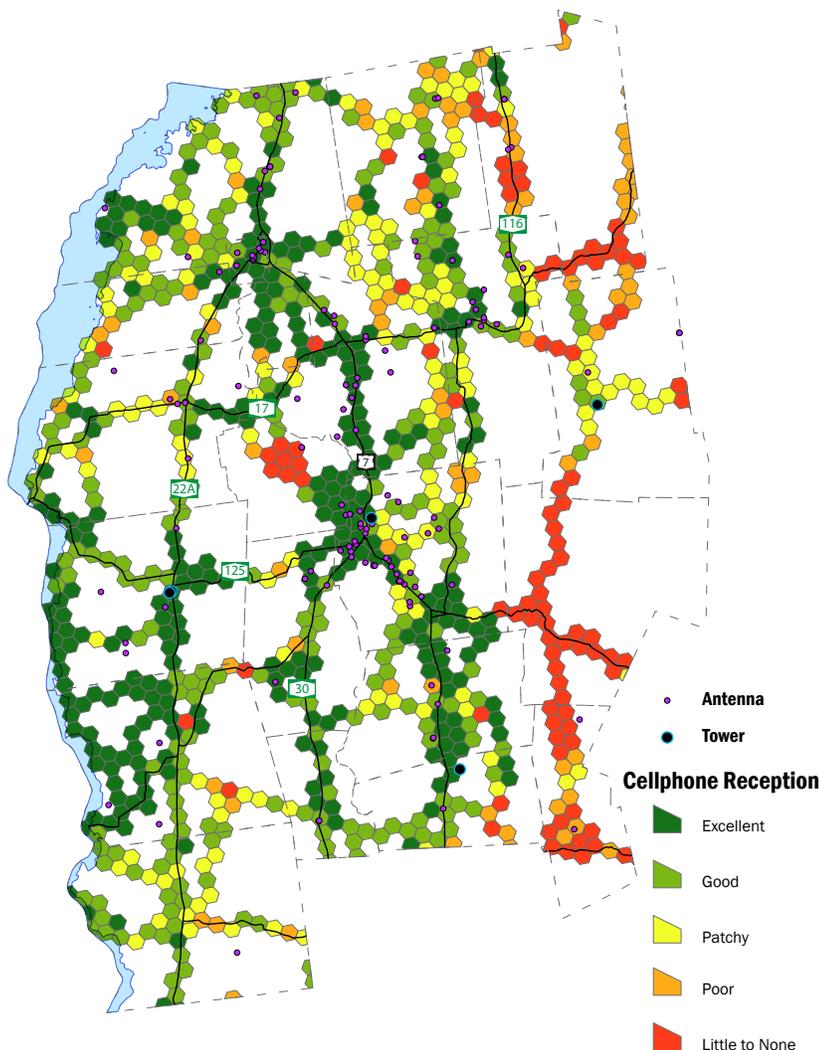
TRADITIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Wired Telephone Service

Three local phone service providers serve the Addison Region through 16 telephone exchanges. Most of the remaining lakeshore and northern part of the Region, except for an area around Vergennes, is served by Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom. Consolidated Communications and Xfinity serves the rest of the Addison Region. All of these providers are investing in providing internet service in their service territories.

Wireless Communications

Multiple cellular providers serve the Addison Region, including Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, and regional carriers. Cell phone coverage has improved significantly over the past two decades as providers have expanded their networks and upgraded to 4G LTE and 5G technologies. Coverage remains variable across the region, with strong signals along most of Route 7 and other major corridors but weaker or absent coverage in some rural and mountainous areas.

Much of the Region's cellular infrastructure utilizes antennas mounted on existing structures such as silos, church steeples, and utility poles, minimizing visual impacts compared to traditional freestanding cell towers. This approach has allowed the Region to expand wireless coverage while preserving the rural character of the landscape. ACRPC strongly supports this creative approach, complemented by new fiber internet, to build a robust and resilient telecommunications network for the Region.

Emergency Communications

Radio communications in Addison County are structured to support both statewide coordination and localized emergency response. The Vermont State Police operate on UHF frequencies in the 460 MHz range for dispatch and law enforcement communications statewide. Meanwhile, local fire departments, ambulance services, and EMS units use VHF frequencies in the 150 MHz range

for their operational needs. Many towns maintain independent radio systems, with transmitters located on towers such as Chipman Hill in Middlebury, Cream Hill in Shoreham, and Knox Hill in Orwell, or mounted on buildings. Ferrisburgh Fire Department relies on a transmitter atop Mount Philo in neighboring Chittenden County. Dispatching is decentralized, with the Addison County Sheriff and the police and EMS departments in Vergennes, Bristol, and Middlebury managing their own radio traffic. All 9-1-1 calls, whether from landlines or mobile phones, are routed through a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and then directed to the appropriate radio channels for emergency response. Vermont's official RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) program has been discontinued as of November 1, 2025, but amateur radio operators can still contribute to emergency communications by joining the state's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) or the Addison County Amateur Radio Association.

Local News and Information Resources

Residents of the Addison Region access local news and information through multiple platforms:

- **Print and Online Media:** The Addison County Independent (weekly), *Burlington Free Press* and *Rutland Herald* (daily regional papers), and *Seven Days* (weekly) provide local, regional, and statewide news coverage through print and online platforms.

- **Radio:** Local commercial stations include WVTK FM(92.1), WFAD AM (1490), WCLX FM (102.9), WIZN FM (106.7), WRMC FM (91.1, Middlebury College), and WVPS FM (107.9) Vermont Public Radio provide news, entertainment, and emergency information with particular reliability during power outages and disasters.

- **Public Access Television:** Middlebury Community Television and Northeast Addison Television (Bristol) provide Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) programming, including coverage of local government meetings and community events, accessible through cable and online streaming platforms.

- **Local Broadcast Television Channels:** ABC 22 (WVNY), CBS 3 (WCAX), NBC 5 (WPTZ), and Fox 44 (WFFF)
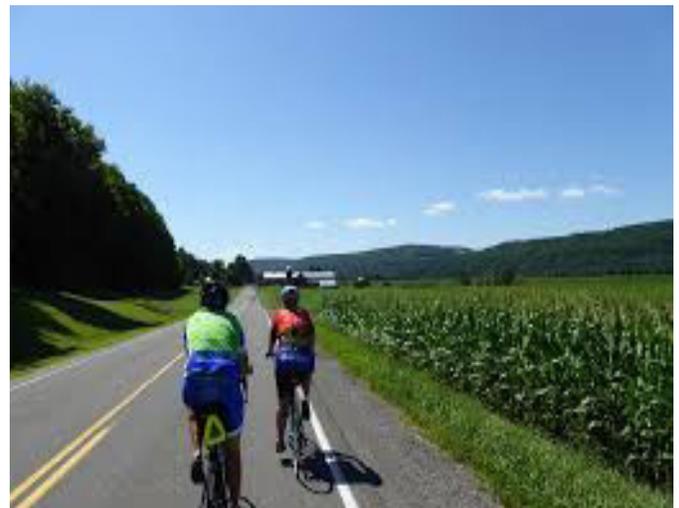
Regional Cultural Resources and Facilities

The Addison Region, with its varied topography and wealth of natural resources, has an equally rich collection of archeological, historic, and cultural resources. The character and history of the Addison Region is reflected in the sites, structures, events, and traditions built or established by residents over thousandsmore than 250 of years. That period represents only a brief portion of a much longer history of human habitation in the region, which goes back more than 10,000 years.

The importance of these cultural and historic resources is reflected in their ability to provide a sense of continuity between generations and a connection to place. A shared sense of history and cultural pride creates stronger communities and encourages connections between people. Historic and cultural sites, buildings, and events can also provide economic benefits from the reuse of existing structures as unique community gathering places for the enjoyment of music, theater, and other cultural performances.

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Vermont's archeological sites are critical links to our recent and distant past. In many cases, these links help us to understand our rich social, economic, and technical traditions. The sites range from Native American campsites used by the earliest Vermonters (called the Paleo-Indians), to revolutionary war shipwrecks, from 12th century Native American farming sites (the earliest known in northern New England), to abandoned 19th century mining communities. More typical are the hundreds of long deserted 19th century farmsteads with their telltale cellar holes and stone walls, and the small, largely invisible, Native American seasonal campsites that span both the very long period of prehistory and the shorter period of recorded history. Pre-contact sites in forested landscapes can be especially important since they may be undisturbed by land management and agricultural practices. The archeological record can also provide information about past climate and landscape changes. Although only a few sites in the Region have been designated in the Vermont Archeological Inventory, there may be many other areas that contain significant artifacts to pre-European settlement.

Some landscapes have a higher potential for containing pre-contact settlement sites; these are archaeologically sensitive lands. These lands exhibit a combination of environmental characteristics that would have attracted indigenous peoples. Archaeologically sensitive lands generally have less than 8% - 15% slope and are often found in the following landscape settings:

- 200' from a river, stream, lake or pond, wetland, spring, or relict (i.e. now dry) drainage
- adjacent to a confluence
- adjacent to falls or rapids
- on a flood plain or river terrace
- on an elevated knoll in a flood plain
- on the flat at the head of a drainage
- at a natural portage between two watersheds or pass through mountains
- at chert, quartz, or quartzite outcrops
- on post-glacial (or "paleo") landforms (some examples: sandy beach line from the Champlain Sea, edges of former post-glacial lakes and ponds or bays, edges of former post glacial swamps or wetlands)

Winter habitation sites might be located on south facing, sheltered terraces along a valley edge, and summer planting fields may be located in a sunny floodplain.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are a wide range of historic sites and structures in the Addison Region, several thousand of which are listed on the Vermont Register of Historic Places. These sites and structures include military sites and covered bridges, churches and community buildings, grand mansions and one-room schoolhouses, farmhouses and their outbuildings, as well as industrial and commercial buildings. There are approximately 75 buildings or sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and three historic districts in Bristol, Middlebury, and Vergennes are also nationally recognized. More detailed information on these historic resources is available at ACRPC's office and from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

The Vermont State Register of Historic Places is used in the division's legally mandated reviews of projects requiring Act 250 permits and those involving state or federal funds, licenses, or permits. Sites listed in or determined eligible for the Register are considered under criterion 8 of Act 250 for projects that require land use permits. Permits may be denied for projects that have an undue adverse effect on archaeological or historic resources. Properties that are listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are further protected from adverse impact by projects that are federally funded, licensed, or permitted.

A number of Addison Region communities have active Historical Societies that work to protect these resources, maintain collections, do research and promote greater awareness of local history and historic resources. Several have also developed walking tours that highlight their historic resources. While most of the region's historic resources are privately owned and not open to the public, some are public structures still used for a civic purpose, a few are open as museums, and others have been converted to inns and restaurants.

LIBRARIES

A majority (19) of the 31 libraries currently operating in the Addison Region are school libraries. However, most communities in the Region continue to have access to one of the 12 public libraries. These libraries range in size with the larger municipalities – Bristol, Middlebury ,and Vergennes – having the largest facilities. However, even in small communities, the local libraries provide a

range of services and activities such as children's programs, reading groups, literacy education, use of public computers and internet access, community meeting space, and more. In addition to their own collections, patrons of libraries throughout the Region have access to materials from libraries throughout Vermont via interlibrary loan while digital resources that enable access to books, music, language learning, video content, and more are also offered through the Vermont library system. Additionally, some local libraries provide lending library services that allow residents to share household tools, games and educational activities, bikes, and more for community members to use at home.

ACRPC has recently supported several towns with grant writing and management to upgrade energy and communications infrastructure in municipal libraries, with the largest project being the redevelopment of the Isley Library in Middlebury.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Addison Region offers diverse cultural resources including more than ten museums ranging from the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum to small local history museums, two state historic sites (Mount Independence and Chimney Point), and several historic house museums such as the Rokeby Museum and Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History. The Region is home to numerous artists and craftspeople who exhibit from their studios, galleries marketing local art, and Middlebury College's Museum of Art with traveling shows and a permanent collection. Performance venues range from informal summer concerts on town greens to professional productions at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater and the Vergennes Opera House, with year-round events including the Bristol Community Band performances, Middlebury's Festival On-the-Green, and the Addison County Fair and Field Days.

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

The cultural, artistic, and historic resources described above play an important role in the culture of and way of life for residents of the Addison Region. However, there is a wide range of other components that, when woven together, form the character of the Region's communities. These components are numerous and diverse, ranging from the qualities of the land itself and the economic forces that have shaped the region's com-

Lincoln General Store

munities to the influence of local gathering places and events that create and maintain a sense of community among residents.

The Region's residents value access to cultural opportunities. Some of these things – such as citizens discussing current events while sitting on a bench at their general store or going to a pancake breakfast at the firehouse, are difficult to characterize but they are important, nonetheless. These and many other components of local culture and community character contribute to the quality of life in the Addison Region.

GOVERNMENTAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES

Municipal Offices

Each of the 21 municipalities in the Addison Region has a municipal office and a clerk who, among other duties, maintains the municipal records stored in each office's vault. The municipal offices are the repositories for all land records; vital records like birth, marriage, and death certificates; and, voter registration lists. The clerk and municipal office serve as the basic unit of local government in most of the rural towns in the Addison Region. In the smallest towns, the office is essentially the only public building and serves several community and civic functions. In addition to office space, many municipal offices are used as community meeting spaces. (See **Map 1**.)

Several offices in the region are in historic buildings originally constructed for civic purposes—some as town halls, churches, or schools in the mid-1800s. Many of

these buildings, which have served their function as a town office well for a half-century or more, are beginning to encounter difficulties. Several offices in the Region lack adequate vault space for additional records, a problem that has been exacerbated in recent years as the amount of paperwork to be recorded has increased significantly. Others do not have sufficient space for regular board or committee meetings, or for office use as the number of employees working for the town has increased. Additionally, a few buildings have issues such as lack of accessibility, or insufficient wastewater or drinking water infrastructure. Even with their issues, the Clerk's Office/Town Hall often serves as the hub of the community. Town Clerks know a lot and are a great source of ultra-local information.

Community Buildings

In addition to the municipal office, most communities have a larger hall-type building that is used for town meeting and other large community events. Sometimes this is a separate building, other times it and the municipal office are part of the same structure. While a few town halls were constructed for civic use as a meeting hall, many are former schools, churches, granges, or other similar structures.

In recent years, a few communities in the Region have constructed or are planning projects to develop community buildings that can serve multiple functions. Some towns are considering reuse of existing historic structures in their village centers, while others have plans for new construction. A common theme of most of these projects is to revitalize a community center by having a building with space that can serve multiple purposes ranging from town offices, library, meeting rooms, childcare or preschool, medical clinic, and recreation center.

Highway Garages

Most of the municipalities in the region also have a building for storing highway equipment and materials. Several communities have a shared garage facility with the fire department and a couple share space with state highway maintenance facilities. Many towns are also facing a lack of space for equipment storage as towns have needed to house more and larger equipment. A number of municipalities in the Region have constructed salt sheds to meet changes in federal and state law related to stormwater. Still more towns plan to replace existing structures or to construct new ade-

Map 1 - Municipal Buildings
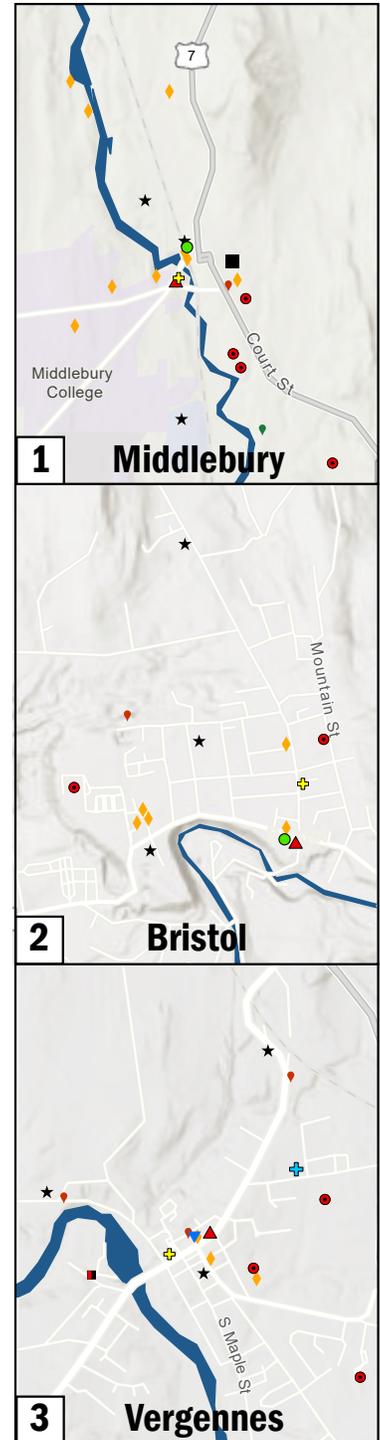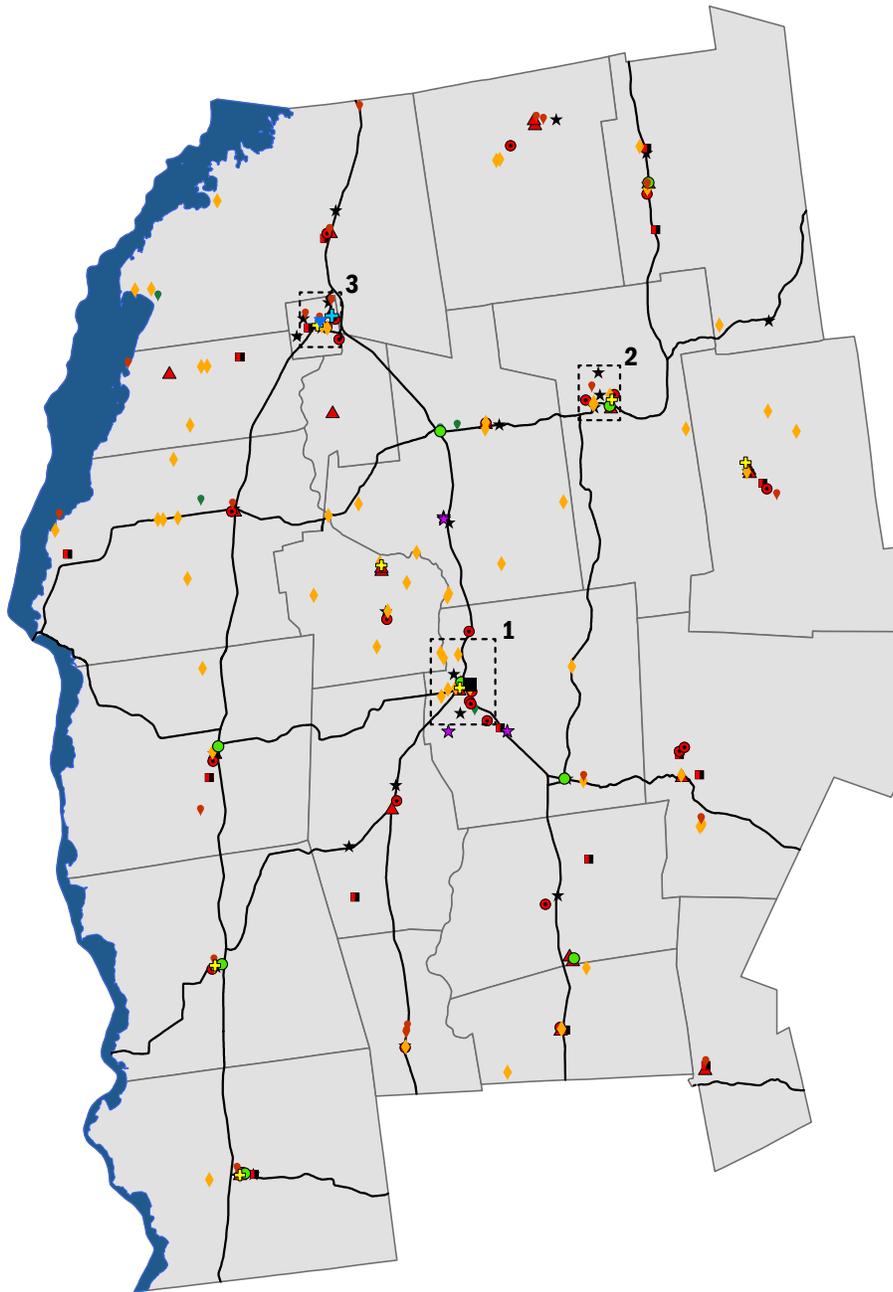
■	**Court House**	✚	**National Gaurd Facility**	▾	**State Government Facility**
★	**Emergency Services**	●	**Post Office**	■	**Town Garage**
◆	**Federal Government Facility**	◆	**Public Gathering Space**	▲	**Town Office/City Hall**
✚	**Library**	●	**School K-12**	▼	**Visitor Information Center**

quate storage for road salt and sand in the near future to meet these requirements.

Cemeteries

There are many historic cemeteries throughout the Addison Region and a smaller number still in use. These cemeteries are administered either by municipalities through a Cemetery Commission with appointed representatives or by private, nonprofit Cemetery Associations. These commissions and associations are responsible for laying out the cemeteries, selling lots, and maintaining the grounds and records.

Finding funds to maintain historic cemeteries that are no longer actively used and without an income stream is an ongoing struggle for the commissions and associations. The Vermont Old Cemetery Association works to encourage the restoration and preservation of neglected and abandoned cemeteries throughout the state and supports the work of local organizations. Volunteer labor, local fundraising, and philanthropic donations are used to maintain and repair cemeteries throughout the Region.

Other Municipal Facilities

Municipalities in the Addison Region also own a variety of other lands and facilities such as tax sale lands, old school lots, town forests, housing facilities like Weathervane West in Lincoln, and old road rights-of-way. Many municipal plans provide a detailed inventory of municipally owned structures, land, and rights-of-way.

ACRPC recently supported more than half of the towns in the Region in accessing planning and implementation funding to improve the energy efficiency and weatherization of municipal buildings. This Plan supports building on this work to further improve existing municipal infrastructure to promote and improve community centers in each of the Region's historic villages to increase the sense of community in each town.

RECREATION RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

The Addison Region, bounded on the west by Lake Champlain and on the east by the Green Mountains, is rich in recreation resources. The region's year-round recreation opportunities attract visitors and contribute to the quality of life for residents. (See **Map 15** in the Natural Resources Chapter.)

Public Trails

The Addison Region offers many opportunities to use public trails. In addition to the trails on state or federal land, there are trails on municipal and private land. There are trails in the region for a variety of activities often and many trails are shared among different users.

- The Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) is an 18-mile multi-use trail system surrounding downtown Middlebury. The TAM provides access to wooded and open recreation paths, connecting residential areas, the town center, and the Middlebury College campus to each other and to surrounding natural areas. The TAM is funded mainly through grants and private donors, and most of the trail is on private land.

- Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) Trail System of the Addison Region includes eight VAST clubs with hundreds of miles of trails. These trails are maintained by local volunteers, generally located in the more rural parts of the Region and are used primarily by snowmobiles. They also support other activities like cross-country skiing and snowshoeing and offer a source of revenue for tourism-based businesses in the winter months. This existing network of winter trails offers potential for developing into year-round multi-use paths in some locations.

- The Long Trail corridor passes through the Addison Region on a combination of public and private lands. Several connecting trails link the Long Trail to other resources in the Region such as Silver Lake and the Moosalamoo area. An especially popular section of the Long Trail runs between Breadloaf and the Appalachian Gap.

- The Bristol Trail Network has a number of town-owned parks and has connected those, its downtown, and other near-by natural areas with approximately 2.5 miles of trail.[40]

- The North Country Trail is the newest trail to the Region and one of the most ambitious. This trail connects the Appalachian Trail in Vermont to the Lewis and Clark Trail at Lake Sakakawea State Park in North Dakota. It also joins other significant trails like the Superior Hiking Trail and Kekekabic Trail in Minnesota and shares sections with the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) in Vermont.

- The Catamount Trail is a 300-mile backcountry ski

route spanning Vermont. It passes directly through Goshen, Ripton and Lincoln, offering skiers a mix of ungroomed forest routes and quiet wilderness travel through the Moosalamoo region and Green Mountain National Forest.

Other communities in the Addison Region have begun developing trails or trail systems in their communities, while others are just starting to plan for possible corridors. Vergennes has plans for and is seeking funding to construct trails around the City. Many of the smaller village centers have begun thinking about sidewalks and trails that would provide recreation for residents and a safer way for children to walk and bike to community facilities. Leicester and Whiting have considered the abandoned rail bed running from Leicester Depot west to Lake Champlain as a potential trail corridor. Snake Mountain, located primarily in the towns of Addison and Weybridge, is popular hiking area in the region and additional trails there have also been identified as desirable. The cross-country ski trails located at Rikert/Breadloaf Campus are another winter trail resource in the region.

Trail Use Conflicts

Trail systems in the Region have successfully accommodated diverse users, though conflicts between snowmobilers and cross-country skiers, mountain bikers and horseback riders, and other groups occasionally arise. ATVs present the most pressing challenge, as their growing popularity has pushed use onto private land since they are prohibited on state and federal lands, creating conflicts between ATV enthusiasts, other recreation users, and landowners. ATV riders are beginning to organize similarly to VAST to secure trail access and promote responsible riding practices. Trail riding on horseback is also increasing in popularity as more residents acquire horses. Riders have not yet formed an organized group or secured specialized amenities such as trailer-accessible access points. As these emerging user groups grow, addressing space and resource conflicts will become increasingly important for regional trail management.

Trail Connections

The state and federal lands in the Addison Region offer great recreation resources for trail users. Continuing to connect local trails to the larger trail systems, especially those in the Green Mountains, would benefit all users. The Moosalamoo area, located largely in the Addison Region with its miles of trails and backcountry roads connecting Green Mountain Forest land with surrounding privately owned tracts, provides an excellent example of such a public-private partnership. The Long Trail and its associated connecting trails provide another.

Bicycle Facilities

Bicycling is one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the region. Bicycles also serve as a mode of transportation for regional residents. The Addison Region offers cycling opportunities for those who want to peddle around the gently rolling terrain of the Champlain Valley, to test their endurance biking up one of the mountain gaps, or careen down a wooded trail on a mountain bike. Much of the focus of bicycle tourism in the region has been in the Champlain Valley. The Lake Champlain Bikeways loops in the Region have been popular while the recent addition of the Triangle Bike Loop between the three large towns of the Region enables the development of improved bike infrastructure to benefit both recreation and commuters. The steeper terrain in the eastern part of the Region like the Moosalamoo National Recreation area attracts mountain bikers. See Chaper 1 for more information.

Water-Based Recreation

The Addison Region has miles of shoreline on Lake Champlain, Lake Dunmore, Otter Creek, the Middlebury River, the New Haven River, as well as numerous smaller ponds and streams. These water bodies are used for a range of recreation activities including boating of all types, swimming, year-round fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing. Summer camps and second homes line some areas of shoreline, bringing seasonal residents and visitors to the Region.

Lake Champlain

The Addison Region has three state parks on Lake Champlain, along with state-owned boat launches and fishing access points in Shoreham, Addison, Panton, and Ferrisburgh, supplemented by private campgrounds and marinas in several towns. Lake Champlain is a largely untapped gem for boating. Additional facilities and connections between the lake and regional communities should be developed. Most lakeshore towns have identified the need for local beaches. Panton has devel-

oped lake access and others like Addison have potential sites. However, development remains challenging due to costs and complications including parking, restrooms, and aquatic nuisance plant management. Ensuring public access to Lake Champlain through State facilities is an important goal of this plan.

Other Water Bodies

Beyond the "big lake" there are numerous water bodies – such as Lake Dunmore, Fern Lake, Cedar Lake, Sunset Lake, Bristol Pond, Otter Creek, the Middlebury River, and the New Haven River – currently providing recreation opportunities in the Region. The towns in which some of these smaller lakes are located have also identified public access as an important issue. Public access on these lakes is more difficult to secure than on Lake Champlain, since many are ringed by residential development. The issue for public access on streams is similar to that on Lake Champlain. As land is no longer used for agriculture and is developed for other uses, traditional access points can be lost. Campgrounds offer one opportunity for access on or near Lake Champlain. Branbury State Park offers acces to Lake Dunmore in Salisbury. Information about water quality and conservation can be found in the Natural Resources Chapter of this Plan.

Water Use Conflicts

Water-based recreation users can create conflicts. The use of non-motorized boats in the Addison Region's lakes and streams is increasing. At the same time, the number of motorized boats, especially personal watercraft, is also increasing. Sometimes motorized boats are being used in places that used to be accessible only to non-motorized craft. Additionally, when boats ramps funded by boat registrations get congested, non-motorized boat users can feel unwelcome. Also, as more of the Region's shorelines become developed, conflict can occur because new owners are not aware that public use of the shore is allowed under state law between the water and the mean high waterline, if accessed legally.

Wildlife-Based Recreation

Wildlife-based recreation including hunting, fishing, and bird watching has a long history in the Addison Region, with the sporting community funding much of the current outdoor recreation infrastructure and 11 state-owned Wildlife Management Areas. Hunting on private land is declining as parcels are developed and posted, concentrating hunters on remaining open areas, while shooting ranges have closed due to noise and safety concerns, leaving no public ranges in the area. The Region's fishing resources include native trout and diverse lake species with growing ice fishing popularity, and bird watching resources span diverse habitats from alpine tundra to forests, though both face increasingly limited access due to changing land ownership patterns. The shifting demands for local access to natural spaces has generated growing interest in developing multi-use stewardship plans for new and existing town forests.[41] ACRPC supports communities in the planning, fundraising, and project management efforts to move recreation projects like the recent Monkton Town Forest project forward.

Municipal Recreation and Organized Sports

Many communities throughout the Addison Region have local greens, parks, and sports fields that vary in size, amenities, and supported activities. The municipalities of Bristol, Cornwall, Middlebury, Monkton, Ferrisburgh, and Vergennes have active recreation departments or committees, while other communities have groups focused on town greens or ball fields that could evolve into recreation committees. Smaller communities often depend on neighboring towns for recreation facilities while recognizing the importance of more conveniently located local opportunities. These towns also rely on their schools to provide recreation facilities, especially sports fields and playgrounds, with schools and associated fields often forming community recreation centers, supplemented by organized youth and adult sports leagues throughout the Region.

ACRPC has supported the ongoing demand for more recreational opportunities by enabling projects such as the effort to create the Cornwall Outdoor Recreation Area with planning, grant writing, and project management assistance.[42]

Health & Safety

STATE HEALTH PLAN

The Vermont Department of Health's 2025-2030 State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) lays out a five-year strategic blueprint to ensure that all Vermonters—especially communities experiencing historic inequities (such as Indigenous people, people of color, LGBTQ+

Vermonters, older Vermonters, people with disabilities ,and people who are unhoused)—have fair access to the conditions that support good health.

The plan establishes four overarching goals: (1) improve the availability of affordable, accessible, safe housing; (2) improve health and quality of life by addressing the high cost of living; (3) increase access to inclusive, equitable, and affordable health care services; and, (4) strengthen the capacity of the mental health and substance use services system.

To achieve these goals, the plan uses a framework of strategies (actions to be taken by communities, agencies, and partners), indicators (population-level health outcomes to track), and performance measures (to monitor how well the strategies are working). Implementation depends on collaboration across sectors (housing, finance, health care, social services, community partners) and prioritizes a "Health in All Policies" approach—recognizing that health is shaped by where people live, work, learn, and play.

HOSPITALS

Porter Medical Center (PMC) is the major institutional provider of healthcare in the Addison Region. Porter Medical Center (also referred to as Porter Hospital) is a nonprofit healthcare institution located in Middlebury. Founded in 1925, the facility has grown to serve the residents of Addison County and surrounding areas.
The hospital operates as a 25-bed acute care facility under its Critical Access Hospital designation and is part of the UVM Health Network. On the same campus, it maintains a 98-bed skilled nursing facility (including memory care, short-term rehabilitation, and long-term care units) through the Helen Porter Healthcare & Rehabilitation Center.

Additionally, Porter Medical Center supports a network of outpatient clinics and medical practices across the region including primary care in Middlebury, Vergennes, and Brandon, as well as specialized services in cardiology, orthopedics, obstetrics/gynecology, ear-nose-throat (ENT), podiatry, and more. The campus includes a modern Birthing Center, surgical suites, 24-hour physician-staffed emergency department, diagnostic imaging and laboratory services, infusion center, and ExpressCare for urgent outpatient needs.

Porter Medical Center released a 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) report for Addison County. The report recommended that organizations in Addison County focus on Access to Health Care, Housing, Mental Health and Substance Use, and Social Determinants of Health.

Addison Region residents also have access to hospital services at University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMC) and Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC). UVMC, in Burlington, is the largest healthcare facility in the state. It is a 533-bed, Level 1 trauma care center and is a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Vermont Medical School. RRMC in Rutland is a 145-bed community hospital and is the second largest hospital in Vermont.
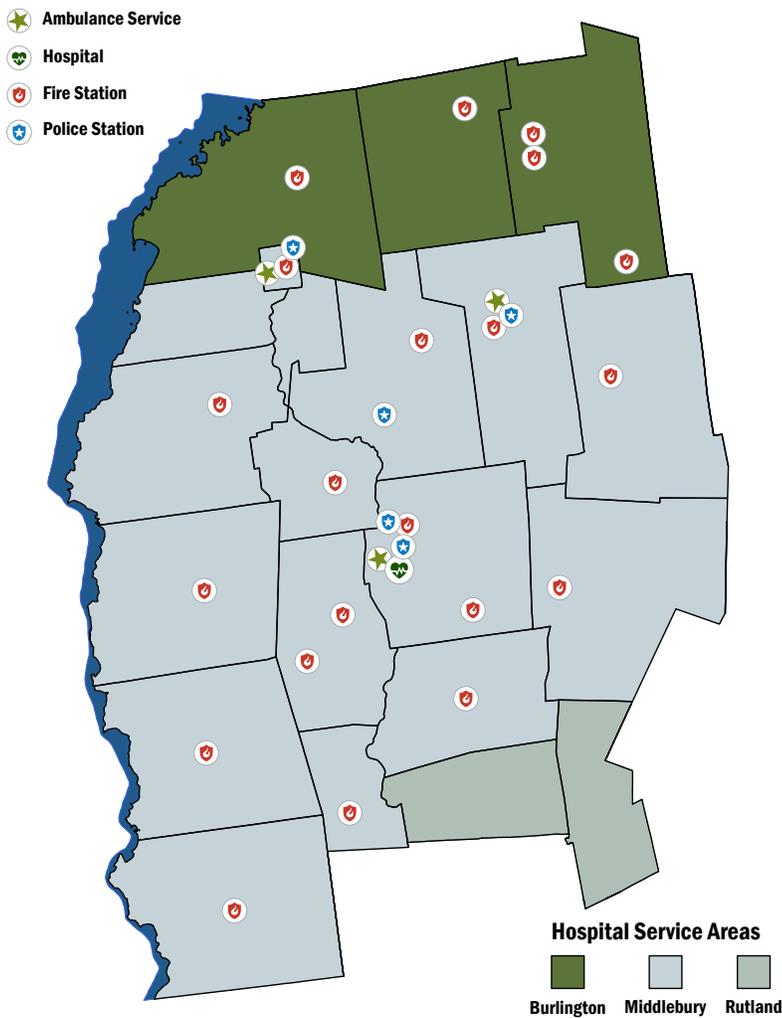
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Primary healthcare in the Addison Region is provided by a variety of organizations. There are nine medical practices owned and managed by Porter Medical Center located in Middlebury, Vergennes, and Brandon. The PMC practices include five family practices, as well as Porter OB/GYN, Porter Internal Medicine, Porter Ear, Nose and Throat, and Middlebury Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine. PMC also contracts with Green Mountain Urology to provide a clinic in Middlebury.

Between 15 and 20 other physicians maintain independent practices around the region. There are also other clinics providing healthcare services in the Region. The Open Door Clinic is a free clinic for uninsured and under-insured Addison Region residents providing primary care in Middlebury and Bristol.

Mountain Community Health, located in Bristol, is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). An FQHC is a primary care clinic that receives federal grants to provide healthcare to underserved communities, often in designated shortage areas. These centers offer a range of comprehensive services and operate on a sliding fee scale based on income.

Residents in the southern part of the Addison Region may seek medical services in Brandon or the Rutland area. To the north, region residents may choose to see practitioners in Chittenden County.

Community Infrastructure

Map 4 - Emergency Services

- ★ Ambulance Service
- ✚ Hospital
- 🛡 Fire Station
- 🛡 Police Station

Hospital Service Areas

Burlington   Middlebury   Rutland

While according to the state's measurements the Addison Region is well supplied with medical providers, the towns of Orwell and Bristol are still designated as Medically Underserved Areas by the federal government. Generally, access to healthcare services is more difficult for those in the outlying towns since most of the providers are in Middlebury. The Shorewell Clinic, which provides primary care from an office in Shoreham, was created as a response to the need for medical care that was more accessible to rural residents. Given the rural nature of the Addison Region, it has traditionally been and continues to be more difficult to attract and retain primary care providers.

HOME HEALTHCARE

As Vermont is the second oldest state and Addison County is oldest county in the state, home healthcare has become a growing component of the healthcare delivery system over the past decade. Homecare services have expanded in scope and intensity as insurers, doctors, and hospitals look for ways to control healthcare costs by caring for patients in their homes whenever possible. Patients are being discharged from hospitals sooner and need greater care at home. The number of frail elderly people who wish to remain in their homes is growing, thus increasing demand for homecare services.

Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Inc. (ACHHH) provides skilled care services such as nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social work, and nutrition consultation. ACHHH also offers other support services through home health aides who provide personal care and homemakers who assist with basic housework. The agency also provides special services such as hospice care and mother-child health services.

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has a district office in Middlebury that serves the Region's municipalities. VDH provides health promotion and disease prevention services in partnership with local healthcare providers, voluntary agencies, schools, businesses and community organizations. Public health nurses, nutritionists and outreach workers carry out VDH's programs locally. Services available through VDH's office in Middlebury include programs for Dr. Dynasaur-eligible children, the region's childcare providers, pregnant woman and young children, as well as cancer screening for at-risk populations. The region's municipal health officers also receive support from VDH's district office.

HEALTHCARE AT EDUCATION FACILITIES

Elementary and secondary schools in the Addison Region vary in the level of healthcare services they provide on-site. The Region's larger schools have full-time reg-

istered nurses, while the smaller schools have a nurse on-site only part-time. School nurses are responsible for health screenings, immunizations, and general health issues for students. In some schools, nurses are also involved in classroom teaching, and some have school-based Health Centers.

Middlebury College has its own health center, Parton Health Center (PHC), which serves the basic healthcare needs of its students. PHC has a staff of around 20 full- and part-time employees. PHC has two inpatient beds and one observation bed. The college also provides psychological support through its Center for Counseling and Human Relations.

DENTAL CARE

There are approximately 11 dental practices in the Addison Region, most in Middlebury with one in Bristol and several in Vergennes. There is one orthodontics practice, while the others provide general dentistry. Community health sites like Mountain Community Health in Bristol offer dental care with sliding-scale fees as a Federally Qualified Health Center. Overall, in the Addison Region, there is a lack of available, accessible dental healthcare services, particularly for low-income residents and those without insurance for preventive care. Many clinics report capacity constraints, and many residents go out of the Region for dental services.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC), a local community mental health center located in Middlebury, serves Addison Region residents. The Counseling Service offers a range of professional mental health and developmental services. In addition to providing direct services, CSAC focuses on prevention, early intervention and outreach services by working collaboratively with other community agencies. The Counseling Service also provides a full-range of support services to people with severe mental illness including a supervised residential setting, an eating disorders program, a sex offender treatment program and a 24-hour emergency crisis hotline. CSAC's main offices are in Middlebury with satellite offices in Bristol and Vergennes.

Additionally, there are more than 15 private counselors, psychologists, and licensed social workers in the Region with a variety of specialties.

## NURSING HOMES AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

As the baby-boom generation ages, there will be an increasing demand for healthcare services in general and long-term care services in particular. In the Addison Region, residents in need of residential care have access to nursing homes and residential care homes both in the Region and in the Burlington and Rutland areas.

The largest nursing home facility in the Region is the Helen Porter Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center (HPHRC), which is part of Porter Medical Center, in Middlebury. It is licensed for 105 beds — including dedicated neighborhoods for long-term care, post-acute rehabilitation, memory care, and specialized palliative/hospice end-of-life suites. Facilities include a full post-acute rehabilitation program with physical, occupational, and speech therapies aimed at helping residents return home after hospitalization or surgery. The memory-care and long-term care wings share a "home-like" environment, and recent renovations have introduced private rooms, upgraded therapy spaces (including a simulated household kitchen and natural light), and modern end-of-life suites developed in partnership with the ACHHH hospice program. The building and grounds also feature well-equipped communal areas, a secure courtyard, landscaped outdoor space and amenities tailored to resident comfort and dignity

Several smaller residential care facilities exist in the area as well, including EastView at Middlebury, The Residence at Otter Creek, Vergennes Grand, and Shard Villa in Salisbury, offering various levels of support such

East View Residential Housing, Middlebury
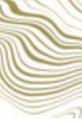
as assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing. Residential care homes are state-licensed, group-living arrangements designed to meet the needs of people who cannot live independently and usually do not require the type of care provided in a nursing home. Increasing residential facility for seniors in the region has been identified as an important need.

HUMAN SERVICES

There are numerous organizations that provide a broad range of services to the elderly, those with disabilities, parents, children, and other residents of the Addison Region. There are also a few coalitions or councils, which are working together to better meet the needs and improve the quality of life of the Region's residents.

Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects (HOPE), originally formed as the Addison County Community Action Group (ACCAG), has been providing a wide variety of programs to low income people since 1965. HOPE's core facility houses one of the region's largest food shelves, serving over 3,000 people annually, which offers non-perishable foods, dairy, fresh produce, and baked goods donated from local farms and gleaning initiatives. Beyond the food shelf, HOPE operates a thrift/resale store on Boardman Street, Middlebury, that provides clothing and household goods vouchers to clients. It offers a broad suite of supportive services including emergency rent and utility assistance, help with medical and dental needs, job-related aid (such as tools or uniforms), budget counseling, and assistance to persons experiencing homelessness (including hotel stays, laundry vouchers, and referrals).

Charter House Coalition (CHC) is a nonprofit based at 27 North Pleasant Street, Middlebury, VT, serving adults (and some families) experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Addison County. Founded in 2005 as a volunteer-based outreach providing meals and a "warming shelter," the organization has grown into a year-round emergency shelter with professional staff and multiple support services. In 2024, they provided more than 9,491 bed nights and over 23,000 meals, with outreach and case-management services to hundreds of individuals and households in Addison County. CHC fills a low-barrier shelter role: they accept individuals often excluded in other settings (e.g., due to substance-use, mental-health issues, past incarceration) and focus on humanity, respect and dignity. They

act as a hub and connector: by serving as coordinated entry point, they help integrate the homelessness/housing-services network in Addison County.

John Graham Housing & Services (JGHS) provides affordable, safe housing and emergency shelter in Addison County for low to moderate-income individuals and families and those without a place to live. The John Graham Shelter in Vergennes is the only emergency shelter for families with children in Addison County.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The main provider of public transportation in the Addison Region is TriValley Transit (TVT), a non-profit public transportation provider serving the central Vermont region, including the counties of Addison, Orange and northern Windsor with plans to extend into Washington County, starting July 1, 2026. TVT services are described in Chapter 3 on Transportation.

HOUSING PROVIDERS

There are a few nonprofit and governmental entities that provide housing and related services in the Addison Region including Addison Housing Works (AHW), Vermont State Housing Authority, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) and the Vermont Economic Services Division. Together, these efforts illustrate a range of housing responses—from higher-performance cohousing and senior rental housing to broader affordable-housing portfolios—working to provide diverse housing options in Addison County.

Addison Housing Works (formerly Addison County Community Trust) provides opportunities for affordable homeownership in the region. AHW owns and operates nine mobile home parks where residents own their homes and the trust owns the land. AHW also offers the Homeland program that allows residents to own a home and lease land from the trust. In the region, AHW manages 340 mobile home lots and 334 managed rental apartments. The organization also manages about 76 homes in its single-family shared equity program.

Other innovative initiatives provide diverse housing options in the county. Weathervane United in Lincoln is a project that transformed three buildings in Lincoln's

village center into 10 apartments for the area's older population. Over the years, these apartments have housed around 50 residents. The housing project is run by a volunteer board, which helps keep rent affordable for tenants. Bristol Village Cohousing is an intentional cohousing community completed in 2017 in the heart of the village area of Bristol. It offers fourteen dwelling units plus a central common house and shared green space on two acres.

The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) is a federally-designated Community Action Agency incorporated in 1965, which serves Franklin, Grand Isle, Chittenden, and Addison counties. Vermont's five Community Action Agencies (CAAs) receive their basic funding through annual Community Services Block Grants from the federal Department of Health and Human Services. CVOEO's Housing Assistance Program aids low-income residents, including renters, homeowners and the homeless, with security deposits, back rent or mortgage assistance, housing searches, home buying and repair information, advocacy, landlord/tenant and fair housing issues. CVOEO also provides assistance with weatherization and energy bills for income-qualified homeowners in the region.

Other organizations and agencies provide assistance such as housing vouchers, programs for first-time homebuyers and funds to keep people from becoming homeless. There are also services aimed at specific populations such as the elderly, disabled, teens or mentally ill. The Vermont State Housing Authority manages 64 units of affordable rental housing for the elderly and disabled in Middlebury and 12 units in Vergennes. The Counseling Services of Addison County has some housing for its clients. Please see the population and housing section for more information on housing in the Region.

SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

There are several organizations that provide a range of services to the region's elderly. Age Well, is a regional community-based coalition that serves as a clearinghouse, referral service and service provider. Age Well serves anyone age 60 or older in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle counties. Age Well coordinates programs like Meals on Wheels, which provides home delivery of hot meals, and Senior Companions, who are older adults who help other seniors live independently. Age Well also offers assistance like health insurance counseling, a help line and programs that provide caregiver support.

Elderly Services Inc. (ESI), headquartered on Exchange Street, Middlebury, operates a suite of programs designed to support older adults and their families in Addison County. Its flagship initiative is Project Independence, a nationally-recognized adult day program that offers medically-oriented daytime care for elders facing chronic illness, memory issues, or social isolation, providing hot meals, nursing oversight, transportation, social activities, and individual support plans. Beyond the adult day center, ESI offers eldercare counseling and consultation for family caregivers, a lifelong-learning program (ESI College) with pay-what-you-can classes, and caregiver support groups and educational seminars. In recent years, ESI has invested significantly in facility upgrades to enhance its capacity, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. In early 2024 the organization secured a $1.785 million state grant to support major repairs and energy-efficiency improvements at the Weinberg Center, including new insulation, solar panel installation, replacement of roofing and siding, and a geothermal heat-pump system.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

State Police

The Vermont State Police (VSP) serve as a primary law enforcement agency in Addison County, particularly for towns without their own full-service municipal police departments. They provide statewide police services including traffic enforcement, criminal investigations, and response to major incidents. In Addison County, their local coverage is anchored by the "New Haven Barracks" field station, which is responsible for patrolling state highways and providing support to local agencies. The VSP also has taken on expanded roles such as embedding mental-health crisis specialists and enhancing training for officers responding to behavioral health-related calls.

The New Haven Barracks located on Route 7 functions as the command point for troopers in the area, includes administrative offices, and vehicle fleet support.

Addison County Sheriff's Department and County Jail

The Addison County's Sheriff's Department (ACSD) has the jurisdiction to provide police services throughout the County. However, it does not have the resources to fully function in that capacity. ACSD provides transport of prisoners and security at the county courthouse. It is the primary agency responsible for civil service process throughout the county and provides other public safety services, such as crowd control, as needed. Towns in the Addison Region without municipal police departments may contract with the ACSD to provide local law enforcement patrols. ACSD also patrols the Green Mountain National Forest's recreation areas within the County on a contractual basis.

ACSD has occupied its location on Court Street in Middlebury for over 150 years. The building was built in 1845 as the sheriff's residence, sheriff's department, and county jail. The jail is no longer in operation.

MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS

In the Addison Region, Bristol, Middlebury, and Vergennes have municipal police departments. In their coverage areas, these departments are the primary law enforcement entity.

Bristol Police Department

The Bristol Police Department (BPD) was formed in 1903 with one officer who patrolled the two-block business district. Currently, the department employs six full-time officers, including the chief. The Bristol Police Department serves the village of Bristol, (approximately a 1-square-mile district) and the broader municipal area in partnership with the Vermont State Police and the Addison County Sheriff's Department, operating as a full-service agency providing 24-hour coverage within its jurisdiction.

In 2013, the department moved into a purpose-designed station at 72 Munsill Avenue, replacing its previous basement facility in Holley Hall; the new ~2,200-square-foot leased facility features enhanced security, prisoner holding capability, and room for future expansion. Recent annual reports highlight the department's growth in staffing, ongoing community partnerships (including local mental-health and addiction-services agencies),

and equipment upgrades. Overall, the BPD has oriented itself around modern community-oriented policing, infrastructure suited to current public-safety needs, and proactive collaboration with allied agencies and local organizations.

Middlebury Police Department

The Middlebury Police Department (MPD) serves the town of Middlebury, Vermont and is responsible for 24-hour law enforcement coverage including patrol, investigations, traffic enforcement, community policing, and emergency dispatch support. The department emphasizes building partnerships with residents and local institutions. MPD also coordinates closely with other agencies such as the Addison County Sheriff's Department, the Vermont State Police, and campus public safety at Middlebury College to handle mutual-aid responses, large events, and specialized investigations.

The MPD occupies a modern repurposed campus on the site of a former wastewater treatment plant off Seymour Street- an adaptive reuse project completed around 2021 which converted old industrial buildings into a police station, vehicle garage, forensics lab, and administrative space. The building includes secure detention capacity (able to securely hold up to six people, with space for additional non-secure holding) and is equipped to serve as an emergency operations center with full backup power, multi-media briefing rooms, and a mobile command post vehicle.

Middlebury Police Station (Former Wastewater Treatment Facility)

Middlebury has identified a need to evaluate the dispatch system, which currently uses the VT Department of Public Safety in off-hours and local dispatchers during daytime hours. It will examine the level of service to the public and accessibility of the police for emergency and non-emergency service calls.

Vergennes Police Department

Vergennes established its own police force in 1980. A full-time chief and seven full-time police officers along with trained assistants provide full-service law-enforcement including patrol, traffic enforcement, criminal and juvenile investigations, and ordinance enforcement for the City. Since March 2014 the department has been housed in a modern 4,611 square-foot facility at 8 Main Street, designed with the capacity for up to ten full-time officers and built to support functions such as secure custody processing, evidence storage, a sally port and training space.

Municipal Constables

All the region's municipalities have, as required by state statute, an elected or appointed town constable. These municipal constables are typically responsible for enforcing local ordinances, which are often not covered by other law enforcement entities.

The level of training, experience, and job description of municipal constables varies greatly among towns. In some municipalities, the constable is the local law enforcement officer, with all powers of search, seizure, and arrest within the town. In other communities, the constable has limited power and authority. By state statute, a constable's authority is limited to the municipality, while municipal police have statewide jurisdiction.

OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT ENTITIES

Middlebury College Security

Middlebury College has a Department of Public Safety that provides a uniformed security staff 24 hours a day. The department maintains regular foot and cruiser patrol of campus and responds to emergencies. The department's staff includes 11 full-time officers and 6 full-time telecommunicators. Campus security officers

do not have powers of arrest, but work closely with local law enforcement agencies. The department maintains two fully equipped patrol vehicles. Through the use of these cruisers, foot patrol, and seasonal bike patrol, officers maintain continual patrol through the college's buildings and grounds.

Forest Service

The Forest Service has a public safety role within the boundaries of the Green Mountain National Forest. Forest Service rangers participate in search and rescue operations and enforce regulations within the forest.

Game Wardens

The State Department of Fish and Wildlife has a statewide warden force of around 30 officers who each oversee a district of approximately 300-square miles. Wardens enforce fish and wildlife, boat, snowmobile, ATV (all-terrain vehicle), and general criminal laws. These officers are trained in compass and map skills and are frequently called in to assist other law enforcement agencies in search and rescue operations. Generally, at least one of the state wardens operates out of the Addison Region.

E-911 AND DISPATCH SERVICES

In the early 1990s, Vermont recognized that emergency dispatch radio system used by the state was severely outdated and in need of modernization. The state began to explore a system of consolidated dispatch centers and development of a statewide Enhanced 911 system began. In 1998, emergency dispatch in the Addison Region was consolidated into the newly built Public Safety Answering Point in Williston and the E-911 system became operational statewide. The Williston office dispatches some of the Region's emergency responders directly, including the state police. Some of the Region's fire and rescue organizations continue to have local dispatchers to whom the Williston office transfers the calls.

Enhanced 911 provides everyone in Vermont with 911 service and provides emergency responders with information about the source of the 911 call. Vermont was the first state to use an all-digital, statewide network for public safety emergency response calls. Implementation of E-911 required renaming of some local roads

to conform to naming standards. All structures were given new 911 addresses and new structures are addressed following the 911 conventions. The system is also capable of processing calls that originate from cellular service providers. As the technology in the actual phones has improved, the system can now locate where some cell phone calls into the system originate from, which greatly improves the ability to respond to an emergency call from a cell phone.

ADDISON COUNTY COURT

Since 1798 three buildings in Middlebury, all in the same vicinity, have served as the Addison County Courthouse. In 1995 the County Courthouse moved to the Frank Mahady Courthouse, a 39,500-square-foot facility behind the former courthouse. The Addison County Family, District, Superior and Probate courts are located in the courthouse.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

There is no state prison or jail in Addison County itself- the Addison County Sheriff's Office once had its own local jail, but it is no longer in operation.

The closest state-run correctional facility is the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility in Rutland. Most detainees from the Addison Region who require incarceration are transported either to the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility in Rutland or to the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) in South Burlington. There is no federal prison facility in Vermont.

Vermont's prison population was more than 1,650 in 2025, below the roughly 1,750 seen in 2019 and a peak of more than 2,200 in the late 2000s. State data shows the detainee population- people jailed while awaiting trial- has been rising more rapidly than the sentenced population. At the same time, Vermont's prisons have experienced persistent staffing shortages. This has required the State to send prisoners to other states, currently via contract to Mississippi.

Vermont's policy has traditionally been to incarcerate only violent or repeat offenders and to deal with lesser offenses with probation, community service, and other community-based programs. The vast majority of people in Vermont's corrections system are not incarcerated. The Vermont Department of Corrections has 12

community-based facilities, also called probation and parole offices or field offices, at locations throughout the state, including the Mahady Courthouse in Middlebury.

CRIME RATES

In Addison County, violent crime is very low relative to national figures — recent data show an annual rate of about 31.2 violent crimes per 100,000 residents (for 2019–2023) compared to roughly 106 per 100,000 nationally. Property crime is also low, at approximately 62.3 property crimes per 100,000 residents over the same period, versus about 163 nationally.

Addison County remains a relatively safe area—with crime rates well below national averages—but like Vermont overall it is not static: statewide data show increases in some crime categories (e.g., aggravated assault, homicide) over the past decade.

FIRE PROTECTION AND RESCUE SERVICES

Volunteer Fire Departments

There are 17 fire departments in the Addison Region. Additionally, the Brandon Fire Department, which is outside the region, serves the towns of Goshen and Leicester. The Vergennes Department serves the towns Panton, Waltham, and portions of Ferrisburgh in addition to the City of Vergennes. The remaining municipalities

have local departments. Most of the fire departments in the Region are composed entirely of volunteers. Middlebury and Vergennes have paid volunteer departments with responders who are paid for their time when out on a call. Most of the Region's fire departments are nonprofit entities separate from the municipalities. They are funded through a combination of appropriated municipal funds, fundraising efforts, grants, and donations.

Several Addison County municipalities have been studying and budgeting for fire station improvements or replacements rather than ongoing repairs, driven by aging buildings and modern operational needs (larger apparatus bays, storage, training space, ADA, and mechanical upgrades). For example, Vergennes has publicly funded station studies and estimated multi-million-dollar upgrade needs to bring an older station up to current standards, and New Haven is pursuing construction of a new fire station. Those capital projects are increasingly showing up in town official discussions and town capital plans.

The Addison County Firefighters Association (ACFA) is a regional organization of the local departments. Member departments have a mutual aid agreement to provide assistance to each other as requested. The association also offers a yearly fire training school and a basic training course for new firefighters as needed. That network is a key resilience factor while individual town departments grapple with staffing and capital stresses. Addison County's fire services remain community-rooted and resilient, but are under growing financial and personnel pressure. Higher apparatus and gear costs, plus aging stations, are forcing capital planning and grant-seeking; meanwhile, volunteer declines are motivating conversations about paid staffing models and regional consolidation to ensure reliable 24/7 coverage. The County's mutual-aid structures and association work by time and capacity, but many towns are actively weighing long-term shifts from an exclusively volunteer model toward hybrid or regional approaches.

Other Fire Responders

Each municipality in the region has an appointed Forest Fire Warden. The wardens issue burn permits and would coordinate response in the event of a forest fire.

Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

There are four emergency transport squads that serve Addison Region residents; the Bristol Area Rescue Squad, the Middlebury Volunteer Ambulance Association and the Vergennes Area Rescue Squad are located within the Region. The Brandon Rescue Squad, located outside the Region, serves the towns of Goshen and Leicester. The service areas of the squads in the Region do not follow municipal boundaries and there are back-up protocols between the squads to provide coverage when the primary responder is not available. The Emergency Medical Services Division of the Vermont Department of Health licenses these squads and establishes training requirements for rescue personnel. The region's rescue squads are funded through a mix of billing for service, appropriations from municipalities, fund-raising, and subscriptions or donations.

Additionally, there are five first response teams located in the outlying towns that provide emergency medical services in the Region. First-response teams — often volunteer-based squads affiliated with fire or rescue departments — provide the critical "first on-scene" emergency care before ambulances arrive. As demand for emergency care rises and response expectations grow, these first-response teams represent a crucial but vulnerable piece of the County's public-safety backbone. The EMS system faces widespread staffing and funding challenges. While call volumes have increased, many

services, including those in rural counties like Addison, rely heavily on volunteers. Many face recruitment and retention pressures, and they struggle with reimbursement models that do not fully cover costs. The EMS system will need to navigate several key challenges to maintain and strengthen service. Limited volunteer availability, increasing medical complexity, and the need for career staffing are putting pressure on existing agencies. Funding models are another major issue: Vermont EMS providers report that reimbursement rarely covers the full cost of readiness and response, particularly in incidents that do not result in patient transport. As the County continues to respond to an evolving health-care environment, emergency medical services will need to adapt: expanding training, integrating with regional hospital and long-term care networks, enhancing community paramedicine or mobile-integrated-health roles, and ensuring that response capacity is resilient against growing demands, natural disasters, and infrastructure stresses.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Municipal Emergency Management Directors

Municipalities appoint a Local Emergency Management Director (LEMD) as required by state statute. The responsibilities of the LEMD include identifying a community's vulnerabilities, planning for emergencies, responding to disasters, and conducting recovery operations.

The level of involvement, training, and expertise of the LEMDs in the Addison Region varies. In about half of municipalities, these responsibilities are held by the Select Board Chair. Other municipalities have appointed an LEMD or supporting Emergency Management Coordinator. Some LEMDs have attended Vermont Emergency Management sponsored courses and participate in regional coordination. In some municipalities, LEMDs are preparing to respond to future disasters by purchasing and installing back-up generators for emergency shelters and developing shelter plans. All LEMDs in the region have participated in the development of a Local Emergency Management Plan for their municipality.

Addison County Regional Emergency Management Committee

The Addison County Regional Emergency Management Committee (ACREMC) was formed after the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC #8) for the Addison Region was absorbed into a new statewide LEPC. Voting members of the REMC are made up of Local Emergency Management Directors and Emergency Services Representatives from each municipality in the Region. Representatives from fire departments, emergency medical services, law enforcement, media, transportation, hospitals, the Department of Health district office, organizations serving vulnerable populations, and any other interested public or private individual or organization are invited to attend and participate.

The REMC conducts All-Hazards preparedness planning and coordinates with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), and the new Statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). ACRPC provides administrative support, including taking meeting minutes, with funding from VEM.

Other Organizations

In the event of a disaster or emergency, other organizations in the Region would be called into service such as the American Red Cross and the National Guard.

Childcare

Childcare is essential for the Region's children, families, and workforce, driving community economic development. Quality childcare fosters children's social and academic growth, supports families in high-risk environments, and enables parents to work, thereby strengthening the economy and expanding the tax base. However, high costs create barriers, particularly for low-income families, highlighting the need for equitable access to childcare. Affordable childcare is defined as costing no more than 7% of a family's income. Higher-quality childcare typically includes low staff-to-child ratios, licensed facilities, and trained educators.

The State and Region face a childcare crisis. According to the nonprofit organization Let's Grow Kids, Vermont's child care system is stretched thin. Though approximately 21,131 children under the age of five in Vermont are likely to need some form of childcare, only 12,380 full-day, full-year slots exist for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and just 8,090 meet the state's high-quality standards. That leaves 61% of infants likely to need care without a quality option. The average two-child household spends around $26,000 a year on childcare, and educators earn a median of $39,315,
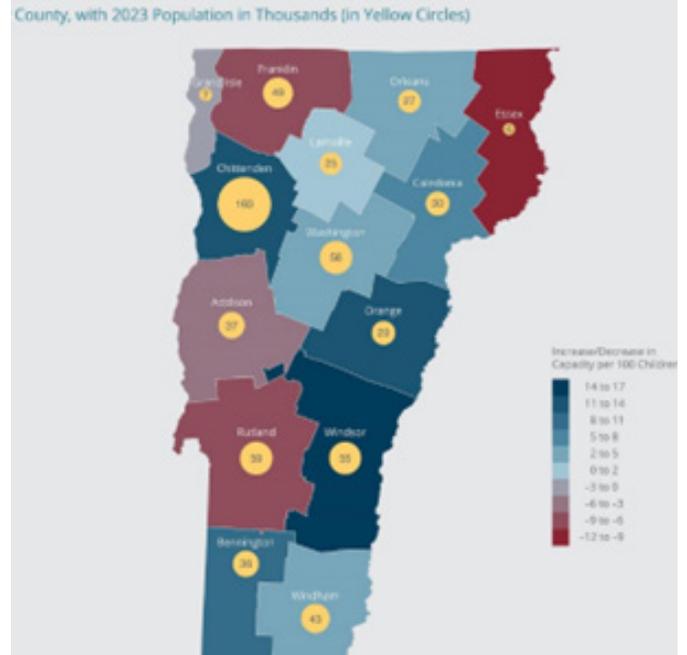
often without benefits — below a livable wage. As of 2025 there were a total of 153 providers in the Addison County Region with a licensed capacity of 2,022 and a vacancy rate of 3.07%.

Act 76, enacted in 2023, invests $130 million annually from the state's general fund and introduced a 0.44% payroll tax. This public subsidy aims to improve affordability and expand access, including for children with special needs who require one-on-one assistance or specialized equipment. Even with these investments, gaps persist, particularly in workforce compensation,

	Number of Providers	Total Licensed Capacity		Infant Licensed Capacity	Toddler Licensed Capacity	Preschool Licensed Capacity	School Age Licensed Capacity
Center Based Child Care & Preschool Programs	28	182		37	31	38	76
Registered Family Child Care Homes	19	40		7	17	13	3
Licensed Family Child Care Homes	3	789		73	117	568	31
Afterschool Child Care Program	13	1007		22	21	0	964

rural access, and infant and toddler care availability. Continued monitoring of access, affordability, and workforce conditions will be essential in understanding how well the childcare system is meeting the Region's needs.

FUTURE TRENDS

The future of childcare in the Addison Region should prioritize affordable, high-quality care to meet the current and future workforce needs. Despite an aging population, the need for childcare is strong, but challenges like low wages for childcare workers and a lack of capacity persist. The need to continue to invest in childcare infrastructure will be essential to support a strong and resilient regional workforce.

To ensure that childcare meets regional workforce demands, additional childcare facilities are needed within and surrounding the Region's growth areas to match facilities with areas of employment. The largest growth should occur in Middlebury, Vergennes, and Bristol. A Let's Grow Kids analysis identifies that to meet demand, the Region would need to add an additional 323 infant slots, 129 toddler slots, and 148 preschool slots, increasing the total licensed capacity to 2,622. As the population increases, more capacity and childcare workers will be needed.

To meet the increased capacity and to maintain current staff-to-child ratios, an additional 125 childcare workers will be needed. Investments in professional development and competitive wages will be essential for increasing the Region's childcare workforce, reducing staff turnover, and ultimately improving care accessibility and quality. Training the new childcare workforce will require collaboration with local schools, training centers, employers, and childcare centers to meet the current and future demands.

Affordability will continue to be a barrier to accessing childcare. The Child Care Contribution (CCC) payroll tax, implemented under ACT 76, has helped reduce costs for families and expand childcare capacity. However, this investment alone is not expected to fully close the affordability gap. Continued public investments through subsidies from Act 76 will be critical to lowering the barriers for financial assistance by increasing state reimbursements for childcare by 35%. Addressing the

OTTER CREEK CHILDCARE CENTER EXPANSION IN MIDDLEBURY

After approximately seven months of renovation and expansion, the Otter Creek Child Center facility, located at 150 Weybridge St, reopened its classrooms in December 2025, having added 12,000 square feet to its size.

The renovation allowed two facilities, College Street Children's Center and Otter Creek at Inn on the Green, to merge into a single facility that doubles their combined capacity from 69 to 139 childcare spots. The expanded center will be fully staffed, employing a total of 24 classroom teachers, six "floating" educators, three program directors, and a family and engagement coordinator.

Many organizations and individuals were instrumental in funding the OCCC expansion and advocating for policy changes in order to provide families with the financial support they need to afford quality child and infant care:

- Middlebury College
- Private Donors
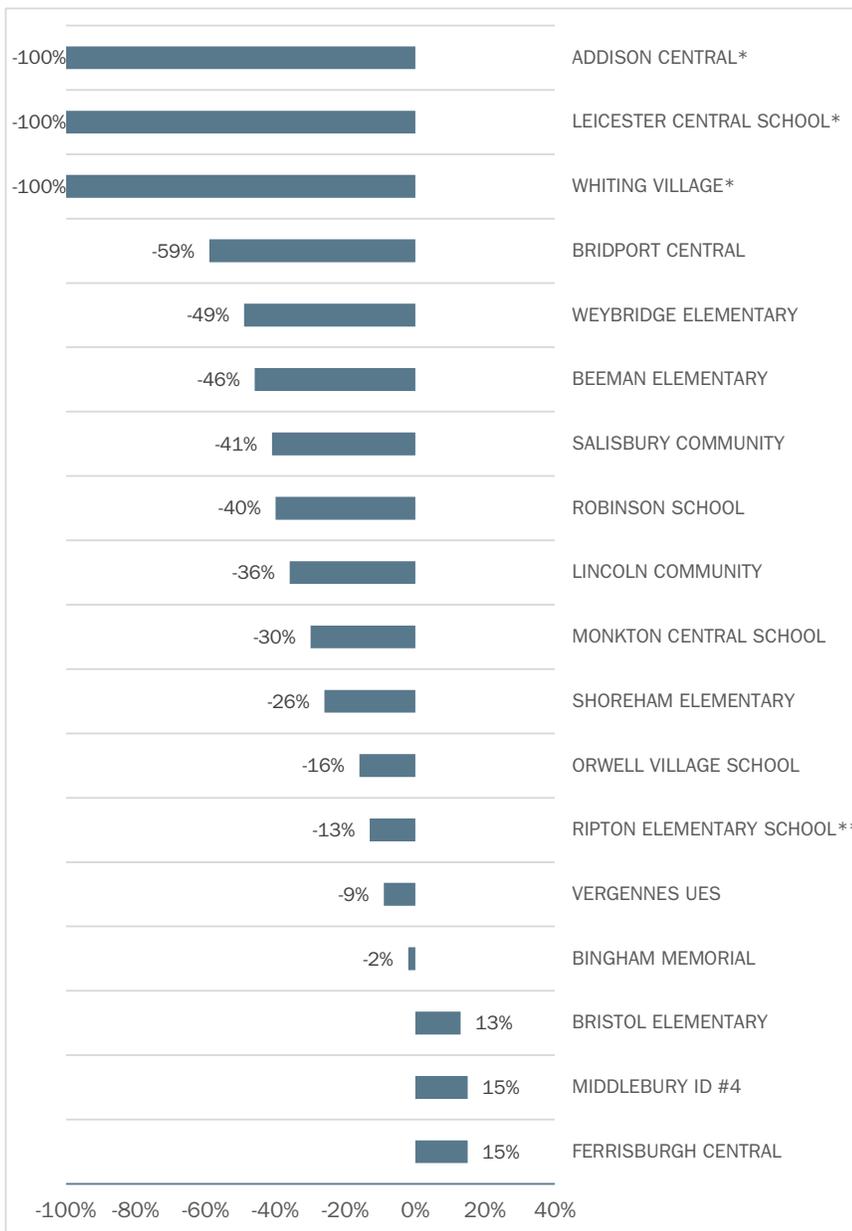- ACRPC-RBMS and Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment

Otter Creek Childcare Center

childcare crisis in the Region requires policy changes, employer partnerships, and workforce development.

Improving access to affordable childcare, supporting workers' professional growth, and expanding facilities in key employment areas can enhance workforce stability and improve children's development and school readiness.

Figure 4: Percent Change in Elementary Student Enrollment (2004-2023)

-100%	ADDISON CENTRAL*
-100%	LEICESTER CENTRAL SCHOOL*
-100%	WHITING VILLAGE*
-59%	BRIDPORT CENTRAL
-49%	WEYBRIDGE ELEMENTARY
-46%	BEEMAN ELEMENTARY
-41%	SALISBURY COMMUNITY
-40%	ROBINSON SCHOOL
-36%	LINCOLN COMMUNITY
-30%	MONKTON CENTRAL SCHOOL
-26%	SHOREHAM ELEMENTARY
-16%	ORWELL VILLAGE SCHOOL
-13%	RIPTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
-9%	VERGENNES UES
-2%	BINGHAM MEMORIAL
13%	BRISTOL ELEMENTARY
15%	MIDDLEBURY ID #4
15%	FERRISBURGH CENTRAL

* Closed previous to 2023   ** Closed at end of 2024-25 school year

OTHER SERVICES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are numerous other organizations working to provide a broad range of services to the Addison Region. There are regional associations of religious leaders and congregations that both raise funds for other service providers and directly provide services. The People of Addison County Together (PACT) is another community coalition that seeks grants and other funding for a variety of community projects. The United Way of Addison County is a nonprofit fundraising organization that supports the work of other community organizations and service providers.
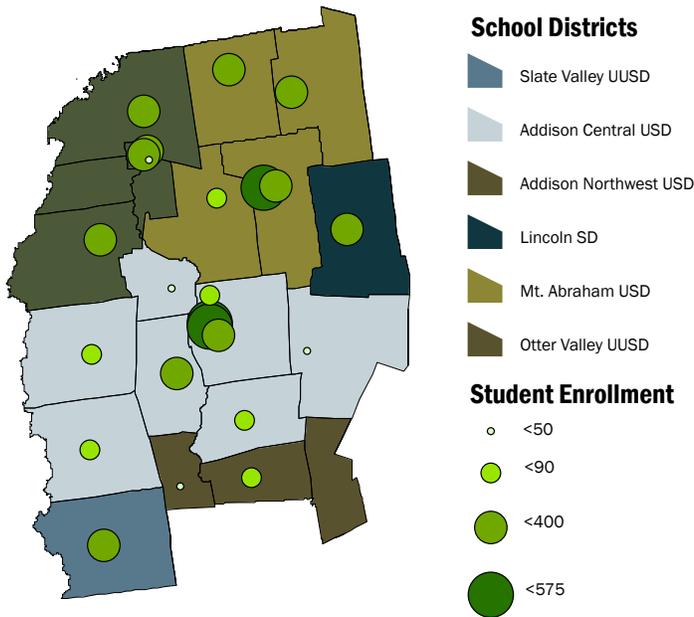
Education

SUPERVISORY UNIONS

As of 2025, there are six supervisory unions/districts serving Addison Region municipalities: Addison Central, Addison Northwest, Mount Abraham, Lincoln, Slate Valley, and Rutland Northeast. The first four are located entirely within the Addison Region and serve only the Region's municipalities. The latter two unions/districts are located partly in the Addison Region and serve municipalities both in and out of the Region.

After a suspension of aid for school construction in 2007 led to a backlog of deferred maintenance, the Vermont General Assembly enacted Act 72 in 2021 to conduct a statewide assessment of the state's public-school buildings.[44/45]

Focusing on the four unions/districts that are entirely within the Region, each owned building received a report card in the fall of 2023 using a Facility Condition Index (FCI) along with itemization of associated repair costs.[46] In short, buildings were reported to need nearly $6.7 million in immediate repairs; if deferred maintenance continues through 2033, that estimated number increases tenfold. Currently, ten buildings are owned by Addison Central (including Ripton Elementary which is now closed and the Patricia A Hannaford Career Center); Addison Northwest owns three buildings; five are

Map 5: Addison Region School Districts and Enrollment

School Districts

Slate Valley UUSD

Addison Central USD

Addison Northwest USD

Lincoln SD

Mt. Abraham USD

Otter Valley UUSD

Student Enrollment

o   <50

<90

<400

<575

a general trend for most of the region's schools, but to varying degrees. Comparing 2004 to 2023 enrollment data, the average percent change is -22% and the median percent change is -26%. This ranges from Bridport decreasing by 59% to Middlebury's and Ferrisburgh's increase of 15%. [43] (See **Figure 4**)

Over the past 8 years, Supervisory Unions/ School Districts have had to make tough decisions to close some small elementary schools due to lower enrollment numbers, high operational costs, etc. Addison Central Elementary School closed in 2020 and students now attend Vergennes Elementary School. Leicester Central Elementary School and Whiting Village Elementary School combined to form Otter Creek Academy at Leicester, Sudbury (not in region), and Whiting. As of the 2025-2026 school year, Ripton Elementary closed, and students are now attending Salisbury Elementary.

Figure 5   Addison Region Middle and High School Enrollment

owned by Mount Abraham; and Lincoln owns a single building.[47]

Overall maintenance and the longevity of school buildings will continue to remain in the forefront of community conversations together with decreasing enrollment and their combined relationship to property taxes.

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

There are currently 17 public elementary schools in the Addison Region. Addison Central and Addison Northwest schools both offer K-5, each moving sixth grade to middle/high schools in 2021 and 2024, respectively. Mount Abraham, Lincoln, Slate Valley, and Rutland Northeast continue to offer K-6. In addition to specific town-cited elementary schools, Addison, Panton, and Waltham send their students to Vergennes Elementary; Ripton sends its students to Salisbury Elementary; Goshen sends its students to Neshobe Elementary School in Brandon; and, Leicester and Whiting are served by Otter Creek Academy.

Enrollment at most elementary schools increased during the early 1990s. However, during the latter part of the decade, enrollment in many schools leveled off or decreased. A decline in enrollment continues to be

Building expenses and repurposing these structures continue to be an evolving topic of discussion in local communities.

Given the Region's current demographic and housing trends (see Chapters 5 and 8, page X), school enrollments will likely not return to the peak figures of the early 1990s in the near future. Many people are waiting longer to have children, if they choose to at all, due to a multitude of factors: career, financial security, lack of housing options, cost of insurance, lack of childcare opportunities, school loan debt, etc. Ideally, as housing inventory increases, it will boost school enrollment as well, however, this can prove to be a sluggish and prolonged progression.

PUBLIC MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Regarding public middle schools, sixth to eighth graders from Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham, and Weybridge attend the Middlebury Union Middle School; sixth to eighth graders from Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes, and Waltham attend Vergennes Union Middle School; seventh and eighth graders from Starksboro, Monkton, Bristol, and New Haven attend Mount Abraham Middle School; Goshen, Leicester, and Whiting students attend Otter Valley Middle School; and, Orwell students attend Fair Haven Middle School. Lincoln students in grades 7-12 participate in the school choice/tuition program for middle and high school.

There are five public high schools that serve students from the Addison Region: Middlebury Union High School, Mount Abraham High School, Vergennes Union High School, Otter Valley Union High School, and Fair Haven Union High School. The first three are in the Region, and the last two are outside of the Region.

The peak numbers of elementary students seen in the early 1990s began moving through the Region's middle and high schools in the mid to late 2000s. Once those large classes graduated, high school enrollments declined. Issues related to enrollment and building capacity in the Region's high schools are similar to those at the elementary level. However, since the Region's high schools serve union districts with larger combined student populations, they were often seen as better insulated against sudden shifts in enrollments than the smaller elementary schools.

However, district consolidation continues to be a crucial subject for residents of the Addison Region. In 2022, Addison Northwest and Mount Abraham school districts proposed a ballot measure to combine the districts, but the voters emphatically rejected that proposal. With the increasing costs of school budgets, particularly due to health care expenses and the State's inability to initiate a substantial change to education funding, this conversation may arise again.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

The Region's high school students, as well as adults seeking continuing education, can attend the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center (PAHCC) in Middlebury.

Founded in 1971 and later renamed after a well-loved faculty member in her honor, PAHCC provides a wide range of programs for high school and adult students across Addison County. In 2004, voters in the Region's three main supervisory districts approved a separate regional technical school district with its own board of directors to run the center and set curriculum and budgets. The Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center Regional Technical School District (PAHRTSD) Board includes representatives from each school district and the Workforce Investment Board. PAHCC is one of Vermont's 17 Career Technical Education (CTE) Centers. In February 2018, the Agency of Education launched a planning initiative to develop and articulate a strategic direction for career technical education in the state. Vocational-technical schools faced perception challenges even though many of these career paths are widely demanded throughout Vermont.

PAHCC has a main campus located in the Middlebury High School complex and a north campus located off Exchange Street in Middlebury. The career center provides students challenging, practical, and classroom-based instruction, along with strong community collaborations and hands-on learning experiences. These opportunities help students develop solid work ethics, cutting-edge technical skills, and a strong sense of inclusion and purpose. PAHCC prepares students for college and careers in a wide range of fields including, but not limited to agriculture and natural resources, video technology, building trades, information technology, pre-engineering, accounting, law enforcement, and automotive technology.

PAHCC offers 13 technical programs and 4 foundational "pre-technical" programs. Most technical programs are geared toward 11th and 12th graders, with select options available to 10th graders. These programs aim to equip students with the skills needed for high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand careers—either right after graduation or following college. Pre-technical programs are available to 9th and 10th graders, helping them explore a variety of future career pathways. The majority of the high school students come from Middlebury Union, Mount Abraham, and Vergennes Union, though students from private schools, other regional high schools, and homeschooled students are also welcome. Adults, throughout Vermont and adjacent states, often enroll in personal and career growth evening and weekend class-

es. Additionally, adults and students in the Addison Region can enroll in programs at other vocational-technical schools throughout the state. [44]

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is responsible for ensuring that both federal and Vermont state regulations are followed so that students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). To achieve this, the Agency is dedicated to supporting families and Vermont schools that serve students with disabilities.

In September 2025, the Vermont AOE distributed a report "Current State of Special Education Delivery" in response to Act 73 of 2025, marking the first step in developing a three-year special education strategic plan as part of the state's broader education reform effort, which also involves redrawing school district boundaries and implementing a new education funding formula.[45] A key finding is that although overall student enrollment is decreasing, the number of students with disabilities is increasing, and in turn, education costs can be difficult to manage.[46]

Special education costs are highly variable based on the number and needs of qualifying students in a given school year, so the impact on the budgets of the region's small schools can be significant. Specific to data within the Addison Region from 2015 – 2022, Mt Abraham School District (formerly Addison Northeast) saw an increase of 34% for K-12 Special Education Cost/Child Count to $26,997, although a 9% decrease in students; Addison Northwest School District had a 15% increase to $29,546 although a 22% decrease in students; conversely, Addison Central experienced a 1% decrease to $19,909, while having an 8% increase in students.[47]

PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND HOMESCHOOLING

There are a number of private schools providing Pre-K, elementary, or secondary education in the Addison Region. Those include the Bridge School (K-6th), the Champlain Valley Christian School (K-8th), the North Branch School (7th-9th), and the Red Cedar School (K-8th). The Willowell Foundation provides options for outdoor education including The New Roots Project

(ages 7-11), Pond Brook (ages 12-15), The Walden Year (ages 16-19).

For the 2025-26 school year, 293 students in Addison County attended private school, equating to about 6% of all K-12 students, compared to the state average of 15%.[48] In addition, homeschooling throughout Vermont has become increasingly popular as the pandemic fueled this growing trend. During the 2020–2021 school year, 5,500 students were homeschooled—an increase of more than 100 percent compared to 2018–2019. The figure has since decreased, with approximately 3,500 students receiving home instruction in 2022. Unfortunately, regional home study data is not currently available.[49]

OTHER EDUCATION FACILITIES

Northlands Job Corps Center in Vergennes opened in 1979 and provides vocational education and training for individuals aged 16 to 24 whose educational needs are not fully met within the public school system. Operated under contract with the U.S. Department of Labor, the center attracts students from across northeastern United States, the majority from Vermont and neighboring New York, and provides housing, meals, and medical care at no cost to students or their families. Located on a 65-acre, state-owned campus, Northlands typically serves approximately 150 students on average and is currently managed by Education & Training Resources, a Kentucky-based organization that operates several Job Corps centers nationwide.

In May 2025, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) suspended operations at all contractor-run Job Corps centers, which was then halted in July when a federal court issued preliminary injunctions preventing the Department of Labor from closing Job Corps centers, ruling that the administration did not meet legal requirements when it attempted to close rather than terminate the program. Although the centers are currently required to stay open, the program's long-term future remains uncertain as legal and political proceedings continue. As of late May 2025, more than 100 young people were enrolled at Northlands and it employed 110 people.[50]

Vermont Adult Learning, in conjunction with the Hannaford Career Center, serves as a key partner in advancing regional workforce development. The organization offers foundational adult education, high school completion programs, English language instruction, and work readiness training, Collectively, the Hannaford Career Center and Vermont Adult Learning deliver comprehensive educational opportunities for young adults and adults, emphasizing workforce development and technical skill advancement across the region. The Middlebury Center is a United Way of Addison County Funded Agency.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Providing and paying for public education has become a central consideration for many Addison Region residents when planning for the future of their communities. The implications of growth and development on school budgets have continued to be a primary topic when public hearings or votes are held on local plans, zoning regulations, and development applications. The state has worked through various formulas over the decades, and at the end of June 2025, Gov. Phil Scott signed a sweeping education reform bill into law, Act 73 of 2025, setting the stage for a historic overhaul of Vermont's public school system.

Act 73 establishes a three-year timeline for transforming the education system. After the General Assembly approves new school district boundaries in 2026, the restructured districts will begin operating in the 2028–2029 school year.[51] At that time, the statewide tax rate and weighted student funding formula will also take ef-

Mary Hogan Elementary

fect.[52] Other provisions of Act 73—such as statewide graduation requirements and minimum class sizes—will be implemented in the years leading up to the launch of the new districts.

Public perception in the Region is that education costs are continuing to rise at rates exceeding what taxpayers can afford. Over recent years, per pupil costs in the Region's schools have increased beyond the rate of inflation, but by varying amounts. The factors influencing these rising costs are numerous and vary between the schools, although heath care cost increases tend to be the largest factor. Given that local schools are the largest single expense to taxpayers throughout the Addison Region, education funding will continue to be central to debate and decisions regarding the future community growth and development.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Middlebury College provides undergraduate and graduate level education to approximately 2,800 students from around the world. The college is a private, co-educational, residential, four-year, liberal arts institution. Middlebury College offers around 40 undergraduate programs, as well as four summer programs. The college has a 500-acre main campus in Middlebury, a large summer campus in Ripton, and owns a significant amount of property in Middlebury and other Addison Region communities. In 2024 and 2025, Middlebury College worked with ACRPC to create a Master Plan for the 3,000 acres of land it owns in the Champlain Valley, that is used both privately and by the general public for a variety of purposes, including agriculture, recreation, forest products, and nature conservation.

Addison Region residents have access to a variety of cultural, educational, and recreational activities at Middlebury College. Most scheduled on-campus activities such as lectures, performances, and movies are open to the public. Area high school students may
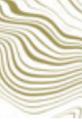
enroll in certain classes, provided that there is space, at no charge. Local residents make extensive use of the college's athletic facilities and are also able to use the college's library. The college provides housing for nearly all its students and restricts off-campus housing to 125 or fewer. The Town of Middlebury sees the acquisition of houses and the expansion of the campus into the residential neighborhoods that surrounds the college campus as undesirable. If student enrollment were to be significantly increased, a new agreement regarding student housing, traffic and parking would need to be reached between the town and the college.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT

The Community College of Vermont (CCV) in Middlebury is located on Court Street, where it serves around 250 students per semester at this site, as part of CCV's statewide network. CCV offers a flexible mix of associate degree and certificate programs across its 12-location system, with classes available days, evenings, weekends, and online to accommodate working adults and part-time students. At the Middlebury location, students can access advising, financial aid support, and local class offerings while benefiting from CCV's broader online and statewide curriculum, making it a convenient gateway for post-secondary education and workforce training in the Region.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

GOAL 1: Ensure all residents have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, education, childcare, and human services that support well-being and opportunity.

Objective 1:

Attract and retain healthcare, human service, and childcare providers to meet regional needs.

    a. Provide data, technical assistance, and grant support to healthcare, human service, and childcare providers.

Objective 2:

Integrate childcare and education services into municipal and regional planning processes.

    a. Encourage inclusion of childcare and education facilities in land use and capital planning.

    b. Assist towns in identifying sites and navigating permitting for childcare centers.

Objective 3:

Ensure services are accessible, affordable, and responsive to community needs.

    a. Coordinate data and partnerships to identify childcare needs and support providers.

Objective 4:

Expand lifelong learning and vocational training opportunities through regional partnerships.

    a. Partner with schools, libraries, and nonprofits to build a regional lifelong learning network.

    b. Support towns and school districts in developing joint-use and capital improvement plans.

GOAL 2: Provide coordinated, effective, and equitable public safety and emergency services that protect residents and property while preparing for future risks.

Objective 1:

Strengthen coordination among law enforcement, fire, rescue, and emergency management agencies.

    a. Facilitate regional coordination through the Emergency Management Committee (REMC).

    b. Promote cooperation between emergency service providers.

Objective 2:

Promote hazard-informed land use and infrastructure planning.

    a. Assist municipalities in developing and updating emergency plans and hazard mitigation strategies.

    b. Support the development of all-hazards building codes and emergency access standards.

    c. Provide information to municipalities and homeowners on building in hazard-prone areas.
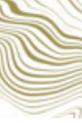
Objective 3:

Improve the resilience and accessibility of emergency services.

    a. Map vulnerable areas and hazardous materials, and support the E911 system.

    b. Seek funding for watershed geomorphic assessments.

Objective 4:

Increase local capacity for emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation.

    a. Organize training and outreach on emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation.

GOAL 3: Preserve and enhance the Region's cultural, recreational, and civic assets to strengthen community identity, livability, and long-term sustainability.

Objective 1:

Promote the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic and cultural resources.

    a. Assist municipalities in developing regulations and plans for historic preservation and adaptive reuse.

    b. Support initiatives that highlight the Region's historic and cultural assets.

    c. Provide planning, grant writing, and project management support for civic and cultural projects.

Objective 2:

Support the development of accessible, affordable municipal facilities in village centers.

    a. Assist municipalities with capital budgeting and mutual aid coordination.

Objective 3:

Expand and protect access to recreational resources and trail systems.

    a. Develop GIS maps and data for historic and recreational resources.

    b. Support the development and linking of trail systems and public access to water bodies.

    c. Encourage municipalities to retain control over unused rights-of-way for future recreation use.

GOAL 4: Ensure all residents, businesses, and institutions have access to affordable, reliable, and future-ready broadband and communications systems.

Objective 1:

Achieve universal fiber-optic broadband coverage with high-speed symmetrical service.

    a. Support Maple Broadband and member towns in completing fiber deployment.

Objective 2:

Ensure broadband affordability and digital equity for all income levels.

    a. Promote digital literacy, affordability programs, and device access for low-income households.

Objective 3:

Build resilient communications infrastructure that withstands climate and disaster risks.

    a. Provide data and support for E911 and public safety communications.

    a. Support efforts to enhance resilience of communications infrastructure against natural disasters.

Objective 4:

Minimize the environmental and visual impacts of communications infrastructure.

    a. Assist municipalities in developing telecom-friendly plans and regulations.

    b. Encourage use of existing structures for antennas and minimize visual disruption of new towers.

Objective 5:

Leverage communications technology to support economic development, education, and healthcare.

    a. Coordinate with economic development and emergency services to ensure infrastructure supports business growth and public safety.

    b. Support local news and public media through outreach and engagement.

GOAL 5: Protect and enhance water quality and ensure access to cost-effective, environmentally sound water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste systems.

Objective 1:

Prevent contamination and depletion of water resources.

   a. Develop and implement a regional water strategy for quality, availability, and infrastructure resilience.

Objective 2:

Ensure infrastructure meets current and future residential, commercial, and industrial needs.

   a. Support infrastructure upgrades and replacement of failing systems.

Objective 3:

Promote sustainable development through integrated water and waste planning.

   a. Create a region-wide wastewater and stormwater management strategy.

B. Guide sustainable development through water-related planning and investment.

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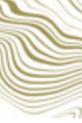
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