



Bennington County Regional Commission

News and Notes

May 2022

Bennington County Regional Commission 2022 Annual Meeting - Thursday, May 19 5:30 PM

**Kilburn Meeting Room
at the**

Manchester Town Office Building

(Just off VT 7A north of Downtown Manchester: [DIRECTIONS](#))

A remote meeting option via ZOOM is available; see access information below

You are invited to join us for the Annual Meeting of the Bennington County Regional Commission. This event provides an opportunity for BCRC commissioners and staff to gather with local officials, businesses, and residents as we highlight the Commission’s work in community and economic development. We return with our first in-person regular Commission meeting since early 2020! We’ll begin with a light meal provided by Zoey’s Deli (free to attendees—please note RSVP request below), hear a brief report on the BCRC’s work over the past year and a look at plans and priorities for the future, recognize this year’s Bongartz Award winner, Rose Keough of Sunderland, and then listen as Vermont’s Commissioner of Housing and Community Development discusses the state’s housing crisis and actions being taken to support the provision of quality affordable housing.



Commissioner Josh Hanford

Housing affects workforce availability, economic development, community vitality, public health, and many other aspects of the quality of life for all Vermonters. Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development, Josh Hanford, will provide context for the current shortage of housing facing the state as well as information about recent efforts to provide additional financial support and regulatory reform to address those needs.

RSVP: The meeting is free and open to the public, but please let us know by May 8 if you plan to attend and whether you will be bringing a guest(s) so that we can be sure to have enough food! Just send a note or call Jim Sullivan at the BCRC.....jsullivan@bcrcvt.org * 802-753-7831

For Remote Attendees—Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85924759323?pwd=TGdUQVdQdkJyQytkY3FRV005TVBZZz09>

Meeting ID: 859 2475 9323

Passcode: 310153

Grants to Address Flooding Issues in Manchester

Governor Phil Scott recently announced Resilient Communities Fund grants, including two awarded to the BCRC to provide analyses of flood prone areas in Manchester. The grants are designed to ultimately lead to floodplain restoration and ecological projects that will help protect property and lives from future flooding. The Manchester projects include:

- A scoping project to address the need to evaluate alternatives for sustainable management of sediment accumulation and reduce flood risks within an alluvial fan reach of Bourn Brook, where a dense development pattern exists adjacent to the channel. The study area has been modified by historic dredging and berming, increasing flood and fluvial erosion hazards for the existing development and infrastructure.
- A scoping project to address the need to evaluate alternatives for sustainable management of sediment accumulation and reduce flood risks within an alluvial fan reach of Lye Brook. The study area has been highly modified by logging, agriculture, and improperly designed bridge crossings with historic dredging and berming which have increased the flood and fluvial erosion hazards for existing developments and infrastructure



Jonathan Cooper Earns Esteemed Economic Development Designation

In March Jonathan Cooper, BCRC Community & Economic Development Specialist, attained designation as a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) through the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). IEDC Certification is one of the highest benchmarks of professional competence a practicing economic developer can attain. The CEcD status is recognized around the world, and it is the only certification program for economic developers in the United States. Candidates must pass a rigorous and comprehensive three-part, two-day examination, which tests a practitioner's knowledge, proficiency and judgment in the key areas of economic development, including business retention and expansion, marketing, finance, workforce development, community development, real estate, strategic planning and management.



To be eligible to sit for the exam, practitioners must complete four core training courses and two elective courses. Candidates are also required to have at least four years of consecutive, paid, full-time economic development related experience. Cooper began his journey toward the designation with his initial coursework in 2017.

On average only 30% of the candidates pass the certification exams, and only 10% pass on their first exam attempt. Cooper successfully passed all three exams on his first try. Cooper is the only economic development professional in Vermont with the CEcD designation.

Putnam Block Redevelopment Phase 2 Open House

On April 13th, M&S Development and BCRC hosted an open house at the Bennington Performing Arts Center to update the community and gather input on Phase 2 of the Putnam Block Redevelopment. Still in its planning and feasibility stage, it is envisioned that the next phase of the project would involve the construction of a single four or five story building at the corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue. The first floor would include 10,000-12,000 square feet of medical offices and several small retail spaces. The upper floors would be a mix of efficiency, one-bedroom and two-bedroom residences in a range of price points. It is possible that there may be some for-sale condominium units as well as rental apartments.

Remediation of contaminated soils to complete the Brownfields corrective action plan approved by VT Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency will commence in May. That work will have a price tag of approximately \$850,000 bringing the total amount to remediate the entire Putnam site close to \$2,000,000.

If planning, feasibility and funding solicitation go well, it is possible that Phase 2 would begin construction in the Summer of 2023 and be ready for occupancy approximately twelve months later.

You can read more in a Bennington Banner article on the [Putnam Block Redevelopment Phase 2 Open House](#).



Robert Stevens, of M&S Development discusses Phase II of a major redevelopment project in downtown Bennington

2022 EnVision Vermont: Age-Friendly Community State Survey

Vermont's demographics are changing. 1 in 4 Vermonters are over the age of 60. Are Vermont's communities ready and able to meet our changing needs and goals as we all age? What will it take to ensure all Vermonters have the opportunity for financial security, health and wellness, social connection, affordable housing, transportation and more? The State of Vermont and partners are hoping to address these questions as we work together to create ***EnVision Vermont: A 10-Year Action Plan for Aging Well***.

Your voice matters for this vision. If you are age 45 or older, we invite you to take this survey and tell us what's important to you as you age, share your experiences, and let us know how well our communities are supporting older Vermonters right now. The results of this survey will help us see where we're doing well as a state and where we need to improve to be a more age-friendly state.

Link to survey: <https://bit.ly/3N2aADp> **DEADLINE TO RESPOND: May 20th, 2022**

To learn more or request a paper copy of the survey, go to <https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/legislative/older-vermonters-act> or call 1-800-642-5119.



Community of
Vermont Elders





Green Mountain National Forest Schedule of Proposed Action

Dutch Hill Glad Additions: This project would create additional glades on the southern portion of Dutch Hill backcountry ski area to provide terrain for recreation and clear vegetation for vista improvement near the summit of Dutch Hill. Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61906>

Lye Brook Trailhead Relocation: The Lye Brook Trailhead parking area would be relocated on Lye Brook Road near its intersection with Benson and Glen Roads. The new parking lot would accommodate 30 to 40 vehicles. Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61176>

Manchester Trail Bridge Replacements: Three trail bridges on the Manchester Ranger District would be replaced due to their poor structural integrity and to provide trail users with a safe and enjoyable route over water crossings. Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61078>

Prospect Mountain Trail Improvements: The project would construct new Nordic ski trail segments, widen existing trails, and install culverts to relieve trail congestion, increase skier safety, and enhance the recreational experience at Prospect Mountain.

Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61080>

Spruce Peak VAST Trail Additions: Add two sections of existing snowmobile trail totaling about 1.1 miles in use and maintained by the VT Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to the Forest Service trail system. Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56382>

Sucker Pond Trail Relocadtion: The project would involve constructing approximately 0.3 miles of 6-foot-wide trail tread south of Sucker Pond to relocate this section of trail out of a wetland and into a more suitable area for multiple trail uses. Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61081>

White Oak Planting: The purpose of this project is to establish white oak seedlings in a genetic test to evaluate which parents produce high quality seedlings, and which sources of white oak are best adapted to this site. Web Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61092>



Cat Bryars accepts a Prevention Champion Awards on behalf of the BCRC. The award recognizes individuals or organizations who through their work or volunteerism are helping to keep Vermonters and their communities safe through their involvement in and promotion of substance misuse prevention. The BCRC was nominated for our work with The Collaborative.

New Energy Planning Resources

Thanks to BCRC's Regional Energy Coordinator, [Callie Fishburn](#), our webpage has been updated with a wealth of information to help with your community's energy planning and implementation projects. Take a look at the data for your town, helpful webinars, and guidance for local plans and bylaws at:

[Energy Planning - BCRC \(bcrcvt.org\)](#)

The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission just produced a new report on the relationships between climate and land use, and how municipalities can update their policies and regulations to make a difference: [Climate-Change-and-Land-Use Standard-Resolution 20220427.pdf \(ccrpcvt.org\)](#)

The Dorset Energy Committee recently hosted an Electric Vehicle—And More! that was covered by GNAT-TV. You can watch that here: [The News Project – EV's And More In Dorset – GNAT \(gnat-tv.org\)](#) and get some ideas for an event in your community!

Finally, for those of us who have been interested in battery/energy storage technology, and particularly the potential for recycling critical components, here is a great article from Amory Lovins:



[Six Solutions to Battery Mineral Challenges - RMI](#)

Amory B. Lovins is known as the Einstein of energy efficiency. His earth-shaking ideas on energy security, efficiency, and renewables have changed the field for more than 40 years. His thoughts continue to change hearts and minds today. He is the cofounder and chairman emeritus of RMI and an adjunct professor at Stanford University. Click on the image to the left to get a view "Inside Amory's Brain."

VLCT Guide To Treasury's ARPA Portal

Treasury's guidance has been helpful. but not tailored to Vermont's NEUs (276 or the 277 local ARPA recipients) so VLCT decided to create its own: [VLCT's NEU Guide to Treasury's Portal](#). It designed to be an easy to follow document to help those with the biggest limitations in capacity be able to navigate this process. It is a screen by screen guide that walks folks through the portal of real Vermont NEUs with written directions that accompanies the screens. It is broken into three sections: designating roles, uploading required documents and Project and Expenditure Reports. The last section is specific for municipalities that have not spent or obligated any of their funds yet, which are likely the one who will need the most support in this reporting period.

BCRC Runs Boston!



The BCRC Was well represented at the 126th running of the Boston Marathon this year. Commissioner and Executive Committee Member Dimitri Garder completed his first Boston in 3:36:26. Jessica Chapman, wife of BCRC Assistant Director Bill Colvin, finished her fifth Boston Marathon in 3:40:10. Congratulations to Dimitri and Jessica on terrific performances in one of the oldest and most prestigious running events in the world.



Events and Opportunities....

The ACRPC regional energy committee meeting will feature Ken Pulido from VHFA and Melanie Paskevich from Heat Squad discussing new **ENERGY IMPROVEMENT FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES** for Vermont residents. Although this conversation is directed toward Addison energy committees, VHFA is putting together an innovative financing option that may be of particular interest to everyone in Vermont and everyone is welcome to join in! ACRPC will record the meeting in the event that you cannot attend.

Tuesday, May 3 · 7:00 – 8:30pm Google Meet joining info: <https://meet.google.com/trr-jbvk-iyw>

2021 Southern Vermont Economy Summit: Cultivate Change. The Fifth Annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit will be held May 12th, from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM in Dover, Vermont. The theme is “Cultivate Change.” The event is always a time for this region to think big, learn something new, and ask questions and connect. For more information and registration, go to: [5th Annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit: Cultivate Change Tickets, Thu, May 12, 2022 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)

United Counseling Service (UCS) is delighted to announce the return of the **Southern Vermont Youth Summit.** The event is open to any Bennington County youth ages 13-18. The Youth Summit will take place on Saturday, May 14 from 9am to 3pm at Grace Christian School at 104 Kocher Drive in Bennington. The keynote speaker, Dawn Campbell, Assistant Director of Student Services with the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union (SVSU), will discuss equity and inclusion, helping students find a sense of pride in themselves and learning to appreciate their differences. Workshops will include Suicide Prevention, Substance Use Awareness, Career Skills, Living Healthy Lifestyles and more. This year, thanks to the Vermont Community Foundation and the Gregory S. Hillman Fund, the Summit is free. To register for this free event visit [UCS Youth Summit](#). Lunch will be provided and there will be drawings for prizes throughout the day. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Shuler at rshuler@ucsvt.org or call 802.442.5491.

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[Regulating Cannabis – What Municipal Officials Need to Know](#) virtual event for PACIF and VLCT Members on Tuesday, May 24th from 10:00—12:00. For more information and to register, go to: [Regulating Cannabis - What Municipal Officials Need to Know | Vermont League of Cities and Towns \(vlct.org\)](#)

[Registration is now open](#) for **Energy Action Network's first in-person Pre-Summit** event, taking place May 24th, 2022! The 'Pre-Summit' event is designed to start developing connections and ideas before the Summit itself in September. This year's Pre-Summit will be held on May 24th from 9:30am-3pm at the Vermont College of Fine Arts' Alumnx Hall, located at 45 College Street in Montpelier. All Network members and public sector partners who would usually attend our Summit are welcome to attend. The EAN Pre-Summit is your opportunity to:

- See a sneak preview of the 2022 EAN Annual Progress Report,
- Hear updates and next steps from current EAN Network Action Teams,
- Engage in facilitated brainstorming to surface potential new priorities for the Network over the coming year,
- Begin crafting pitches and forming Network Action Teams for the 2022 Network Summit.

JUNE
09
2022

**Downtown and
Historic Preservation
Conference**

ST. JOHNSBURY, VERMONT



The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Preservation Trust of Vermont is pleased to present the **Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference** on Thursday, June 9, 2022, in St. Johnsbury. This will be an in-person

event without virtual offerings. [Register Now](#). Take advantage of the early bird rate until May 13th. Space is limited and the conference may sell out quickly. Please [visit our website](#) for more information on the schedule, sessions, and additional conference information.

Sign Up for Sessions! Once registered you will receive an email to sign up for sessions. Please take a minute to complete this as some sessions have limited capacity and will sell out quickly. This event is made possible through a partnership with the Town of St Johnsbury, St Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce, St Johnsbury Academy, Catamount Arts, Fairbanks Museum, St Johnsbury Welcome Center, St Johnsbury Athenaeum, United Community Church, and over 30 sponsors. We are grateful to have such a wonderful community of statewide partners, thank you!

Detailed conference information will be emailed about a week before the conference including up to date COVID safety protocols, the conference program, and a map of St. Johnsbury. The conference will follow state-mandated COVID safety protocols current at the time of the event while individual sessions will follow COVID safety protocols specific to venue requirements.

If you have any question, please contact ACCD.CPR@vermont.gov or Gary Holloway at 802-522-2444.

In cooperation with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the state of Vermont's Office of Racial Equity, the **Vermont Community Foundation** is seeking proposals from Vermont villages, towns, and cities that close the [opportunity gap](#) by supporting local efforts to foster inclusion and belonging for people of all races and backgrounds. We recognize the powerful leadership roles that local governments can play in removing structural barriers and building a more inclusive and diverse state, and want to support communities in fulfilling that potential. For more information, go to: [Equitable and Inclusive Communities \(vermontcf.org\)](https://www.vermontcf.org).

The Bennington County Regional Commission, Windham Regional Commission, and Rutland Regional Planning Commission have combined efforts to bring a safety training to the region: **Crisis Management for School-Based Incidents for Key Decision Makers** will be held this fall in Londonderry. The training will focus on All-Hazards Planning and Preparedness, Vulnerability Assessments, Threat Assessment Management, All-Hazards Response, All-Hazards Recovery, and Scenario-Based Activities. Anyone may attend but the training is specifically designed for First Responders, School Administrators, School Safety and Security Personnel, Emergency Management Personnel, Mental Health Personnel, and Community Stakeholders.

The training will be held October 4th to 5th, from 8am-4pm the first day, and 8am-3:30pm the second day. The training will be at the Londonderry Rescue Squad located at 6068 VT Route 05148. The flyer with course information and registration details can be found at: http://www.bcrvvt.org/uploads/1/1/1/8/111899771/mgt_417_londonderry_vt_10.4-5.2022.pdf



The Center for the Advancement of Public Action
requests the pleasure of your company to celebrate the
2022 Bennington Food Summit
with fellow grantees and partners.

Please join us Friday, May 20th at 5pm for a dinner
hosted by Chef Steve in the Commons Atrium at
Bennington College.

After dinner, join us at 7pm in the CAPA Symposium
with our keynote speaker
Bryan Dale

Assistant Professor in the Department of Environment
and Geography at Bishop's University

*Getting to Local: Challenges and Opportunities
on the
Path to Food System Transformation*

Please RSVP to keliebowman@bennington.edu by May 6th
Vaccination required

Supported by the Mellon Foundation grant to Address Food Insecurity In Bennington County

BCRC Staff Contacts

Mark Anders, Transportation Program Manager: manders@bcrcvt.org
Catherine Bryars, Planning Director: cbryars@bcrcvt.org
Bill Colvin, Community and Economic Development Director: bcolvin@bcrcvt.org
Jonathan Cooper, Community and Economic Development Specialist: jcooper@bcrcvt.org
Callie Fishburn, Regional Planner and Energy Coordinator cfishburn@bcrcvt.org
Scott Grimm-Lyon, Solid Waste Program Manager/Planner scgrimmlyon@bcrcvt.org
Jim Henderson, Environmental Program Manager: jhenderson@bcrcvt.org
Allison Strohl, Emergency Management Program Manager/Planner: astrohl@bcrcvt.org
Amanda Stevens, Financial Manager: astevens@bcrcvt.org
Jim Sullivan, Executive Director: jsullivan@bcrcvt.org

Main office phone number: 802-442-0713