



Bennington County Regional Commission

# News and Notes

## September 2021

### 2020 Census Data Available

The US Census Bureau recently released data from the 2020 Census. A variety of useful interpretive maps and charts have been developed by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information, available at: [US Census Data—Vermont](#). The population of the Bennington region remained relatively constant, with significant increases in some towns including Arlington, Sunderland, Peru, and Dosest, and declines in other towns, particularly in the southern part of the county. Additional details, including data on villages in our region, will be available soon.

#### Population of Bennington Region Towns 2010 and 2020

	2010	2020	Change
Arlington	2,317	2,457	140
Bennington	15,764	15,333	(431)
Dorset	2,031	2,133	102
Glastenbury	8	9	1
Landgrove	158	177	19
Manchester	4,391	4,484	93
Peru	375	531	156
Pownal	3,527	3,258	(269)
Rupert	714	698	(16)
Sandgate	405	387	(18)
Shaftsbury	3,590	3,598	8
Stamford	824	861	37
Sunderland	956	1,056	100
Woodford	424	355	(69)
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,484</b>	<b>35,337</b>	<b>(147)</b>

#### Hearings to Consider Town Plan Approvals

The Bennington County Regional Commission will meet at 5:30 PM on September 16 to conduct public hearings to consider approval of the Rupert Town Plan pursuant to 24 VSA Section 4350, and a determination of energy compliance for the Rupert Town Plan pursuant to 24 VSA Section 4352. The plan is available for review at: [Rupert Town Plan](#). The hearing will be held using ZOOM; to log in: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84049294554>. Contact the BCRC at 802-442-0713 for other attendance options.

## UVM Students Complete Summer Internships with BCRC

Two University of Vermont students completed internship projects, working under the direction of BCRC staff. Each of the projects was designed to provide useful information to support municipal planning work in communities around the region.

Vance Canella conducted an inventory of the availability of sidewalks in villages and adjacent residential neighborhoods. He noted that sidewalks “...promote safe travel for pedestrians, help to reduce carbon emissions, and can even help to create a sense of community...” and found that quite a few areas with high densities of housing are lacking this important piece of infrastructure. You can view Vance’s project at: [Sidewalk Inventory](#).

Rachel Whittelsly completed an assessment of the degree to which existing buildings and lots conform to zoning dimensional standards in all of the village centers in the region. The analysis showed areas where lot sizes, front, side, and rear setbacks, and other conditions were consistently out of sync with regulatory standards. The research will be particularly beneficial as BCRC staff work with many local planning commissions to develop amendments to land use bylaws that bring them more into alignment with historic development patterns while supporting desired housing densities and the physical characteristics of walkable village centers. Rachel’s report is available at: [Village Zoning Analysis](#).



South Shaftsbury Village zoning analysis

## Regional Allocation of ARPA Local Recovery Funds

Local governments will be receiving funds to support a number of eligible activities to offset the negative impacts of the Covid pandemic and to support long-term infrastructure investments. Specific guidance is available in the US Treasury’s [Compliance and Reporting Guidance](#), at the [American Rescue Plan website](#) maintained by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, or by contacting ARPA support staff at the BCRC: [Allison Strohl](#) and [Callie Fishburn](#).

Municipality	Total Municipal Payment	Total County Payment to Municipality	Combined Total Payment
Arlington Town	\$231,674.00	\$431,247.51	\$662,921.50
Bennington Town	\$1,375,178.32	\$2,559,813.49	\$3,934,991.81
Dorset Town	\$203,408.30	\$378,632.58	\$582,040.89
Landgrove Town	\$16,435.98	\$30,594.60	\$47,030.58
Manchester Town	\$367,768.08	\$684,578.62	\$1,052,346.70
Manchester Village	\$74,432.99	\$138,552.63	\$212,985.63
North Bennington Village	\$177,655.12	\$330,694.54	\$508,349.66
Old Bennington Village	\$13,714.10	\$25,527.98	\$39,242.08
Peru Town	\$37,164.15	\$69,178.88	\$106,343.03
Pownal Town	\$355,938.36	\$662,558.30	\$1,018,496.66
Rupert Town	\$71,397.05	\$132,901.40	\$204,298.45
Sandgate Town	\$39,886.03	\$74,245.50	\$114,131.54
Shaftsbury Town	\$358,346.18	\$667,040.31	\$1,025,386.49
Stamford Town	\$84,692.39	\$157,649.90	\$242,342.29
Sunderland Town	\$99,662.74	\$185,516.32	\$285,179.07
Woodford Town	\$41,875.10	\$77,948.04	\$119,823.14

## Southern Vermont Economy Summit Recordings and Reflections Now Available

In May the Southern Vermont Economy Summit was held virtually over three days with 168 attendees. We gather each year to learn from one another, and from people like Majora Carter and Xusana Davis, two of the keynote speakers at the summit, who have been creating new solutions to the kinds of challenges we are taking on here in southern Vermont.

This year's Summit began with a Brookings Institution scholar who gave us the big picture on rural policy, including what a new era of rural investment could mean for our communities. In the lunch series, we met new Vermonters and learned about who they are, why they are here, what's working, and how we can all play a bigger role in welcoming newcomers.

We met people from fascinating businesses that we never knew existed and found out that even when we're talking about locally owned and operated businesses, an enormous amount of their revenues and our economy comes from selling products and services outside the state.

We met people from other communities who were making small-scale changes that are having long-lasting positive impacts on their community's arts and culture, diversity, planning, and social capital.

The Summit closed with the inspiration of the one and only Majora Carter who says "Nobody should have to move out of their neighborhood to live in a better one!"



### Summit by the Numbers:

**3** days

**9** sessions

**15** hours on Zoom

**80+** panelists, speakers, independent contractors,  
facilitators, and sponsors

**168** attendees

**63** towns represented

**113** organizations, businesses, municipalities represented

**Southern Vermont Economy Summit videos are now available [online](#).**

## Events and Opportunities....

The **Community Wildlife Program at Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department** is offering a new series of webinars and trainings. Due to the ongoing pandemic, they will continue to be presented online.

Webinar topics include:

- Reviewing your Town Plan & Regulations
- Act 171: Selecting Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors for your Town Plan
- Starting a Town Conservation Fund
- Natural Resource Inventories
- The River Corridor, Floodplains, & Riparian Habitat

The Department also is offering two units of Environmental Leadership Training which provide a renewed focus on supporting and developing environmental leadership at the local level.

For more information and registration, visit <https://anr.vermont.gov/content/trainings>

Additional questions can be emailed to [andrew.wood@vermont.gov](mailto:andrew.wood@vermont.gov)

**Regional Forest Economy Partnership (RFEP) Grants:** Grant application details are available at the North Border Regional Commission's website: [nbr.gov](http://nbr.gov)). Potential applicants must express interest through Letters of Interest, which must be submitted by September 10, 2021 at 5:00p.m. An advisory board will determine which applicants will be invited to submit a full application, which will be due November 12, with anticipation of awards in January, 2022.

See [press release](#), and the [application manual](#) for more details.

### 2021 Virtual Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference September 14, 15 & 16, 2021

All attendees must pre-register in order to receive conference link. Registration is now available through the Learning Management System.

Don't have a Learning Management System account? You can sign up for an account.

Have questions about the conference or registering?  
Contact Hillarie Scott at: [hillarie.scott@vermont.gov](mailto:hillarie.scott@vermont.gov)

#### Conference Schedule

	September 14, 2021	September 15, 2021	September 16, 2021
12:30-12:45	Welcome	Welcome	Welcome
12:45-1:30	10th Anniversary of Tropical Storm Irene: A Meteorological Look Back	Hazard Mitigation Funding Opportunities	Emergency Management Director of the Year & Emergency Management Director Certification
1:30-1:45	Break	Break	Break
1:45-2:30	Vermont Wing, Civil Air Patrol-An Asset to Emergency Services and Disaster Relief	Operating a Virtual EOC	How Vermont Arts & Culture Disaster and Resilience Network can support municipal resilience
2:30-2:45	Break	Break	Break
2:45-3:30	Preparing in Plain Language: How to make sure everyone is ready in case of emergency	Who you gonna call? The Watch Officer	Vermont National Guard Resources
3:30-3:45	Break	Break	Break
3:45-4:30	VTAlert Awareness: what it can do, how to become a dispatcher	A Digital Tool for Mapping Fire Department Response Times and Access to Water Resources Across Vermont	Department of Homeland Security Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships: New England Regional Prevention Framework for Violent Extremism

**[Energy Action Network Summit](#)** - September 15, 2021. The Annual EAN Network Summit brings together [EAN's Network Members and Public Partners](#), including leaders in the non-profit, utility, business, higher education, and finance sectors, along with Vermont legislators, leaders in State government, representatives from Vermont's federal delegation, philanthropists, and other thought leaders. The Summit is a key moment each year to connect, strategize, and learn from one another. The 2021 Summit agenda will include:

- Updates on VT's progress towards our climate commitments and energy goals, including the work of the Climate Council and Comprehensive Energy Plan, and on legislation;
- A focus on centering equity in energy and climate work;
- Updates on the Network Action Teams that came out of winning pitches at the 2020 Summit;
- A chance to hear visionary, strategic pitches for how we can rapidly, cost-effectively, and equitably reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas pollution – and to weigh in on which ideas should receive support from the Network.

Please also note that EAN is taking COVID seriously and asking people to only attend in person if they have been vaccinated against COVID, and to expect to wear masks for the majority of the Summit. There is also a virtual option if that makes more sense for you. EAN is requesting that people [register](#) as soon as possible to facilitate their planning.

**[Electric Vehicle Show on September 25<sup>th</sup>](#)**! Join the Bennington County Regional Commission for an electric vehicle show on September 25th as part of ***National Drive Electric Week***. Attendees will be able to talk with EV owners about their experiences driving electric and learn about different EV models from several local dealers. EV models to be displayed include the Tesla Model 3, Chevy Bolt, Nissan LEAF, and more! Attendees also will have the opportunity to view e-bikes and learn about renewable energy and weatherization from local energy organizations. The event will be held outside at the District Courthouse on North Street (Route 7) in Bennington from 10am-1pm, simultaneously with the Bennington Farmers Market which offers live music and several local food vendors. EV owners who would like to show their vehicle at the event are encouraged to RSVP at the event page: [National Drive Electric Week • Bennington • Bennington, VT • Sep 25, 2021](#). **Health & Safety Note:** This event will comply with all applicable health guidelines, and National Drive Electric Week COVID-19 protocols. Attendees are encouraged to wear masks and practice social distancing.

**[VTrans Announces FY2022 Grant Funding for Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation](#)**

Grants funded through this program must have a transportation link; eligible projects include any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff. Possible projects include planning studies (stormwater inventories, low restoration plans, phosphorus control planning), salt/sand sheds, bank stabilization, culvert replacement/re-sizing, stream bank stabilization, detention ponds, check dam, swirl separators, permeable pavers, infiltration basins, gravel wetlands, subsurface detention systems, bio filters, and bio retention systems.

Eligible applicants for this grant program are municipalities. There is not a program cap on the amount of funding granted to a specific project, though there is a 20% local match requirement. All projects must be developed in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations. The application and program guide can be found at: <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Highway-and-Stormwater-Mitigation-Program>. Applications must be received before 1:00 p.m. on October 1, 2021. Electronic submittal of PDF files via email is required; submit to [Ross.Gouin@vermont.gov](mailto:Ross.Gouin@vermont.gov).



**Bylaw Modernization Grants:** The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has \$500,000 available to grant to municipalities for land use, development, and zoning bylaw updates in support of pedestrian-oriented development patterns that increase housing choice and affordability within smart growth areas, and in accordance with Vermont's smart growth principles ([24 V.S.A. §2791](#)). This one-time funding from Act 74 (2021) is intended to help communities confront the State's housing shortage and ready areas for new homes through bylaw modernization. A town or village may apply for Bylaw Modernization Grant funding in addition to a recent or FY22 [Municipal Planning Grant](#). Information about eligibility, funding, and competitive criteria can be found in the [program description](#). The BCRC will work with interested municipalities to develop a single grant application that will provide funding for multiple bylaw updates; contact [Cat Bryars](#) at the BCRC for more information.

**Vermont Housing Summit 2021** - Wednesday, October 13, 9:00am to 3:30pm. Arlington, Vermont. Join Reps. Seth Bongartz and Kathleen James for a nuts-and-bolts workshop with key players in Vermont's housing community, including Josh Hanford (Commissioner, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development), Gus Seelig (Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board), and representatives from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Bennington County Regional Commission, Shires Housing, and the towns of Manchester and Arlington. This all-day workshop is open to anyone interested in expanding housing opportunities across Vermont. Contact [Jim Sullivan](#) or [Allison Strohl](#) at the BCRC for registration information. Organized by Reps. Seth Bongartz and Kathleen James and sponsored by: Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Bennington County Regional Commission, Shires Housing, Town of Manchester, Town of Arlington.

Questions: Contact Rep. Seth Bongartz ([SBongartz@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:SBongartz@leg.state.vt.us), 802.362.1488) or Rep. Kathleen James ([KJames@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:KJames@leg.state.vt.us), 802.733.1435)

**2021 Municipal Planning Grants** - Municipalities may apply for up to \$22,000 and joint applications from several municipalities (a consortium) may apply for up to \$35,000. A wide range of municipal planning and implementation activities are eligible for funding. For this funding year, ACCD has identified four priority areas:

- ◆ COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plans and/or Investment;
- ◆ Fair & Affordable Housing Plans and/or Regulations that Implement Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods;
- ◆ Plans for a NEW Designated Area or Visual/Physical Master Planning for a Designated Area;
- ◆ Innovative Statewide Model Project.

Review the [Program Description](#) for eligibility requirements. Application Deadline: November 1, 2021.

**37th Annual Vermont Tourism Summit** - November 17-18 \* Killington Grand Resort Hotel  
The Vermont Tourism Summit draws one of the largest gatherings of tourism professionals in the state including owners, managers, and employees of many businesses connected to this important sector of the economy. For more information and to register, go to:

[Registration - VERMONT TOURISM SUMMIT \(vttourismsummit.org\)](http://vttourismsummit.org)

[Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) and [Flood Mitigation Assistance \(FMA\)](#) programs. For both programs, the application period opens September 30, 2021 with a state deadline of Friday December 17, 2021.

**Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):**

- Eligible Applicants: State agencies, regional planning commissions, and municipalities. Municipalities must have an approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan at the time of application submittal.
- Funding Available: \$1,000,000 (federal share) set-aside for Vermont with up to \$500,000 available for planning activities. Up to \$50 million is available per sub-application for nationally competitive mitigation projects.
- Eligible Projects: Everything that was previously eligible will still be eligible, e.g., home buyouts, floodplain restoration, culvert projects, Local Hazard Mitigation Planning grants, etc. In addition, under BRIC, applicants can apply for Project Scoping or Direct Technical Assistance.
- Management Costs: 5% of total project costs will be available to sub-applicants for managing the grant award.

**Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA):**

- FMA funds must benefit an NFIP-participating community; ideally those with Repetitive Loss/Severe Repetitive Loss properties.
- Up to \$900,000 is available per State for project scoping to develop community flood mitigation projects that reduce future NFIP flood claims.
- Up to \$70 million can be applied for per sub-applicant for Community Flood Mitigation Projects to address community flood risk to reduce future NFIP flood claims.

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for COVID, DR-4532:** President Biden has authorized FEMA to provide the State of Vermont funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for the major disaster declared for the COVID-19 pandemic. The contribution for the State of Vermont is \$13,396,387. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, more information on a grant deadline coming soon.

**Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF):** The Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF) is currently under development, subject to approval by the Agency of Administration. This fund was established by the Vermont Legislature under Act 74 with the intent of improving landscape and community resilience and reducing the future public safety and water quality impacts of climate-related flood hazards in Vermont, focusing on buyouts of flood-vulnerable properties. This program will prioritize projects that are not eligible for FEMA funding, more details coming soon. Round one of applications anticipated in October 2021 and round two January 2022. Available funding is \$4.6 million in fiscal year 2022.

**American Rescue Plan information for Municipal Officials from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns: [American Rescue Plan Act | Vermont League of Cities and Towns \(vlct.org\)](#) .**

This information also can be accessed through BCRC's website: [BCRC - Home \(bcrcvt.org\)](#) .

Contact [Callie Fishburn](#) or [Allison Strohl](#) at the BCRC for more information.

**BCRC Staff Contacts**

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