



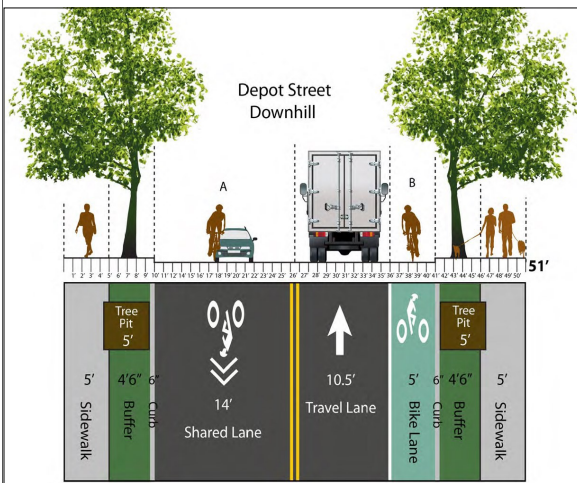
Bennington County Regional Commission

News and Notes

November 2018

BCRC November Meeting Thursday, November 15, 2018 - 5:30 PM Park House at the Manchester Recreation Center [\(click for directions\)](#)

This month’s meeting will focus on transportation issues, including a presentation by Joe Segale from the Vermont Agency of Transportation on planning for **autonomous vehicles**. Once a futuristic concept, these “self-driving” vehicles are becoming more of a reality. Segale will review the remarkable technological advances as well current thinking in Vermont regarding pathways to widespread use, potential benefits, challenges, and impacts on our communities. These vehicles may allow for greater mobility and freedom for many residents, reduce the need for private vehicle ownership, and improve safety and efficiency. They also may require distributed fleet parking areas, result in more net trips because of a “zero-occupant vehicle” phenomenon, and have unanticipated impacts on a variety of businesses.



Manchester has been a leader in adopting innovative and effective transportation improvements over the years, and two new projects will continue that theme. Representatives from BikeManchesterVt will provide a history and prospective view of a pathway that will extend through the northern part of town, largely following the former MD&G rail corridor. The town’s planning director, Janet Hurley, will review how the community is implementing a major redevelopment of Depot Street (Route 11/30) – creating a safer, more attractive, and much more bicycle and pedestrian friendly streetscape.

The meeting also will include a brief overview of a proposed amendment to the BCRC Bylaws

designed to accommodate inclusion of the Regional Development Corporation (RDC) as a functional part of the BCRC. A vote on the Bylaw amendment will occur in January. Contact [Jim Sullivan](#) at the BCRC for more information.

Batten Kill Habitat Restoration

Through partnerships among The BCRC, Bennington County Conservation District, Batten Kill Watershed Alliance (BKWA), Batten Kill Comprehensive Invasive Species Management Association (BKCISMA), and The U. S. Forest Service, Ondawa Farm, located on the Batten Kill in Manchester, has eradicated invasive plant species while establishing a 2.5 acre riparian buffer zone. The project was initiated by the BKCISMA who, with the assistance of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp, removed honey suckle, Japanese knotweed, bittersweet and garlic mustard. Large piles of these plants will be burned by USFS staff later this year.

While on a site visit, BCRC environmental program manager, Jim Henderson, met Matt and Courtney Weir, the owners of Ondawa Farm (Ondawa is the Abenaki name for The Batten Kill). Henderson asked the Weirs if they would be willing to abandon the outer edge of their hay field to establish a “no cut” riparian buffer zone extending 100 feet from the stream bank. He explained that the buffer would help to repair existing bank erosion, prevent additional erosion, and filter stormwater and other contaminants while providing enhanced habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. The Weirs embraced the idea and within days of this year’s first cut of hay a “no cut” riparian buffer zone was marked off.



Riparian buffer planting at Ondawa Farm in Manchester.

Meanwhile, Cynthia Browning, BKWA Executive Director, offered to plant the newly established “no cut” zone with 200 native trees and shrubs acquired through The Alliance’s riparian buffer program. This inventory of plants included sycamore, aspen, yellow birch, silver maple, red maple, Champlain Valley oak, arrow wood, dogwood, elderberry, high bush cranberry and buttonbush. On October 6th Henderson coordinated volunteers from Bennington College and Trout Unlimited who planted ninety trees and shrubs along one section of the buffer zone. Several days later Browning coordinated a group of Burr and Burton Academy students who planted the remaining trees and shrubs as part of their service learning program.

The Weirs are very thankful to all of the organizations and volunteers who made their river restoration project a great success and they look forward to enjoying their newly established floodplain forest. Land owners who are interested in learning more about riparian habitat restoration are encouraged to contact Jim Henderson (jhenderson@bcrcvt.org), Cynthia Browning (bkwaexdir@gmail.com) or Shelly Stiles (shelly.stiles@bccdvt.org) for more information.

Regulatory Guidance for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The Department of Housing and Community Development has produced a resource document for planners and planning commissioners to help prepare and update local regulations to accommodate electric vehicle charging stations. The guidance provides an overview of the latest EV trends in Vermont and offers tips to update use, parking, sign, performance, and procedural standards that easily accommodate this new technology in local bylaws. You can download a copy of the guidance document at: [EVSE Development Regulations](#).



A plug for plug-ins! Plug-in electric vehicles (EVs) are fast, fun, and efficient. Maintenance is simpler and cheaper. Refueling is as simple as plugging into an electrical outlet and you'll spend the equivalent of about a \$1.50 per gallon of gas to do so. EVs increase our energy independence and contribute to healthier air and lower carbon emissions. And [purchase incentives](#) are available to cover up to \$9,300 toward an EV purchase. Plug-in Hybrids can be even more affordable to buy, and eliminate "range-anxiety" while still operating on electric power during most daily travel. For more information on EVs and PHEVs, visit [Drive Electric Vermont](#).

Putnam Block Site Work Underway in Downtown Bennington

Demolition of the H. Greenberg & Son Hardware building began as work on Phase 1 of the Putnam Block Redevelopment got underway in earnest. Significant environmental remediation work has already been completed on the site and more, including pulling a 10,000 gallon underground storage tank and removal of some urban soils, will continue through mid-November. The Bennington Redevelopment Group expects to complete and close on its financing of Phase 1 in early December and construction work will begin at that time.



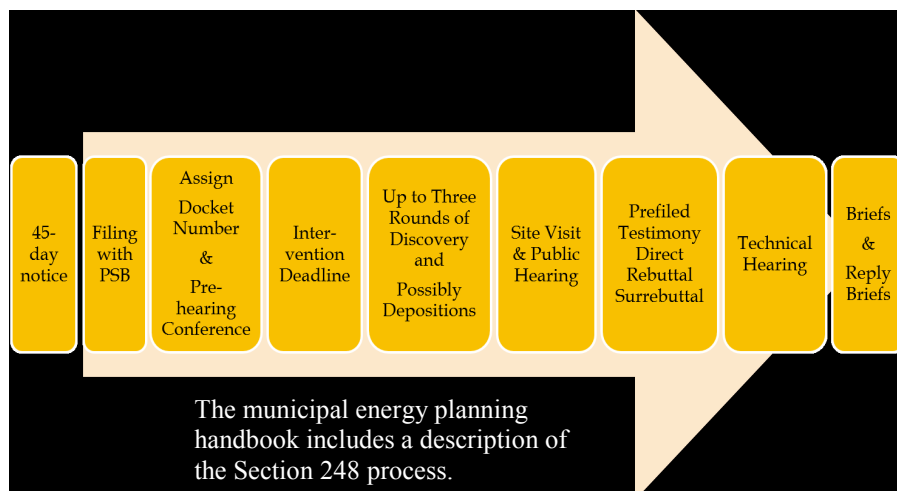
Energy Planning Resource Document Available

The BCRC assisted with the production of a new handbook intended to help municipalities interested in developing an enhanced energy plan that meets Act 174 requirements. It consists of two sections:

- ◆ Module 1 includes a revised version of last year’s best practices document. This module focuses on the basics of developing a municipal enhanced energy plan.
- ◆ Module 2 was added to the best practices document this year. This module reviews the basics of the Section 248 regulatory process. It also provides general advice about how to write effective municipal enhanced energy plan that will be effective in the Section 248 process. This module was written with the assistance of Joe McClean, an attorney at Stitzel Page and Fletcher in Burlington, VT.

A copy of the handbook can be downloaded at:

[*Municipal Enhanced Energy Planning in Vermont – Best Practices and Resources*](#)



Historic District Mapping Now Available

The project to map all of Vermont’s State Register Historic Districts is complete, and the information is now available for use. The “State Register Historic Districts” layer has been installed in the Planning Atlas as well, under the [“Historic Resources”](#) tab.

The mapping service has been published to the [Vermont Open Geodata Portal](#).

The map at the right, taken from the Planning Atlas, shows the North Pownal village center and historic districts as well as specific historic sites.



Events and Opportunities....

Getting a Loan for Your Small Business: What Lenders Want You to Know

November 7 - 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM - at the Lightning Jar in Bennington (194 North Street)

A panel discussion moderated by the US Small Business Administration, with USDA Rural Development, Community Capital of Vermont, Vermont Small Business Development Center, Vermont Economic Development Authority, Vermont Community Loan Fund, Bennington Revolving Loan Fund and The Bank of Bennington. For more information, contact Michelle Marrocco at michelle@lightningjar.org or 802-321-3070.

BCIC's 60th Annual Meeting

November 8 from 4:00-6:00 PM in the Paresky Wing of the Bennington Museum

The networking and social hour will feature a full cash bar and catering prepared by the Mount Anthony Country Club. The meeting hour will feature remarks from **Lisa M. Ventriss**, President of the Vermont Business Roundtable, a public affairs organization comprised of 115 CEOs from among the state's most successful private sector and not-for-profit employers. [Click to REGISTER](#)

Western New England Greenway Conference

Nov. 10 from 10 AM to 3:30 PM at the Bennington Museum

Join us as we continue to plan a contiguous bike trail from New York City to Montreal. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. The conference is free of charge. For more information: call 860-435-9505 or e-mail: Info@HousatonicHeritage.org. For a full agenda and to register [CLICK HERE](#).

VT Statewide Housing Conference

November 13th and 14th at the Hilton Burlington (60 Battery Street, Burlington)

An inspiring line-up of interactive, cutting-edge sessions will focus on specific municipal policy tools and community case studies. The conference features exceptional national speakers as well as state and local experts ready to share tools and best practices for improving housing affordability and creating vibrant, thriving communities. Register here: <https://www.vhfa.org/conference/>.

Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness & Management

Wednesday, November 14th from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, Arlington Town Hall, 3828 VT Route 7A

Staff from the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program, the Bennington County Conservation District and the Bennington County Regional Commission have teamed up to provide information on the emerald ash borer, to help develop management strategies for addressing EAB, and to assist towns in assessing their risks and developing mitigation plans. This training is intended for municipal staff, Selectboard members, Planning Commissions, Conservation Commission, Tree Committee members, Tree Wardens and anyone else who may be engaged in planning for EAB at the local level. Please sign up for the meeting at <http://benningtoneabtraining.eventbrite.com> by Wednesday, November 7th.

BCRC November Meeting

Thursday, November 15 beginning at 5:30 PM—Park House at the Manchester Recreation Center

This month's meeting will focus on transportation issues, including connected and autonomous Vehicle technology and implications for planning as well as two major new transportation improvement projects planned in Manchester. Contact [Jim Sullivan](#) at the BCRC for more information.

3rd Round of Public Input Sessions for Southern Vermont CEDS

November 15th : 8:00am-10:00am – Old School, Wilmington; 2:00p-4:00pm – Mt. Anthony Masonic Lodge, Bennington; 6:00pm-8:00pm – Town Office, Manchester

Vermont Development Conference

Thursday, November 15 at the Hilton Waterfront Hotel in Burlington

A full day of programming featuring timely discussions on Act 250, project finance, Opportunity Zones, and obstacles facing emerging breweries, cideries, and distilleries. Participants will have the unique opportunity to network and connect with 300 commercial real estate and development professionals with a vested interest in growing Vermont. Go to [VT Development Conference](#) for information and to register.

2018 Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network Gathering

November 15, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Campus Center Auditorium

The annual RCP Network Gathering brings together land conservation and planning professionals, foundations, state and federal agencies, foresters, researchers, and more in a workshop-based event aiming to build capacity for collaborative conservation in support of resilient communities and regions. For more information and to register, go to: [RCP Network Gathering](#).

Public Transit Regional Forum

Friday, November 16 at 1:00 PM – Manchester Community Library, 138 Cemetery Ave

The Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan will quantify Vermont's transit needs, as well as recommend programmatic and policy initiatives to strengthen the statewide transit system. This plan will lay out a 10 year vision for improved transit service in Vermont and develop policies and strategies to guide the improvement of Vermont's transit network. Go to [Public Transit Policy Plan](#) for more information and to complete a survey.

BCRC Information / Question and Answer Sessions for Municipal Officials

November 27, 6:30 PM at the Sunderland Town Offices and November 29 at 6:30 PM at Cole Hall in Shaftsbury

General information about the BCRC, its programs, staff, and funding—a brief presentation followed by questions and answers. More information will be sent to towns and villages with the BCRC Annual Report. Contact : Jim Sullivan at the BCRC (jsullivan@bcrcvt.org or 802-442-0713).

2018 Connectivity Summit

November 30 at the Grand Summit Resort Hotel at Mount Snow

Join the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Southern Vermont Economy Project in its second annual Connectivity Summit. The 2018 summit will consist of two tracks: The first track will include connectivity information and how towns can get organized around these issues. The second track is for towns who have a town sanctioned effort. Those towns will be able to sign up for 30 minute time slots with Clay Purvis from the VT Dept of Public Services, meet with service providers, and learn more about FirstNet.

Register at: [Connectivity Summit](#).

Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Grants

Grant applications are due November 30th, 2018.

Program description and application are available on the EVSE [website](#).

The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development announced the launch of Vermont's new Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) program. In total, \$2.4 in funding will be available over multiple years to support the installation of Level 2 and DC fast charge stations at qualified locations. Eligible applicants include local governments, schools and other public institutions, businesses, non-profits, and homeowner associations. The program prioritizes funding in state designated areas (downtowns, village centers, new town centers, growth centers and neighborhood planning areas), highway corridors, public transit hubs, major tourist destinations, colleges/universities, hospitals, public park and rides, workplaces and multi-unit housing.

For more information, please contact Gary Holloway at 802-828-3220 or gary.holloway@vermont.gov.

Vermont Community Development Association's Fall Conference - Workforce Development: Community-Based Strategies

Wednesday December 5 from 9:30am to 3:00pm at the Hotel Coolidge, White River Junction

Many Vermont businesses, agencies, organizations, and communities are actively exploring strategies at all levels to support Vermont's workforce. Join VCDA at the Fall Conference to:

- ◇ Learn about Vermont's workforce today: What are the challenges and opportunities in ensuring a new generation can work to build tomorrow's economy?
- ◇ Hear about key statewide workforce development initiatives and how your community can connect and partner.
- ◇ Engage in discussions on practical strategies and community case studies around fostering a workforce-friendly community— including housing, transportation, childcare, and advancing training and career development.

For more information contact Theresa Bachand at 802-229-9111 or tbachand@vlct.org .

USDA Grant and Loan Programs

[Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Loans & Grants in Vermont](#)

Program Fact Sheet: [PDF](#)

What does this program do?

Provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements.

Who may apply?

Agricultural producers with at least 50% of gross income coming from agricultural operations, and Small businesses in [eligible rural areas](#).

Vermont Program Contact: Ken Yearman, Energy Programs Coordinator
(802) 828-6070 or Kenneth.Yearman@vt.usda.gov

[Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program](#)

[Program Fact Sheet](#)

What does this program do?

This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

Who may apply?

This program assists qualified applicants who are not otherwise able to obtain commercial credit on reasonable terms. Eligible applicants include: most state and local governmental entities and private nonprofit.

What kinds of funding are available?

Long-term, low-interest loans

If funds are available, a grant may be combined with a loan if necessary to keep user costs reasonable.