



Bennington County Regional Commission

News and Notes

September 2018

BCRC September Meeting Thursday, September 20, 2018 - 5:30 PM Recent Healthy Community Initiatives

The September meeting of the BCRC will be held at the new [Catamount Connections](#) facility, located on the ground floor of the Masonic Lodge at 504 Main Street in Bennington ([click here](#) for directions—parking along the street or in the parking lot behind the building on Pleasant Street). The meeting will begin with a public hearing to consider approval of the Sunderland Town Plan and a Determination of Energy Planning Compliance pursuant to Act 174.



Catamount Connections is a new initiative arising out of a Promise Community grant, awarded through the BCRC, that offers a facility and programs helping to build a support network of peers and resources for parents. Through hosting structured and informal opportunities for learning, relationship-building, and collaboration, Catamount Connections focuses on the Protective Factors of strengthening families: Parental Resilience; Social Connections; Concrete Support in Times of Need; Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development; and Social-Emotional Competence of Children. Kayla Becker, Program Manager, will provide background on the founding of Catamount Connections and plans for the future.

The BCRC partnered with The Collaborative to complete a “Primer on Health, Wellness, & Substance Misuse” for Bennington County. Maryann Morris, Executive Director of The Collaborative, will discuss the Primer and how it can be used to further healthy community goals for communities in our region. The Primer provides sample policy and ordinance language for municipalities to reduce the misuse of substances including: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs. Its discussion of regulatory and non-regulatory actions is intended to enhance the effectiveness of substance use prevention and early intervention for Vermont youth, leading to reductions in substance misuse.

Bennington County Regional Prevention Partnership



Dare Muniere, Director of the Alliance for Community Transformations (ACT), will add information from the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The information and tools presented by Catamount Connections, The Collaborative, and ACT all can be incorporated in municipal plans, addressing policies and possible actions that support a wide range of healthy community objectives.

The business meeting will begin at 6:00 PM—arrive between 5:15 and 5:30 to get a first-hand view of the Catamount Connections facility and enjoy free refreshments!

The meeting is free and open to the public.

Contact [Jim Sullivan](#) at the BCRC for more information (802-442-0713)

Form-Based Standards for Municipal Land Use Planning

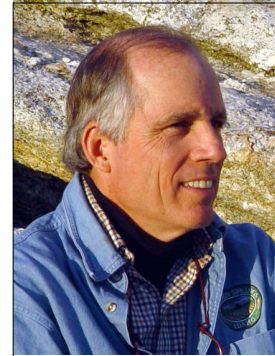
A Public Workshop with Randall Arendt

BENNINGTON COLLEGE CAPA SYMPOSIUM

October 17, 2018 - 5:00 to 8:00 PM

The BCRC has organized a workshop focusing on integration of form-based design standards with municipal land use policies and regulations. The workshop is free and open to the public and will be particularly beneficial to anyone involved in planning and zoning at the municipal level.

Mr. Arendt is the country's most sought-after speaker on the topic of creative development design. He has presented lectures in 47 states and five Canadian provinces. In recent years he has been featured as a key speaker at national conferences of the American Planning Association, the Urban Land Institute, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Association of Home Builders, the US EPA, and others. He is the author of numerous books and articles dealing with design in land use planning, including "Rural by Design: Planning for Town and Country," with the following topics from that work forming the basis for much of this workshop:



Randall Arendt

- ***Simplify that Code!*** Less complicated form-based codes that are well suited to smaller municipalities, including alternatives such as basic (and easily implemented) form-based design standards that have produced excellent results and the role of performance standards to ensure compatibility when different uses are mixed or located close together.
- ***Creative Design Ideas for Downtowns*** Illustrations of design approaches that support strengthening downtowns, with examples from communities of various sizes from across the country.
- ***Transforming Highway Corridors*** Ways that communities can overcome inertia and seize the initiative to implement medium- to long-term physical planning principles to gradually rebuild aging commercial strips as efficient, attractive, and economically vibrant mixed-use districts.

Please RSVP to: jsullivan@bcrcvt.org so that we can plan for seating and food and beverages. The main entrance to Bennington College is on VT 67A—[click here](#) for a copy of the campus map.

Sponsored by the Bennington County Regional Commission, the Town of Bennington, MSK Engineering and Design, Woolmington, Campbell, Bent, and Stasny, P.C., and Bennington College.



**BENNINGTON
COLLEGE**

**WOOLMINGTON, CAMPBELL,
BENT & STASNY, P.C**

Southern Vermont CEDS News

Development of the 2019 Southern Vermont Zone Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is well underway. This economic development plan, being crafted by Windham and Bennington County stakeholders, is a long-term strategy to grow the Southern Vermont Economy Zone – a region recognized by the Vermont Legislature in 2015 as having significant economic challenges. Once completed, the 2019 CEDS will replace the 2014 Windham Region CEDS. The second round of public input sessions for the project will be held the third week of September. Regional economic data will be shared and discussion of the draft goals created by the project team will take place. A final round of public meetings is slated for November. Please come and share your thoughts and ideas at one (or more) of the public session taking place throughout the two counties. Please see schedule below.



Upcoming Southern Vermont Zone CEDS Public Input Sessions

Your input wanted for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)!

September November

Monday Sept 24th **Wednesday Nov 14th**

*Manchester 8-10 am: Manchester Town Hall
Wilmington 2-4 pm: Wilmington Old School
Brattleboro 6-8 pm: Municipal Center*

*Brattleboro 8-10 am: Brattleboro Retreat Education Conference Room
Bellows Falls 6-8 pm: Opera House- Lower Theater*

Wednesday Sept 26th **Thursday Nov 15th**

Bennington 6-8 pm: Mt. Anthony Masonic Lodge

*Wilmington 8-10 am: Wilmington Old School
Manchester 6-8 pm: Manchester Town Hall*

Friday Sept 28th

Bellows Falls 8-10 am: Opera House- Lower Theater

Bennington 2-4 pm: Mt. Anthony Masonic Lodge

Southern Vermont Economy Project

The SVEP recently received funding from the USDA to extend the project through June 30, 2019. With this extension, the SVEP will be able to continue the following activities:

- An annual Southern Vermont Economic Development Summit;
- Quarterly Economic Development for Town Leaders series;
- Knowledge Bites Webinar Series; and
- Unique professional development opportunities in identified areas of need which have not yet been addressed through the project.

Emphasized in the coming year's work program will be:

- ⇒ Developing the SVEP network, body of work, and event formats;
- ⇒ Removing barriers to participation;
- ⇒ Reaching deeper into organizations to connect directly with boards and volunteers;
- ⇒ Supporting partners as implementers; and
- ⇒ Building a shared knowledge base through economic development data.

Contact [Sarah Lang](#), SVEP Manager for more information, 802-257-7731 ext. 222.

Vermont Green Streets Guide

Village and city streets cover large expanses of our landscape, creating dedicated spaces for vehicular traffic and utilities. Conventional street design is reimagined and reengineered in the new [Vermont Green Streets Guide](#), a step-by-step publication that builds expertise, facilitates design, and outlines maintenance practices for a new type of in-town street.

Green Street Design takes a complete view of the street, seeing stormwater as a resource, universal mobility as a priority, and plants as co-engineers of a complex built environment. It reimagines a singular street design that efficiently prioritizes multiple uses and recognizes the unique value of shared spaces. [Download the Guide](#)



Flood Training Website Available: Making Room for Rivers

Flooding is Vermont's most common natural disaster. The Department of Environmental Conservation has a new flood training website to help local officials get flood-ready. The site guides users through basic preparation and features Vermont case studies, tools and resources, and support to help municipalities reduce the risk from future flood events. Visit <http://floodtraining.vermont.gov/> and sign up for the Flood Resilience Listserv to receive updates.



Emergency Management Director Certification

Vermont Emergency Management recently updated the EMD certification program and is now ready for individuals to improve their skills and education in the emergency management field. The EMD certification is designed to provide leaders with fundamental knowledge and skills to effectively manage local disasters. The updated program includes 70 hours of learning curriculum. Trainings are a mix of online courses, instructor-led courses, and practical application. For more information and the list of trainings, please visit <http://vem.vermont.gov/programs/emd/certification>.

Planning and Zoning Law Changes: Electronic Notice, Group Homes, On-Farm Business

Several changes to statutes governing local planning and zoning will affect municipalities. Electronic notices can now be used for bylaw and plan adoption, group homes no longer need to be 1,000 feet apart to be allowed by right as part of a single-family dwelling, and on-farm businesses cannot be prohibited under local zoning.

The Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development released its [2018 planning legislation update](#) which summarizes these changes and more. Past DHCD updates are also available [here](#).

SHIRENOMICS TV!

The BCRC's Community and Economic Development Specialist Jonathan Cooper recently sat down with Matt Harrington, Director of the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, to tape the second episode of their show Shirenomics on GNAT-TV. This episode detailed recent results of the Chamber's survey of business owners (who reported a good deal of satisfaction with current and future prospects), addressed nationwide interest in relocating to Bennington County through the state's Stay To Stay program, and reviewed progress on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southern Vermont that is underway. Those interested in learning more about economic and workforce trends in the region, as well as ongoing development initiatives across Southern Vermont, can visit GNAT's website to access the show: <https://gnat-tv.org/>



Clean Energy Industries Report and Wood Heat Incentives

The Clean Energy Development Fund commissioned Vermont Clean Energy Industries Report for 2018 is now available. The report (the 5th CEDF has issued) details the number of workers in the different clean energy sectors of Vermont's overall clean energy economy.

[Download the report: Clean Energy Industries Report](#)

The report contains a special section on Vermont's wood energy sector. This sector continues to be the focus of CEDF's incentives and market transformation efforts. [Here is a list of advanced wood heating incentives available in Vermont:](#)

- Starting July 1st retail sales of "Advanced Wood Boilers" are exempt from Vermont's 6% sales tax. The Tax Department has information on this wood boiler exemption on their website: <http://tax.vermont.gov/business-and-corp/sales-and-use-tax/exemptions>
- Efficiency VT (EVT) has a new custom incentive for commercial/institutional installations of pellet heating systems. Contact EVT to get details on this new program: (888) 921-5990. EVT also has a flat-rate incentive of \$3,000 for pellet boilers. This can be combined with CEDF's \$3,000 incentive for a total of \$6,000. EVT and CEDF have combined these two forms into one form to be available very soon.

www.encyvermont.com/rebates/list/central-wood-pellet-furnaces-boilers-business

Hazard Mitigation Funding

Vermont will receive \$575,000 in funding for eligible projects and plans under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program. The required match is 25%. State agencies and municipalities are eligible as subapplicants and must have an approved hazard mitigation plan as of the application deadline to apply. Funding (an additional \$200,000) through this program also is available to obtain data to prioritize, select and develop community mitigation projects for future flooding. This is a rare opportunity for communities to access critical, project development/engineering design funds prior to project development. Anything beyond the \$575,000 thresholds goes into a nationally competitive review process. The application period opens on October 1, 2018 and closes at a date to be determined in early January.

Vermont also will receive approximately \$545,000 in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding from severe storm damage that occurred last year. Again, there is a 25% match and municipalities must have an approved hazard mitigation plan along with membership in the National Flood Insurance Program and an adopted Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). Typical hazard mitigation projects include: mitigation of local roads and bridges, home acquisition (buyout), structural elevations or relocations, replacement of undersized culverts, mitigation outreach and education, etc. Project proposals *do not* need to be directly connected to damages incurred from the most recent declared disaster. The applications period opens on October 1, 2018 and closes on a date to be determined in early January of 2019.



Finally, Vermont is eligible for up to \$10 million through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program. Eligible project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Infrastructure protective measures
- Floodwater storage and diversion
- Utility protective measures
- Stormwater management
- Wetland restoration/creation
- Aquifer storage and recovery
- Localized flood control to protect critical facilities
- Floodplain and stream restoration
- Water and sanitary sewer system protective measures

FMA funding is competitive nationally. The applications period opens on October 1, 2018 and closes on a date to be determined in early January of 2019.

Visit <http://vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation> for more information on applying for any of these programs.

Bicycle–Pedestrian Program Grants to Region Municipalities

The Vermont Agency of Transportation recently announced the award of over \$365,000 in grants to support development of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Bennington Region:

- ◆ An additional \$120,000 for construction of a bikepath and safe highway crossing along Kocher Drive in Bennington.
- ◆ An additional \$136,000 to redesign Depot Street as a more bicycle-pedestrian friendly village street in Manchester.
- ◆ \$22,000 to complete a study of a possible multi-use path generally following the route of the old trolley line from Bennington to Williamstown, MA.
- ◆ \$28,000 for a scoping study of a recreation path from the Manchester Recreation Center to North Road.
- ◆ \$29,400 for replacement of sidewalks in Old Bennington Village.
- ◆ \$31,000 for construction of a roadway shoulder along a dangerous section of Sunderland Hill Road in Sunderland.

Emerald Ash Borer



The Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), generally referred to as EAB, is a non-native insect that feeds on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the movement of water and nutrients. Preliminary results from Ohio and Michigan show that healthy ash stands, once infested, can reach nearly 100% mortality of ash trees greater than one inch diameter within six years. During the first few years, ash decline is very slow and symptoms of emerald ash borer are not obvious. Later in the infestation, ash mortality accelerates rapidly.

In Vermont, there are three species of ash: white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), green ash (*Fraxinus pensylvanica*) and black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*). White and green ash are fairly common while black ash is restricted to wetlands. EAB has been confirmed in Bennington County as well as in Orange, Caledonia and Washington Counties. Much of the eastern United States, including Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts, is within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) quarantine boundary. Ash wood may not be moved from within quarantined areas to locations outside that boundary. Vermont also regulates the movement of untreated firewood into Vermont.

There are no readily available controls for EAB, although individual trees can be injected with various insecticides by professionals. While this may be practical for homeowners, it is not a method for controlling widespread infestations. Vermont Invasives, available at <https://vtinvasives.org/>, has a series of recommendations under the umbrella “Slow the Spread.” These include avoiding movement of wood outside of infested areas, a variety of treatment options including kiln sterilization, grinding or chipping trees and branches, and debarking wood used for sawlogs. Forest harvesting is best done between October 1st and April 30th when EAB is not emerging from the wood, as the adults are not yet flying. If buying or selling firewood, try to stay local. Given that moving wood is the primary method of transmitting EAB, it may be best to leave dead and downed trees where they lie if it is not a hazard. Visit [Vermont Invasives](https://vtinvasives.org/) for more detailed information.

Events and Opportunities....

11th annual Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference: September 7 & 8 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, VT. This year's keynote speaker will be FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Albie Lewis. Lewis will discuss his experiences in Houston following Hurricane Harvey in 2017 ([click here for more about Albie Lewis](#)).

BCRC September Meeting: September 20, 5:15 PM at the Masonic Lodge on Main Street in Bennington. Sunderland plan approvals, Catamount Connections, and a Primer for Healthy Communities! See page 1 article for more information.

Southern Vermont CEDS Public Meetings: September 24, 26, 28, and November 14 and 15. See article on page 3 for more information. Meeting details at: [CEDS Public Meetings](#).

Form-based Zoning Workshop with Randall Arendt: October 17, 5:00 PM at Bennington College's CAPA Symposium. See page 2 article for more information. RSVP to Jim Sullivan at the BCRC (jsullivan@bcrcvt.org).

Vermont Highway Safety Alliance Annual Conference: October 17, Jay Peak Resort in Jay, VT. The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance invites you to attend its 6th Annual Conference: Safety for the Ages. Address highway safety issues with colleagues and experts in education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency services. For more information, go to: [Highway Safety Conference](#).

Renewable Energy Vermont Annual Conference: October 18-19, Doubletree by Hilton Hotel & Conference Center—Burlington. REV2018 is excited to welcome Gordon Van Welie, President & CEO of ISO New England as Thursday's keynote speaker and Katherine Hamilton, Chair of 38 North Solutions as Friday's keynote speaker. www.revconference.org for more information.

State Government Municipal Day: November 1, 8:30 AM-4:00 PM, Asa Bloomer State Office Building, 88 Merchant Row, Rutland. A Day of Workshops for Vermont's Local Government Officials, Featuring panel discussions and presentations on a wide variety of natural resource topics. [Click](#) for more information.

Vermont Statewide Housing Conference: November 13 and 14, Hilton Burlington, 60 Battery Street Burlington. This year's conference theme is the impact Vermont communities have on housing affordability. An inspiring line up of interactive, cutting-edge sessions will focus on specific municipal policy tools and community case studies. For more information: [Housing Conference](#).

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Hazard Mitigation Grants: See article, page 6, for details or contact [Michael Batcher](#) at the BCRC.

Transportation Alternative Program Grants: For projects involving 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. Informational workshops will be held via Skype Meeting. It is strongly recommended that an official representative of the applicant listen in on one of these workshops to fully understand the requirements associated with federal-aid projects. Applicants may participate in either workshop from any computer connected to the internet using one of the links below. No password or pre-registration is required, however the application will ask for some basic information prior to starting.

- Session 1: Tuesday, September 4th from 6:00pm - 8:00pm [Join Skype Meeting](#)
- Session 2: Thursday, September 6th from 1:00pm - 3:00pm [Join Skype Meeting](#)

Animating Infrastructure Grants: From bike racks and solar panels to a new bridge, the Animating Infrastructure program strives to renew a sense of pride and connection to place through the development of public art that reflects the vision, values and creative spirit of Vermont communities. Vermont Arts Council designed the program to foster collaborative partnerships with artists to integrate public art into existing or proposed improvement projects. Application deadline: December 2018. Contact Michele Bailey (802) 828-3294 mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org or visit www.vermontartscouncil.org.

Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) Grant Program: The state grants will make funds available to expand Vermont's network of electric vehicle charging stations. Complete program guidelines and application materials will be available soon. Municipalities, businesses, individuals, nonprofits, utilities and equipment providers are eligible. For more information, please contact Gary Holloway gary.holloway@vermont.gov (802) 828-3220.

The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) is seeking concepts for innovative **housing development projects**. These projects will be funded by the **Housing for All Revenue Bond (HRB)**, which was issued by VHFA on behalf of the state in January. The proceeds of the \$37 million bond are administered by VHCB for the development and rehabilitation of owner-occupied and rental housing for Vermonters with very low to moderate incomes. To date, 414 new homes across the state have been developed.

VHCB invites the development community to propose innovative approaches to affordable housing development. VHCB's goals for the use of the HRB funds include the development and improvement of 550-650 units of housing, meeting the highest priority housing needs, geographic distribution, leveraging an additional \$70-100 million in additional resources, and allowing for the piloting of new approaches to providing affordable housing. Developers of selected proposals will be invited to submit a competitive application for consideration by the VHCB Board.

For more information and to learn how to apply, review [VHCB's Request for Concepts](#). Proposals are due by October 31, 2018. VHCB will hold a conference call on August 22 at 1:00 pm to respond to questions. Clarifying questions should be submitted to [Martin Hahn](#), Housing Director at VHCB (mhahn@vhcb.org).