



# Northwest Regional Planning Commission

155 Lake Street, St. Albans, VT 05478

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## Inside This Issue



VTrans Launches New Web-Based Carpooling Program 1



GMTA Open House 1



NRPC Launches Energy Audit Program for Municipal Buildings 2



Are You a Planning or Development Review Volunteer? 3



NRPC Staff 3



NRPC Calendar 4



The Data Resources Your Town Needs for Comprehensive Planning Workshop 4



List of Commissioners 4

## VTrans Launches New Web-Based Carpooling Program

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) through its Go Vermont initiative has launched a new, state-of-the-art ridesharing program. The new program offers those seeking to carpool an Internet tool to search for others who rideshare. The new, web-based program replaces the Vermont Rideshare Program.

The new tool is reported to offer quick and easy service for people looking to ride share not only within Vermont, but anywhere within the entire tri-state area of Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire.

Go Vermont is VTrans' web-based clearinghouse for all kinds of alternative transportation options, including carpools, vanpools, public transit, and rail services, as well as park-&-ride locations.



Registering with Go Vermont automatically qualifies carpoolers for a "guaranteed ride home" in case of emergency. This benefit provides those who use the website with an "insurance policy" in case either they or their driver has an unexpected schedule change. Registrants also can obtain parking passes for designated spaces at participating employers, as well as qualify them for any incentive and drawings offered directly through the Go Vermont program.

This free resource can be accessed by visiting [www.connectingcommuters.org](http://www.connectingcommuters.org) or by calling 800-685-RIDE.

## GMTA Open House

Senator Sara Kittell will cut the ribbon on the new headquarters of the Green Mountain Transit Agency of Franklin/Grand Isle on Monday, February 15, at 1 p.m. The new office is located at 375 Lake Road, Suite 3B. "We're celebrating the opening of our new headquarters and our first year of service to the local community," Tim Bradshaw, District Manager of GMTA-FGI said. "We hope local residents will come to learn more about our services, join us for light refreshments, and congratulate our staff and volunteers for their efforts to expand and improve our service."

# NRPC Launches Energy Audit Program for Municipal Buildings

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has received grants from the US Department of Energy and the Vermont Department of Public Service, which will allow us to pay for energy audits in 20 to 30 publicly-owned buildings in Franklin and Grand Isle County.



## What is an Energy Audit? What will our community receive if we participate?

An energy audit is an inspection, survey and analysis of energy flows in a building, typically conducted to identify opportunities to conserve energy. Energy audits can focus on electricity used in a building by lighting and mechanical systems or on the building envelope and identify opportunities to “tighten” a building with improved insulation, doors and windows. The NRPC will work with municipalities to determine whether they need an electrical audit, a thermal audit, or both.

Following the energy audit, the municipality will receive a summary report that will document opportunities for improved efficiency, provide general cost estimates, and analyze payback periods for each recommended improvement. The NRPC will help municipalities seek funding to implement the recommendations of the audit.



## What responsibilities do we have if we receive an audit through the NRPC?

To participate in the NRPC’s energy audit program, municipalities must commit to:

- ☛ Assign a local contact person to coordinate scheduling and to be available during the audit. This person may be asked to gather information such as building plans and past energy bills.
- ☛ Provide access to the selected building, including the basement, attic, etc as necessary.
- ☛ Have the results of the audit reviewed at a public meeting of the legislative body.
- ☛ Coordinate with the NRPC to explore opportunities for funding recommended actions.
- ☛ Report back to NRPC on measures that are implemented for up to three years after the audit.

The NRPC will be responsible for hiring the energy auditors, paying for the audit, assisting with scheduling and general project coordination, and helping your community find funding for implementation. *While municipalities are not obligated to implement the recommendations of the audit, the NRPC may give preference to projects with demonstrated commitment from the municipality.*



## How do we nominate a building to receive an energy audit?

Building nomination forms have been mailed to the legislative body of each municipality in the region. These forms should be completed and returned by **Monday, March 1, 2010** to Deb Perry, NRPC, 155 Lake Street, St. Albans, VT 05478. Municipalities nominating more than one building should indicate their priorities by numbering the nomination forms. The form can also be found at [www.nrpcvt.com/energy.html](http://www.nrpcvt.com/energy.html)

### In order to be eligible a building must:

- ✓ Be owned by your municipality
- ✓ Not be a school (schools are eligible for audits through the Vermont Superintendent’s Association)

### Preference may be given to buildings that:

- ✓ Have not had an audit completed in the past.
- ✓ Are highly visible and offer opportunities to educate the public.
- ✓ Have heating systems more than 15 years old.
  - ✓ Have unusually high energy usage.
  - ✓ Are used frequently and by a significant number of people.
  - ✓ Have municipal commitment to implement efficiency improvements.

# Are You a Planning or Development Review Volunteer?

Here are opportunities for you to learn more about relevant issues!

## Vermont Law School Weekend Volunteer Retreat

Are you interested in expanding your knowledge of land use and related laws in Vermont? If so, a great opportunity is being offered this summer by Vermont Law School. The school's Land Use Institute will hold its second workshop for volunteers in their communities from June 18-19, 2010. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission will sponsor up to two volunteers from Franklin and Grand Isle Counties to attend at no cost other than travel to the location.

Topics that will be covered at the workshop will include how to handle difficult public hearings, implementing energy efficiency and conservation measures as well as gaining a better understanding of developers' perspectives. If you are interested in learning more about these issues of local and regional importance, please, contact us at NRPC. Or for further information about Vermont Law School's Land Use Institute visit: [www.vermontlaw.edu/landuse](http://www.vermontlaw.edu/landuse)

**Where:** Ohana Camp on Lake Fairlee, Thetford, VT

**When:** June 18-19, 2010

## Annual New Board Member Training

NRPC's popular New Board Member Training is back again this spring. The workshop offers members of Planning Commissions, Development Review Boards and Zoning Boards an opportunity to gain the basic knowledge needed to serve effectively. Topics include: History and Legal Context of Planning and Zoning in Vermont, Roles and Responsibilities for all the players, Types of Local Permit Reviews and Conducting Effective Meetings and Hearings.

Mark your calendars! 7:00-9:00 p.m., attend either March 29<sup>th</sup> in Franklin County or April 1st in Grand Isle County. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

## Specialized Training for Your Town

The Municipal Education Grant program (MEG) provides municipalities with funds for training volunteer boards and commissions to help them perform their duties. Municipalities may apply for a grant of up to \$800 any time before May 15, 2010. Communities in our region have successfully used this program to bring training on a variety of topics directly to Board members. NRPC's experienced staff can organize and provide trainings on a number of topics including:

- ☛ Roles and Responsibilities (Introduction or Advanced)
- ☛ Conducting Meetings/Hearings

- ☛ Making/Writing Decisions
- ☛ Public Participation
- ☛ Bylaw and Plan Pre-Adoption
- ☛ Water Quality and Stormwater Considerations
- ☛ Downtown and Village Planning
- ☛ New Board Member Orientation
- ☛ Customized Training for Special Topics

For more information about the MEG program or to discuss a particular training need, call Catherine or Greta NRPC at 524-5958. Program materials can also be found at: <http://www.dhca.state.vt.us/Planning/MEG.htm>.

NRPC Staff

Executive Director  
Catherine Dimitruk

Assistant Director  
Shaun Coleman

Office Administrator  
Amy Adams

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Land Use Planner  
Greta Brunswick

Land Use Planner  
Deb Perry

Regional Planner  
Cristina Mastrangelo

GIS Technician  
Emily Hubbard



## Northwest Regional Board of Commissioners

Alburgh Town:	Terry Tatro Barbara Baker
Alburgh Village:	Andrea Beaderstadt One Vacant Seat
Bakersfield:	Nancy Hunt Dennis DeBevec
Berkshire:	Claude Charron One Vacant Seat
Enosburg Falls:	Richard Roberge Michael Manahan
Enosburg:	Ronald Duso Lloyd Touchette
Fairfax:	Randy Devine Colleen Steen
Fairfield:	William Kittell Marilyn Savoy
Fletcher:	Bruce Douglas One Vacant Seat
Franklin:	Doug Clark Dan Larivee
Georgia:	Jerry Baitz Kirk Waite
Grand Isle:	Edwin Gelinas David Borthwick-Leslie
Highgate:	Pete Paquette One Vacant Seat
Isle La Motte:	Sylvia Jensen Robin Gutierrez
Montgomery:	Barry Kade Darlene Marrier
North Hero:	John Lambert One Vacant Seat
Richford:	Melissa Wells Ann Lavery
St Albans City:	David Peirce Lazarus Scangas
St Albans Town:	John Gray Paul Larner
Sheldon:	Patrick Howrigan One Vacant Seat
South Hero:	Michael Guernsey Bob Buermann
Swanton Town:	Harold Garrett Robert Manning
Swanton Village:	Christopher Leach Neal Speer

## NRPC FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, Energy Committee Meeting, NRPC Conference Room

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm, Policy/Project Review Meeting, NRPC Conference Room

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, TAC Meeting, NRPC Conference Room

February 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, NRPC Board Meeting, WIB Site, Swanton

## The Data Resources Your Town Needs for Comprehensive Planning Workshop



**Start Date:** Wednesday, March 10

**Start Time:** 7:30 PM

**Place:** Vermont Interactive Television Locations in throughout Vermont

**Directions:** <http://www.vitlink.org/Locations.php>

**Coordinating Organizations:**

Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions <http://vapda.org/>

Vermont League of Cities and Towns <http://www.vlct.org>

**Summary:** A town uses a variety of data to help develop the town plan and other planning documents. How to apply or analyze this information effectively to guide decisions on economic and housing growth, natural resource, transportation, and facility planning can sometimes mystify the citizen planner. This instrumental workshop will examine how to find and apply readily available census and other planning resource data to help develop planning policy. The workshop is delivered in the evening via interactive television and is co-sponsored by Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies.

**For More Information:** Jessica Hill at VT League of Cities & Towns

**Phone:** 802-229-9111

**Email:** [info@vlct.org](mailto:info@vlct.org)

**Website for information and/or registration:**

<http://www.vlct.org/eventscalendar/upcomingevents/?event=268>

**Price:** PACIF members \$45, VLCT members \$55, Non Members \$75



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