



Northwest Regional Planning Commission

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NRPC Awarded Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission was one of 17 nationwide awarded \$1,000,000 from the EPA to establish a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). A brownfield is a property on which expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence, or perceived presence, of contamination. The EPA's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grants provide funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund and to provide sub grants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. When loans are repaid, the loan amount is returned into the fund and re-lent to other borrowers, providing an ongoing source of capital within a community. Through these grants, EPA seeks to strengthen the marketplace and encourage stakeholders to leverage the resources needed to clean up and redevelop brownfields.

The RLF award is a testament to the continued importance and success of the Brownfield program in our region. An RLF is a natural next step that will complement our existing assessment program with cleanup funds and further redevelopment on our brownfield sites. Please visit our website www.nrpcvt.com/brownfields.html for more information or contact gbrunswick@nrpcvt.com or 524-5958.

NRPC Receives Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence and Pollution Prevention

On Monday May 3rd, the NRPC will accept an award from Governor Douglas for "Environmental Excellence in Earth Stewardship and Resource Protection." The award is in recognition of the NRPC's role in stormwater management and project implementation in the Stevens and Rugg Watersheds. Stevens and Rugg Brook are both considered to be stormwater impaired by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and drain into the St. Albans Bay, which experiences reduced water quality due to high phosphorus levels.

This award recognizes the NRPC's efforts to develop and implement stormwater practices and water quality improvement projects within the impaired watersheds. This work was funded by a \$297,600 grant from the US EPA secured by Senator Patrick Leahy. The NRPC, in close cooperation with local, state and federal partners, pursued a variety of projects including geomorphic assessment studies, urban stream restoration projects, stream gauging, low impact development stormwater management, and education and outreach activities. Between 2006 and 2009, the NRPC and project partners successfully leveraged the EPA funds with other funding sources to raise an additional \$1 million to support watershed projects.

In addition to the NRPC, several other organizations will also be recognized. The Friends of Northern Lake Champlain will accept an award for education and outreach in reducing non-point source pollution and the Franklin Watershed Committee will accept an award for reducing phosphorus in Lake Carmi.

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail News

Resurfacing April 29 – July 19

Thanks to federal stimulus funding, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail will be completely resurfaced this year. VTrans has hired GW Tatro Construction of Jeffersonville to undertake the project which is expected to begin in late April and be completed by July 19.

Plans are to put down a 4" layer of compacted crushed limestone (same material as presently on the MVRT) on top of the existing surface, and to widen the trail surface to its original 10' width.

The resurfacing work will take place in sections with the section under construction closed to Trail users. The project will begin on April 29 at the Richford end of the MVRT and move towards St. Albans, ending on July 19. Dates may vary depending on weather conditions.

We apologize for the inconvenience caused by having sections of the trail unusable, but know that you will be very pleased with the resulting new surface!

Bridge Painting, April 15 – May 15

Trail users will also be inconvenienced for about a month while the Interstate 89 bridges (northbound and southbound) over the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail will be painted. The section of Trail directly under the two bridges will be closed while the painting project is taking place (from April 15 through May 15).

Only those trail users intending to travel the MVRT from the St. Albans parking area through to Greens Corner or vice versa will be affected. If you travel from St. Albans east to the Franklin Park West housing development (distance about .75 mile), or from Greens Corner west to mile marker 1 (distance about 2 miles), you will not be inconvenienced by the trail closure.

In order to access the underside of the bridges, the painting company will be placing its equipment on the MVRT. The bridges are located between the Franklin Park West housing development and MVRT mile marker 1.

Watch for updates on our kiosks, on our website www.mvrailtrail.com, or call 933-8851 or 524-5958 for information on closed sections of the MVRT.

Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council Meeting

The Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council will hold its next regular business meeting at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 10 at the Sheldon Elementary School. All are welcome. For more information, contact Cynthia at 933-8851 or cynthiascott@myfairpoint.net.

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 staff can provide assistance in organizing and providing 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 Workshop

Road crews and selectboard members gathered in Enosburgh for a workshop to learn how to prevent erosion, avoid flood damage, and the impact of roads on Vermont's lakes and streams. Speakers included Staci Pomeroy and Chris Brunelle from VT DEC River Management and Linda Boudette Blasch from VT Better Backroads. The NRPC organized the workshop and provided free erosion control materials to each town that attended. The workshop was funded by the VT Clean and Clear Program.

NRPC Workshops Spark Interesting Questions

Recently, the NRPC offered two workshops for local planning and zoning boards. The workshops, held in North Hero and Sheldon focused on the basic roles and responsibilities of municipal boards and officials, the purpose of different types of development review, and conducting effective meetings and development review hearings. This article highlights a few interesting questions raised at the workshops.

Does a quasi-judicial board need to come out of deliberative session and vote publicly whether to approve or deny an application?

No. Development Review Boards, Zoning Boards of Adjustment, and Planning Commissions conducting development review do not need to reconvene the open meeting to vote and publicly announce its decision. The open meeting law states that *“A written decision issued by a public body in connection with a quasi-judicial proceeding need not be adopted at an open meeting if the decision will be a public record.”* (Title 1, Chapter 5, § 312(f)). Vermont’s Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act requires boards to issue written decisions on development review applications that are part of the public record (Title 24, Chapter 117, §4464).

Deliberations are exempt from the open meeting law to allow members of the board to thoroughly and freely review and discuss evidence – without political or public pressure. It provides an environment in which board members can express their opinions without feeling awkward or self-conscious. No decision of the board is final until it is memorialized in a written decision that has been issued to the applicant or appellant and all required parties according to law (Title 24, Chapter 117, §4464).

Do decisions need to be signed?

State law does not mandate that development review decisions be signed, although boards can choose to sign their decisions. Vermont law does enable the chair or vice chair of boards to sign written decisions on behalf of boards. The law reads: *“Any decision or order approved for issue by a board, commission, committee, agency or authority of any municipal corporations, including the legislative body of a municipal corporation, which is required by law to be in writing, may be signed by the chairman or vice-chairman on behalf of the issuing body.”* Title 24, Chapter 33, §1141.

However, quasi-judicial boards are required to take action only by concurrence of a majority of the panel (Title 24, Chapter 117, §4461) and it is good practice to memorialize this in some form. A practical way to do this is to have decisions signed by those who constituted a concurrence of the majority necessary for the decision to be rendered.

For more information about planning and zoning, and the process of development review, please contact Greta Brunswick or Deb Perry at 524-5958.



Please take the Northwest Vermont Park and Ride Survey!

Regional transportation planners in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Transportation are developing a plan to improve existing, and build new park and ride facilities in Addison, Chittenden, Washington, Lamoille, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties and are seeking input from the public. The on-line survey can be found at: <http://www.surveycake.com/cc09224/passwordA.asp>. The survey will take less than five minutes to complete. We would like input from everyone, even if you seldom use a park and ride lot. Your input will help identify the types of improvements and facilities desired. The survey is funded by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization.

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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 Gelinus 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 Connie Burns
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 MAY CALENDAR

May 12th, 5:30pm, Policy/Project Review Meeting, NRPC Conference Room

May 13th, 7:00pm, TAC Meeting, NRPC Conference Room

May 26th, 7:00pm, NRPC Board Meeting, WIB Site, Swanton

NRPC Summer Transportation Planning Services



That time of year for transportation planning field work is fast approaching – and NRPC is once again able to assist your community free of charge in effectively planning its transportation systems. Services available this season are:

Traffic/Roadway Analysis

NRPC offers traffic data capture and analysis for communities interested in developing speed limits, re-classification counts or use analysis. The traffic counting season starts on June 1 of this year and counts are available to communities on a first come, first served basis.

Bridge and Culvert Inventories

NRPC staff will spend time on the ground in your community inventorying and mapping culvert and short bridge structure data. NRPC enter the data into the state's Bridge and Culvert Online Database and provide your community with a series of maps. Having an updated culvert inventory can also reduce the town's match for the Vermont Town Highway, Bridge and Culvert program.

If your community is interested in taking advantage of any of the listed transportation planning services this summer, or you would like more information, please contact Bethany Remmers, Transportation Planner, at 524-5958 or via email at bethany@nrpcvt.com.



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