



# Northwest Regional Planning Commission

155 Lake Street, St. Albans, VT 05478

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## Upcoming City Plan Update Will Consider Form Based Zoning

St. Albans City has received a Vermont Municipal Planning Grant to re-write its municipal plan with the assistance of the NRPC, which will take place over the course of winter 2010 to summer 2011. As part of this municipal plan re-write, the City will explore the concept of form based zoning (known as form based codes). Form based zoning has gained popularity in the last few years for its success in streamlining permitting processes and achieving predictable forms of development desired by communities. Defined by the Form Based Code Institute as fostering "predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code," they have taken hold in many communities across the nation, including Newport, Vermont and Dover, New Hampshire. The Form Based Code Institute goes on to say: "The regulations and standards in form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development rather than only distinctions in land-use types."

City Planning and Development Director, Jim Tischler, is heading up the Municipal Plan re-write effort in coordination with the NRPC. The project will kick off in late September 2010 with a general municipal planning training given by NRPC and a charrette planning and form based code training given by Geoff Ferrell of the Form Based Code Institute. Charrette planning is promoted as the best way to engage community members in defining building and streetscape forms for a particular district or neighborhood, which would be required in a form based code. A charrette is a series of community workshops and design sessions over the course of several days, which incorporate "feedback loops" from professionals. The result is a community created design or vision that is ready to be implemented. St. Albans City will hold a community charrette process a go in the spring of 2011.

NRPC recently worked with St. Albans City to apply for a U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Challenge Grant to develop a form based zoning handbook and template standards appropriate to Vermont municipalities. The proposal includes supplementing the City's charrette already planned for the spring and developing a form based code. The proposal also includes developing template village-scale form based standards. Stay tuned for updates on the City's Municipal Plan re-write throughout the course of the year. For more information contact Greta Brunswick from NRPC ([gbrunswick@nrpcvt.com](mailto:gbrunswick@nrpcvt.com)) or Jim Tischler from St. Albans City ([je.tischler@stalbanstv.com](mailto:je.tischler@stalbanstv.com)).

*Interested in learning more about form based codes and whether they are appropriate for your community? Look on page 4 for workshops on this topic.*

# Weatherization Training

**Learn how to make your home more comfortable and more energy-efficient!**

Weatherization Skillshops have been created to give people with handyman skills the building science background, how-to demonstrations and hands-on skill-building to make energy-saving home improvements. Each Weatherization Skillshop is led by a qualified instructor, and costs only \$150. You'll learn how to:

- ☛ Evaluate your home's needs
- ☛ Choose the right materials and tools for your project
- ☛ Use materials properly—for effectiveness and safety

If you have basic building and home repair skills, you will be able to tackle many energy improvements in your home that can help make your home more comfortable, reduce your fuel use, and save money. The Northwest Region will have a Weatherization Skillshop on October 2, 2010 from 9:00a.m. to 4p.m. in St. Albans at the Northwest Technical Center.

## The skillshop covers several topics:

- ☛ **Attic Air-Sealing & Insulation:** Techniques for sealing air leaks and insulating in the attic. Tools used: caulk guns, foam guns, shears, measuring tape, knife, insulation machine. Materials used: caulk, single-part spray foam, cellulose insulation, other insulation techniques.
- ☛ **Windows & Doors:** Techniques for finding air leaks and sealing drafty windows and doors. Tools used: caulking guns, screw drivers, hack saw, measuring tape, knife. Materials used: caulk, weatherstripping, door sweeps, sash locks, window sealing kits.
- ☛ **Basement Air-Sealing & Insulation:** Techniques for finding air leaks and moisture issues in basements, insulating sills and sealing ducts. Tools used: caulking guns, screw drivers, hack saw, measuring tape, knife. Materials used: caulk, single-part spray foam, rigid foam insulation, other insulation techniques.

*Special Note: Participants will become eligible for the Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Efficiency Pilot Program which includes rebates of up to \$1,000 for energy audits and additional incentives and tax credits.*

For more information on the DIY Program or the Weatherization Training and/or to register call Laurie At 888-514-2151 (toll-free), visit [www.weatherizationskillshop.com](http://www.weatherizationskillshop.com) or e-mail [info@weatherizationskillshop.com](mailto:info@weatherizationskillshop.com).

## VLCT Town Fair



**When:** Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:00a.m.  
**Where:** Robert E. Miller Expo Center,  
Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, VT



Come join VLCT staff for a great day of training, networking, recognition and exhibitors! Planning-related topics include stormwater issues, social media, conflicts of interest and more.

**Contact for More Information:** Jessica Hill at VLCT.

**Phone:** 802-229-9111

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

**Cost:** \$25 - \$50

**Website for info and/or registration:** <http://www.vlct.org/eventscalendar/townfair/>

# Planning Development to Protect the Watershed

## Tools & Techniques to Reduce the Impact of Development

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission invites Planning Commissioners, Zoning Board Members, Development Review Board members, Selectboard members, and interested municipal officials and citizens to learn how to allow development without negatively impacting our water resources.

Learn how your community can:

- Encourage good site planning
- Protect local streams and ponds from the effects of development
- Encourage developers to use innovative practices that mimic the natural ecosystem
- Incorporate water quality standards into your local zoning regulations

**When:** Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, 7-9:00p.m.

**Where:** NRPC Office, 155 Lake Street, St. Albans, VT

For more info or to RSVP, contact Deb at 524-5958 or [dperry@nrpcvt.com](mailto:dperry@nrpcvt.com).

<u>NRPC Staff</u>
<u>Executive Director</u> Catherine Dimitruk
<u>Assistant Director</u> Shaun Coleman
<u>Office Administrator</u> Amy Adams
<u>Transportation/GIS Planner</u> Bethany Remmers
<u>Land Use Planner</u> Greta Brunswick
<u>Land Use Planner</u> Deb Perry
<u>Regional Planner</u> Cristina Mastrangelo
<u>GIS Technician</u> Emily Hubbard



## New Traffic Sign Retroreflectivity Requirements

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has adopted new traffic sign retroreflectivity requirements and public agencies, including all Vermont municipalities, must comply with the new regulations. Retroreflectivity describes how light (from a vehicle's headlights) is reflected off a surface (such as a traffic sign) and returns to its original source (the driver). New traffic sign materials use technology with small glass beads or prismatic reflectors to reflect more light back to the driver's eyes which makes the sign brighter and more visible. If you are interested in some training opportunities about the new traffic sign retroreflectivity requirements here are some upcoming workshops:

**Workshops** - Vermont Local Roads, in coordination with the Agency of Transportation, will hold a series of workshops this fall which will cover the new retroreflectivity requirements.

**FHWA Toolkit** - This is an online resource customized for small municipalities. It includes a summary of the new requirements, sign inventory and replacement budgeting templates and other educational resources. It can be found at: [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway\\_dept/night\\_visib/retrotoolkit/](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/night_visib/retrotoolkit/)

For more information on the new retroreflectivity requirements, visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/retro> or contact Bethany Remmers at 524-5958, [bethany@nrpcvt.com](mailto:bethany@nrpcvt.com).

### Upcoming Important Dates for the New Sign Requirements

**January 2012** - By this date, all agencies will have to establish and implement a sign maintenance program that addresses the minimum sign retroreflectivity requirements.

**January 2015** - By this date, all agencies must comply with the new retroreflectivity requirements for most of their traffic signs they have installed, including all red and white or white and black "regulatory" signs (such as STOP signs and Speed Limit signs), yellow and black "warning" signs, and ground-mounted green and white "guide" signs (except street name signs).

**January 2018** - By this date, all agencies must comply with the new retroreflectivity requirements for overhead guide signs and all street name signs.

## 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 Richard Ross
Enosburg Falls:	Richard Roberge Michael Manahan
Enosburgh:	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 Gelinias 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:	Joseph Luneau 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 SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm, Policy/Project Review Mtg., NRPC Conference Room

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, Transportation Advisory Committee Mtg., NRPC Conference Room

Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm, Brownfields Steering Committee Mtg., NRPC Conference Room

Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, NRPC Board Mtg., WIB Site, Robin Hood Dr., Swanton

## Transforming & Preserving Vermont's Cities & Towns Through Form Based Planning

Free public presentation and facilitated discussion introducing charrette planning and form-based planning and regulation, designed for municipal planning commissioners, selectboard members, managers/administrators, regional planners and commissioners, developers, realtors, engineers, architects, academics, students and others with an interest in community planning and design.

### In Burlington

**When:** Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, 7-9:00 p.m.

**Where:** Sugar Maple/Summit Room, 4th floor Davis Center at the UVM.

**Comments:** No registration required. For more information contact Faith Ingulsrud at 802-828-5228 or by email - [faith.ingulsrud@state.vt.us](mailto:faith.ingulsrud@state.vt.us). Co-sponsored by UVM Center for Rural Studies.



### In St. Albans

**When:** Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, 7-9:00p.m.

**Where:** St. Albans City Hall, St. Albans, VT.

**Comments:** For more information or to RSVP email or call Jim Tischler at [je.tischler@stalbanstv.com](mailto:je.tischler@stalbanstv.com) or 802-524-1500x265.



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