

VERMONT'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Vermont's eleven regional planning commissions operate under the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Title 24, Chapter 117, V.S.A.) and their adopted bylaws. They were formed by action of the municipalities for which they serve. All municipalities by law are members of their regional commission. Although active participation is voluntary, most municipalities participate in and recognize the value of regional planning.

Regional Planning Commissions are governed by boards with members appointed by the region's municipalities. The structures of the boards vary in terms of size, representatives per municipality and whether interest groups are included on the board. Regional Planning Commissions implement a variety of projects and programs tailored to their local and regional needs, and also complete projects of statewide importance and interest.

- ***Municipal plan and bylaw updates and related technical assistance:*** Through municipal planning grant funds or other funding sources, RPCs act as a cost effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont's municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving local permitting through education and on-site training, bylaw modernization and facilitating transition to Development Review Boards. Current plans and bylaws are essential in smooth state and local permitting.
- ***Geographic information services, including mapping:*** In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPC's provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.
- ***Transportation planning:*** Through contract with the VTTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). The TPI is designed to meet federal requirements to ensure local involvement in transportation decision making, and also provides local and regional services such as intersection studies, corridor plans and traffic counts.
- ***Watershed planning and related project development:*** RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the EPA required watershed plans. RPCs also complete river assessments which result in better and safer growth management decisions, and help to ensure river corridor projects are designed to be their most effective.
- ***Grants:*** RPCs assist local and regional groups and state agencies with identifying appropriate grant sources, defining a project scope and writing grant applications. RPCs have experience in all types of grants from CDBG applications, to federal disaster mitigation grants and private foundations. RPCs match many federal sources from the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Transit Administration. These funds benefit Vermont's communities and businesses.
- ***Emergency response planning:*** RPCs work with VT Homeland Security and Emergency Management to coordinate local and regional emergency response planning and complete exercises and training to better prepare our state for disasters.
- ***Brownfields:*** Vermont RPCs have sought and have been awarded over 6 million dollars for this economic development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.
- ***Regional Plans:*** RPC's coordinate planning at the regional level through the development, adoption, and administration of a comprehensive regional plan, and related studies. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.
- ***Special Projects:*** RPCs also work on special projects such as downtown revitalization, recreation paths, farmland preservation, economic development, energy and affordable housing projects.

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