



## FY 25 BUDGET AND WORKPLAN OVERVIEW

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

### INTRODUCTION

In FY 25 NRPC will participate in or manage programs of importance to municipalities, the region and the state. These programs generally are funded through specific grants as noted, and are coordinated across programs. Through this integrated, comprehensive approach NRPC will positively impact the following outcomes:

- *Municipal permitting is predictable and effective.*
- *Vermont is prepared for a local, regional or statewide emergency.*
- *Transportation systems are planned effectively with local, regional and state consideration of economic, environmental, and community impact.*
- *Brownfield sites are assessed and cleaned up, creating and preserving jobs and housing.*
- *Regions and the state have access to sufficient energy resources and plans for new generation, efficiency and conservation to support community and economic development.*
- *Infrastructure is planned and coordinated to meet the needs of the local economy.*
- *Community and economic development are coordinated within and across regions to maximize public resources and ensure strong vibrant communities.*
- *Vermont's land use laws are implemented.*
- *Vermont's working landscape is used effectively for community and economic benefit, water quality is improved and environmentally sensitive areas are protected.*

### BUDGET, STAFFING, AND ADMINISTRATION

The FY 25 NRPC Budget Summary reflects a 13.4% increase in overall revenue and 13.0% increase in expenses for the coming fiscal year. While some grant programs have ended, revenues that support regional projects and programs have remained steady or increased. The revenues and expenses for Healthy Roots line are zero to reflect the anticipation transition of that program to Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO).

#### **Revenue**

The budget includes an increase in Regional Planning funds administered by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) due to a base increase in this funding. NRPC expects to continue to utilize core Regional Planning funds to help our work under the region's technical assistance program. This funding provides match as required under our agreements with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security and supports our Brownfields program.

Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) funds remain steady for next year. A new contract starts October 1, 2024 for this program. Due to spending schedules across two contracts periods and several special project planning funds, the budget shows a small increase overall. Public Safety funding for core programs to support NRPC's work in the state emergency operations center and emergency

planning assistance to municipalities has decreased due to spending schedules across the contracts which run on the federal fiscal year. In addition, NRPC is not anticipating additional revenue from Public Safety for disaster response and recovery support through the Local Liaison MOU. In FY 24, NRPC received \$22,000 for assisting the state during the July 2023 flooding and December 2023 ice storm.

NRPC anticipates an increase in revenue (and corresponding expenses) through its role as the Clean Water Service Provider in the Lamoille and Missisquoi Basins. This reflects the increase in subawards/subcontracts to partners and municipalities for water quality projects and an increase in NRPC staff hours to administer the program and develop projects.

NRPC acts as the fiscal agent for Northern Vermont Economic Development District which encompasses the six northern counties of the state. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) planning grant funds that support economic development work in the district will remain level from the previous year. The increase in this line item is attributed to a new EDA multi-year disaster resiliency grant for recovery and resiliency planning.

### **Expenses**

Increases in expense line items are related to the program and project changes noted above.

The FY 25 budget includes 16 employees: Executive Director, Assistant Director, Senior Planners (3), Regional Planners (2), GIS Technician, Office Administrator (.8 FTE), Economic Recovery Coordinator (.6 FTE, temporary position), Transportation Planner, Assistant Planner & Zoning Administrator, Energy and Climate Planner, Water Quality Project Manager, Project Manager (.4 FTE), Housing for All Program Manager, and summer field staff/interns. NRPC also benefits from the service of two AmeriCorps volunteers. During this year, the Commission may look towards additional assistance through interns or temporary staff as needed and will also hire consultants to assist with technical projects under our transportation, brownfields and emergency planning programs. While the NRPC anticipates a slight decrease in payroll expenses (-2.6%), it is projecting a 4.2% increase in Benefits largely due to a proposed increase in health insurance premiums effective January 1, 2025.

The increase in Telephone/Online is from the new phone system and upgrades to internet service at the office. Software/IT expenses have also increased largely due to an increase in annual software licensing fees. Both Telephone/Online and Software/IT expenses have exceeded the FY24 budgeted amounts, and the FY 25 proposed amounts better reflect actual costs.

The FY 25 budget includes a \$10,000 increase under Building for renovations to improving access to the building. No increases for utilities/maintenance are proposed. Repayment of the NEFCU mortgage took place in FY 23 and the remaining mortgage is budgeted in accordance with the repayment plan adopted by the Board and reviewed annually.

### **Reserve Funds**

Reserve funds are allocated for long-term, equipment, PAT and building reserves in accordance with the Board adopted reserve fund policy. The Commission has established a three-year plan for equipment and software upgrades and replacement. Anticipated needs for FY 25 are based on that plan and are included in the equipment and software budget line items. No additions to the long-term, PAT or building reserves are proposed in FY25 at this time but NRPC may make changes as part of the mid-year budget adjustment.

## **WORK PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Local and Regional Planning**

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development provides state oversight for NRPC's core funding from the municipal and regional planning fund. In accordance with state statute, a portion of property transfer taxes collected each year is funneled through this fund to provide financial support for regional planning commissions and the municipal planning grant program. This funding supports NRPC basic operations, local and regional planning, and serves as the match for several other programs including transportation planning, emergency preparedness, EDA and Brownfields revitalization.

In FY 25, NRPC will continue its strong local technical assistance program, engage in policy issues important to the region and state, and complete several special projects. NRPC provides technical assistance to municipalities upon request. NRPC will continue our participation in Act 250/Section 248 permit processes. NRPC will assist municipalities in the adoption of plan amendments that will allow greater consideration of local plans in Section 248 permit reviews. NRPC will work with at least five communities on potential municipal planning grant projects, will complete a bylaw modernization project, and will continue to be available to other communities as needed. NRPC will continue to serve as the zoning administrator for two municipalities under a municipal services agreement.

The Regional Energy Plan will be completed in FY 25, with expected adoption in July 2024. NRPC will begin amendments to the Regional Plan to meet the new requirements of H. 687, passed in June 2024. This will require changes to the future land use plan and integration of local and regional housing targets.

### **Transportation Planning Initiative**

#### **Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans):**

NRPC staff works closely with the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Vermont Agency of Transportation regarding regional transportation needs through an effort called the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). In addition to its core planning tasks, the TPI work program also includes special funding for a LVRT/MVRT Junction Feasibility Study, VT 207/Bushey Road Intersection Feasibility Study, and State Rail Trails Interactive Mapping Portal. Because the TPI program follows a different fiscal year than the NRPC, NRPC will operate under the FY 24 work program adopted by the Board until September 30, 2024. A specific FY 25 work program required by VTrans will be presented to the Board for consideration and adoption.

#### **Public Safety:**

Through funding from Vermont Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), NRPC will assist communities, the region and the state with coordinated all-hazard emergency planning and preparedness. In FY 25 NRPC will:

- Complete Local Emergency Operations, Hazard Mitigation and Continuity of Operations Plans
- Complete and distribute E-911 road atlases
- Provide education and training for local officials, emergency management directors and the general public
- Coordinate and participate in state and local public safety exercises and drills
- Provide staff support for new Regional Emergency Management Committees

- Assist interested municipalities with meeting requirements under the Emergency Relief Assistance Fund rules
- Serve in the state emergency operations center as needed
- Participate in river modeling of the Lamoille River and tributaries, as part of an Economic Development Administration disaster resiliency grant

**Water Resources Planning and Clean Water Service Provider Implementation:**

The NRPC continues to be engaged in watershed planning efforts throughout the region. NRPC continues to serve as the Clean Water Service Provider for the Lamoille and Missisquoi Basins. In FY 25, work will continue to select and implement projects. In addition, projects in FY 25 will include:

- Administer grants for local water quality construction projects.
- Assist municipalities with implementation of the Municipal Roads General Permit and 3-acre developed lands permit
- Support implementation of basin plans including grant applications and project management for priority projects
- Implement the Regional Stormwater Education Program (RSEP) for MS-4 communities to achieve permit compliance
- Participate in efforts to implement the Lake Champlain TMDL and Lake Carmi action plan
- Provide assistance to local municipalities and watershed organizations to identify and protect water resources in the region via town planning, land use regulation and project implementation
- Continue work with the Ecosystem Restoration Program on stormwater planning and mitigation; assist municipalities and developers on initiatives to incorporate low impact development designs in future projects
- Coordinate water quality work with transportation and emergency planning efforts including workshops for road crews and outreach related to fluvial erosion hazards and flood mitigation

**Brownfields:**

The NRPC Brownfields program is in its fifteenth year, and has received \$2.4 million in assessment grant funds and \$2.8 million in Revolving Loan Fund awards from the EPA. A program Steering Committee works with NRPC to select sites that may benefit from environmental assessments, fund those assessments, carry out public outreach, and, if necessary, create plans for how specific sites could be cleaned up for reuse. Program priorities for FY 25 include:

- Completing clean-up and redevelopment plans for sites currently in assessment,
- Identifying new sites for assessment and redevelopment,
- Applying for and receiving additional assessment grants,
- Recruiting additional sites for clean-up and RLF funding.

**Northern Vermont Economic Development District and Northern Border Regional Commission**

NVEDD is a partnership with Lamoille County Planning Commission, Lamoille County Industrial Development Corporation, Northeastern VT Development Association, Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation and Grand Isle Economic Development Corporation. NRPC acts as the fiscal agent for NVEDD. Participation in NVEDD makes NRPC and other partners eligible for Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants.

In FY 25 the annual planning grant will fund the work of the partners to support economic activities in the NVEDD area. This is a recurring grant to support the district. NRPC received a \$400,000 disaster resiliency grant that will fund flood resiliency planning in the Lamoille River basin across three counties in the district. Work on this project begins in FY 25.

NRPC staff actively participate in the Northern Border Regional Commission, a multi-state federally designated area. Staff is administering contracts with Northern Border Regional Commission Economic and Infrastructure Development Investment Program grantees.

### **Energy and Climate**

NRPC added capacity in FY 25 to support energy and climate work in the region. NRPC will provide support to local energy and climate action activities including resilience and adaptation projects, and support of climate economy initiatives. In FY 24 NRPC updated its Energy Plan with adoption planned for early FY 25. NRPC will continue to assist communities with the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, which funds energy efficiency projects in municipal buildings. NRPC will help municipalities utilize the new municipal vulnerability analysis tool and will help to update several local energy plans.

### **Healthy Roots**

The Healthy Roots Collaborative is a collective impact partnership of nonprofit and community organizations addressing food access, education and farm viability. Partners are Franklin County Development Industrial Corporation, NorthWest Family Foods, South Hero Land Trust, Northwestern Medical Center, the Abbey Group and a network of over 170 growers and makers in Northwest Vermont. Healthy Roots works to improve food access, provide local food and nutrition education, and develop essential infrastructure and programs that support farm viability all of which directly impact the health and wellness of our Northwest Vermont communities.

In FY 25, HRC will transfer to the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity to become a program of Feeding Champlain Valley. NRPC will focus on supporting HRC through this transfer.

### **Housing for All- Working Communities Challenge**

NRPC serves as the host organization for a three-year statewide collaborative and inclusive effort focused on housing. Our goal is that all people have access to diverse housing types that are safe, accessible, affordable, and energy- and location-efficient, with access to jobs, services, schools, recreation, and diverse transportation options. Housing will serve as a foundation for individuals to lead full and healthy lives, for communities to be vibrant and inclusive, and for the local and regional economy to grow and prosper. In FY 25 the Accessory Dwelling Unit and duplex pilot project will be completed, and funds raising for a home repair initiative in Grand Isle will continue.

<b>NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION</b>				
<b>FY24 Budget</b>				
<b>Adopted by the Board of Commissioners: 6/26/2024</b>				
<b>July 1 2024-June 30 2025</b>				
	FY24 Amended	FY 25 Proposed	Change	
			% Change	\$ Change
<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>3,290,619</b>	<b>3,732,654</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>442,036</b>
Mun Assmt	66,397	68,389	3.0%	1,992
Reg. Planning Funds (ACCD)	488,165	602,798	23.5%	114,633
VAOT	364,805	372,650	2.2%	7,845
Grants in Aid Equip	133,260	0	-100.0%	(133,260)
Public Safety	105,164	58,626	-44.3%	(46,538)
Municipal	151,389	98,850	-34.7%	(52,539)
Shared Services	139,608	174,335	24.9%	34,727
Clean Water Service	710,000	1,035,630	45.9%	325,630
Natural Resources	210,681	219,121	4.0%	8,440
Other Federal Grants	505,173	820,755	62.5%	315,582
Other State Grants	55,328	92,000	66.3%	36,672
Interest	1,500	1,500	0.0%	0
EDA	74,777	145,000	93.9%	70,223
Healthy Roots	191,745	0	-100.0%	(191,745)
Miscellaneous	92,626	43,000	-53.6%	(49,626)
FY 23 carry forward	0	0		0
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,269,080</b>	<b>3,693,171</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>424,092</b>
Payroll	1,128,604	1,099,128	-2.6%	(29,476)
Benefits	331,916	346,010	4.2%	14,094
Building	36,375	46,375	27.5%	10,000
Insurance	12,000	12,000	0.0%	0
Org Dues	10,000	13,000	30.0%	3,000
Tel/Online	15,000	19,500	30.0%	4,500
Postage	2,500	2,500	0.0%	0
Supplies/Equip	65,000	65,000	0.0%	0
Advert	5,000	5,000	0.0%	0
Printing	7,000	7,000	0.0%	0
Travel	18,000	18,000	0.0%	0
Meeting/Wkshp	16,000	16,000	0.0%	0
Technology/GIS	17,665	17,665	0.0%	0
Healthy Roots	62,200	0	-100.0%	(62,200)
Software and IT	31,500	48,500	54.0%	17,000
Prof Serv	1,363,060	1,943,504	42.6%	580,444
Grants in Aid Equip	123,260	0	-100.0%	(123,260)
PAT RESERVE	5,000	0	-100.0%	(5,000)
EQUIP RESERVE	0	0		0
LONG-TERM RESERVE	10,000	0	-100.0%	(10,000)
BUILDING RESERVE	9,000	0	-100.0%	(9,000)
FOUNDATION TRANSFER	0	21,250		21,250
HRC ASSET TRANSFER	0	12,739		12,739
<b>BAL END</b>	<b>21,539</b>	<b>39,483</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>17,944</b>