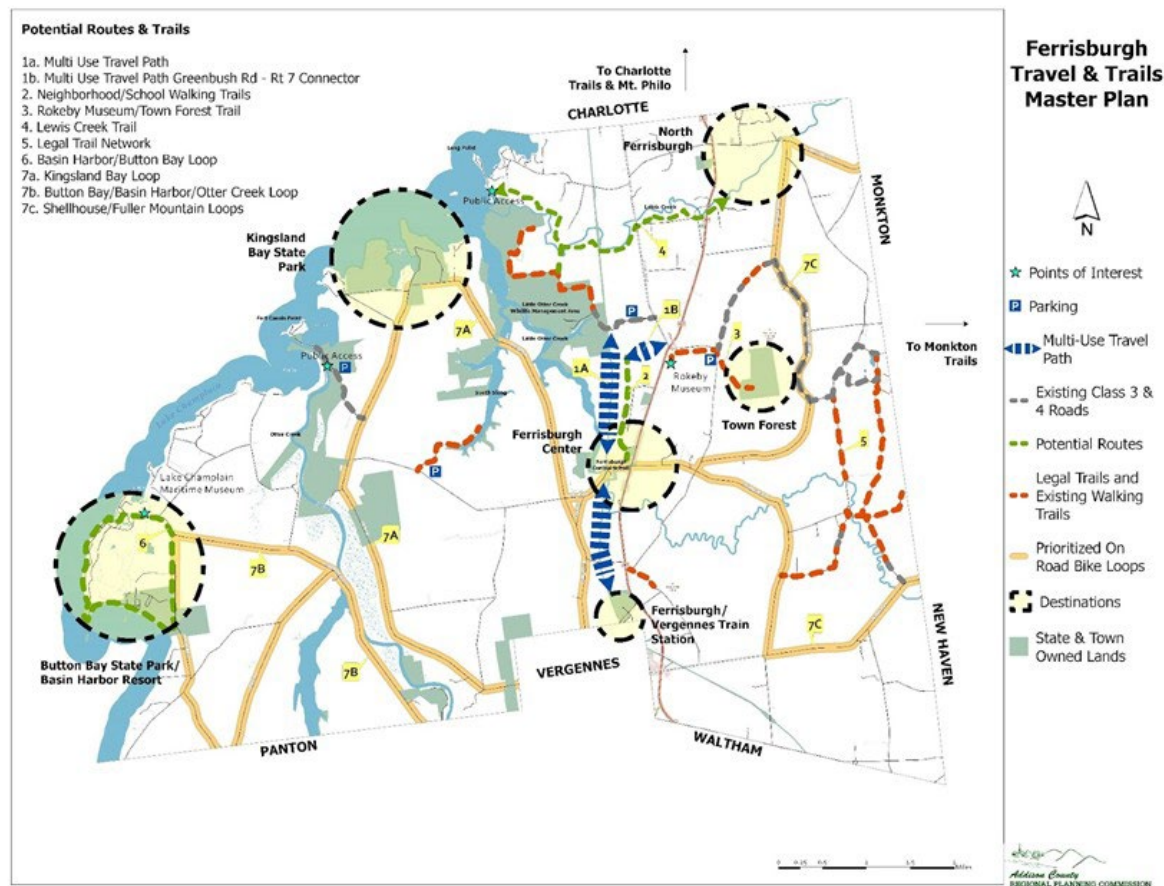


# Addison County Regional Planning Commission

## FY 2025 Annual Report



## INTRODUCTION

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) serves 21 municipalities within Addison County. ACRPC assists towns in the Addison Region (the “Region”) to help provide effective local government and works cooperatively with them to address statewide, regional and local issues.

Municipalities choose to be members of ACRPC. Each municipality’s legislative body appoints 1, 2 or 3 Commissioners, depending upon the population of the municipality, to represent the municipality’s interest on ACRPC’s Board. Additionally, ACRPC’s Board accommodates up to six citizen-interest commissioners who represent other regional interests such as business and industry, natural resources, agriculture and social services. ACRPC delegates a significant portion of its work to six (6) sub-committees, which review various aspects of the Commission’s business. Commissioners serve on these committees and make recommendations for action to the full Commission. All of ACRPC’s committees are advisory. Only the Executive Board and Full Commission have the authority to make decisions to bind ACRPC. Nine highly qualified staff with more than 100 years of combined professional experience provide support to the Commission and its committees and execute the Commission’s work program.



ACRPC staff promoting ACRPC's Future Land Use Map at the Fair

## ACT 181 AND REGIONAL PLANNING

From January through June 2025, ACRPC launched the work designated to RPCs from the 2024 Act 181 and 2023 HOME Act. ACRPC hosted a Kick-Off Presentation in February informing its community about the process then started its work to create a regional map with input from each of its communities. ACRPC Staff met with all 21 Planning Commissions for a total of roughly 50 in-person meetings. Act 181 outreach efforts will continue well into FY2026

ACRPC staff also served on the Tier III advisory committee to the Land Use Review Board and attended the meetings setting the initial scope of the Tier III regulations.

ACRPC started its work on aggregating the Housing targets for the Region created by VHFA to each municipality within the Region.

In addition to the Act 181 Future Land Use work noted above, ACRPC also worked on all other portions of the Addison County Regional plan for a complete adoption planned for July 2026 as follows:

- Continued working on the Economic Development section of the Plan with the Addison County Economic Development Corporation.
- Began working to update the Natural Resource and Childcare sections of the Regional Plan
- Completed re-writing the Transportation section of the Plan
- Completed re-writing the Enhanced energy section of the plan



Former Maverick Gas station in Middlebury being redeveloped as new entrance to Middlebury High School

## BROWNFIELDS

Vermont RPCs have sought and been awarded over 10 million dollars for this economic development initiative. RPCs have performed environmental site assessments on brownfield locations throughout the state. Environmental site assessments allow properties, and formerly degraded properties, to be sold, remediated (if needed), developed or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs and increase housing opportunities.

- In 2022, ACRPC secured a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment (CWA) grant from the EPA- the implementation will continue through 2026. ACRPC has been working with a subcontractor to implement the CWA brownfields grant through work on the following:
  - Addison: Central School and Town Hall
  - Middlebury: Satori Facility, Ilsley Library, Town-owned Maverick Station property, potential Flood-risk property buyouts
- Complimented ACRPC's Transit Oriented Development Program by identifying potential brownfield areas for Area Wide Planning activities along the Vermont Rail corridor in Ferrisburgh-Vergennes-Middlebury
- Complemented its Municipal Energy Retrofit Program (MERP) grants to municipalities by conducting building material surveys in a number of the buildings undergoing energy retrofits in the MERP program, ensuring that the workplace will be safer and all hazardous materials will be identified and disposed of properly.





New Haven River and Route 116

## CLEAN WATER & INFRASTRUCTURE

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assist with completion of the required watershed basin plans. RPCs also work with municipalities to implement river corridor assessments in local planning efforts and regulations, which result in water quality improvements, riverine habitat and safer growth management decisions. ACRPC has undertaken the following actions:

- Served as the Clean Water Service Provider for the Otter Creek Basin. In this capacity it has coordinated a Basin Water Quality Council to oversee the Clean Water Service Provider and served as administrator overseeing **20 projects** to improve water quality, **15 of which are implementation projects**.
- Oversaw Grants in Aid roadway improvement projects in **7 towns**
- Continued its support of the Addison County River Watch Collaborative (ACRWC). ACRPC hosts the ACRWC meetings and sampling events, maintains the website with current sampling data for the public, and supports presentations to targeted community boards. ACRPC helped develop public outreach summary sheets of Middlebury River, New Haven River, and Lewis Creek presenting information regarding contaminant levels at **8** observed recreational sites.
- Worked with ANR 's Basin Planner to help add projects to the Otter Creek Tactical Basin Plan.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning functions. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to develop comprehensive strategies that will position Vermont to achieve long term economic gain.

- ACRPC worked with ACEDC to begin drafting a joint planning document that will serve as the economic development chapter of the Regional Plan,
- ACRPC supported ACEDC's creation of its Regional Priority Projects List and supported several grant applications for local businesses.



## ENERGY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation and natural resources efforts, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- ACRPC Regional Energy Committee - ACRPC hosted 10 energy committee meetings to provide updates on ongoing energy programs and opportunities. The Committee drafted the Regional Energy Plan section and reviewed presentations on topics like the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, Green Mountain Power sustainability and EV infrastructure planning.
- The Municipal Energy Resilience Program – ACRPC provided technical assistance to all regional towns pursuing and implementing the MERP Grants.
- Regional Energy Fairs – we supported the Regional energy fair held on the Vergennes Green in September 2024 and planned for the next fair in September of 2025.
- Thermal Energy Networks – we supported the Middlebury Thermal Energy Network group as it explored opportunities for thermal energy networks in Middlebury and across the region.
- EV Expansion – we provided community outreach regarding EV infrastructure requirements and available resources and programs to support community purchase of chargers, like the Charge Vermont grant for businesses and multi-unit housing sites.
- Pedestrian Travel Support – we provided staff support for the Walk Bike Council of Addison County during this period, which included meeting organization, keeping minutes, and the provision of programmatic expertise on new and ongoing biking and walking infrastructure funding opportunities.



ACRPC booth at Addison County Field Days fair

## EMERGENCY PLANNING & DISASTER RECOVERY

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs provide direct staff to the State Emergency Operations Center, administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committees, and coordination among responders and planners throughout the State's four Public Safety Districts. RPC's also assist with updating floodplain bylaws, creating FEMA-qualified hazard mitigation plans, coordinating updates to municipal emergency plans and providing as needed assistance in special circumstances and declared disasters. ACRPC provided the following services this year:

- RPC staff trained and certified to work as post-event Local Liaisons to municipalities and for roles at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC)
- Wrote and managed annual EMPG grant (\$53,100)
- Applied for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding of \$2M for a stream restoration project and property buyouts along repeatedly flooded sections of Lewis Creek in Starksboro<sup>[AL1]</sup>.
- Worked on Local Hazard Mitigation Plans for the towns of Leicester, Monkton, New Haven, Cornwall, and Salisbury;
- Organized quarterly meetings and activities of the Addison County Regional Emergency Management Committee including recruiting and training new local Emergency Management Directors (REMC).



## EQUITY & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Nearly all RPC planning programs contain elements that support land and community access to all of its citizens.

- In our energy programs ACRPC assisted the Climate Economy Action Center of Addison County develop an Energy Navigator program, which supports area residents in weatherization and electrifying their homes. We collaborated with CVOEO's Green Saving Smart coach to communicate opportunities for low-income individuals in relevant places, including the Addison County Hunger Council and member organizations, energy committees and churches.
- As part of its Transportation Program ACRPC supports Tri Valley Transit, the Region's bus service and the Walk and Bike Counsel, supporting programs promoting mobility for all.
- As a sub-grantee, ACRPC oversaw Part 2 of a Health Equity Grant that focused on a mobile home park located in Bristol Village. We gathered and met with local stakeholders including key members of Addison Housing Works, Vermont Department of Health, and residents of the Mobile Home community. To best understand the needs and concerns of the residents, a survey was created. Unfortunately, the federal funds were terminated March 24, 2025, 1 week prior to survey dissemination. We shared all work and information with Addison Housing Works and their summer interns to carry out the original project if capacity was available.

## GRANT WRITING & ADMINISTRATION

ACRPC actively writes a large number of grants each year for its member municipalities as part of its core services.

- ACRPC applied for **seven municipal planning grants** in the spring of 2025. The region was successful with 4 of the applications. Bridport received funds for a Plan update. Lincoln received funding for updating their zoning and creating Unified Regulations.
- Assisted **thirteen** towns in preparing grant applications to VTrans
- Oversaw **four** municipal planning studies for improving local transportation infrastructure (4 TAC grants)

ACRPC receives most of its funding through grants and performance-based contracts with the state. Town assessments constitute a small but very important percentage of our funding. For fiscal year 2025, ACRPC's total revenue of approximately \$2,000,000 dollars was derived from 95 percent state and federal grants supporting regional and local projects, and 5 percent from town assessments. While percentages may vary slightly from year to year, the year was typical of ACRPC revenue.

- ACRPC operates an electronic accounting and time tracking system using QuickBooks software;
- All of its critical documents are stored and backed up on the cloud;
- ACRPC's updated financial policies reflect the electronic systems;
- ACRPC continues to upgrade its website, IT systems and software to modernize its operations, protect its information from security threats and improve its efficiency over the long term.
- ACRPC has an audit on an annual basis. For FY 2024, its most recent audit, there were no significant findings, which is the same result found in audits conducted in past years. ACRPC anticipates completing its audit for FY 2025 by December 2025.



Stonecrop Housing development Middlebury

## HOUSING

ACRPC continues to promote housing in all aspects of its plans and programs. In addition to working with municipalities on their land use and regulations to encourage housing ACRPC also undertook the following specific programs:

- Supported a housing navigator service to encourage building accessory dwelling units using the ADU guide available on our website and administered a grant from St. Stephens church to support affordable ADU development.
- Continued to work with the Town of Shoreham to forward a 2020 MPG that looked at developing affordable housing for starter homes and seniors on town owned property. Town leaders are moving forward and talking with developers.
- Supported Cornwall's investigation of suitable soils for housing development in their Village Center.
- Supported Bridport's Housing Committee with grant writing for funding for a design charrette. The awarded funds will be used for design sessions in fall 2025.
- Worked with the Towns of Middlebury and Ferrisburgh and the City of Vergennes under a federal RAISE grant secured by Chittenden County RPC to create master plans and proposed regulations for high density transportation oriented development in portions of those communities near their railway stations.





A mapping charrette at Middlebury College

## MAPPING

RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies and regional groups with mapping and data analysis services in support of their projects.

- ACRPC's mapping program supports nearly every planning function it performs. Every municipal plan, enhanced energy plan or zoning bylaw created contains maps produced by ACRPC.
- ACRPC updated town and regional data layers to ensure the best available regional data is available through the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.
- ACRPC created new and updated existing maps for town plan updates in the Town of Ripton, and provided technical support for Monkton, Starksboro, and Cornwall.
- ACRPC continued to support the data gathering efforts its transportation program is undertaking to map hydrologically connected roadways within the Region.
- ACRPC continued to support emergency management and planning in the Region by producing updated flood hazard maps.
- ACRPC continued to support regional conservation efforts by providing ecological mapping & analysis for many communities including Monkton, Waltham, New Haven, Ferrisburgh, Cornwall, Middlebury, and Ripton.
- ACRPC created and supports interactive online GIS maps and dashboards for the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative, Vermont Coverts, Middlebury College, the Addison County Economic Development Corporation, and the Western Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Program.

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING & ZONING

RPCs act as cost-effective professional planning staff for many of Vermont's municipalities. Of the 21 towns served by ACRPC, only Middlebury employs a full-time planner. All other communities rely on volunteer planning commissions aided and supplemented by ACRPC's staff or outside consultants. ACRPC's work in recent years has focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), modernizing bylaws and implementing mapping and policy within local plans. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential to ensure a smooth state and local permitting process. This work is supported through a combination of Federal, State and Local funding sources. All technical assistance provided this year is shown on the "At Work" map; highlights include:

- Completed working with the towns of Waltham and Ferrisburgh on their 2023 MPGs. Waltham Plan was regionally approved in 1/2025. Ferrisburgh's Travel and Trails Master Plan was completed 5/2025
- Orwell completed its Town Plan update, including a new section focusing on its Village Center.
- Work with Addison and Bridport on their Town Plan updates.
- Work with Salisbury on their 2024 Bylaw Modernization grant.
- Work with Lincoln, Goshen, Shoreham and New Haven to collect data and generate maps for their Town plan updates.
- Supporting and advising Cornwall PC and Housing Committee as it updates its zoning regulations.
- Provided technical support to all Zoning Administrators within the Region.
- Held several trainings for local Planning Commissions. Topics included "Roles and Responsibilities", "Creating Accessory Dwelling Units" and "Solar siting on Municipal Property".
- ACRPC conducted municipal consultations in the Towns of Goshen, Leicester, Monkton, New Haven, Waltham, Weybridge and Whiting.
- In Middlebury, New Haven and Vergennes, ACRPC continued to serve as the Municipal Project Manager on several community infrastructure projects creating sidewalks, shared use paths or bike routes. In Middlebury, the sidewalk/path ties neighborhoods and industrial areas to downtown Middlebury. In Vergennes the sidewalk ties the Otter Creek Basin with downtown Vergennes and the Tri-town Bike Loop provides biking connections between our communities.



Middlebury elementary school

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contracts with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), RPCs coordinate the federally funded Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort provides a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont's transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TAC). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the State's transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state and federal transportation network advancement. RPCs help fulfill five transportation planning objectives. The Objectives and ACRPC's work under each are listed below.

- Led **216 coordination activities** between VTrans and interested Addison County parties, including the ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee, Addison County Committee on the Older Adults and People with Disabilities, Tri Valley Transit Board of Directors (Chair), Finance Committee, Nominating Committee and Addison Regional Operating Committee (Chair), Walk Bike Council of Addison County, Road Foremen meetings, Local Concerns meetings
- Initiated culvert inventories in **seven communities**
- Assisted **thirteen** towns in preparing grant applications to VTrans
- Coordinated installation of way-finding signs along the Triangle Bike Loop in seven towns
- Oversaw four municipal planning studies (4 TAC grants)
- Conducted **437** data collection activities on behalf of towns and VTrans (Speed counts, bike, ped, park and ride counts, etc.)
- Assisted with a Planning and Environment Linkages Study of truck traffic in downtown Vergennes.





The Robert Frost Trail in the Moosalamoo NRA

## UNMET NEEDS AND OTHER SPECIAL PROJECTS

RPCs Work on a number of unique projects each year. Examples at ACRPC include:

- ACRPC continued to support the work of the Addison County Communications Union District, dba Maple Broadband, which it helped to create in 2020. Maple Broadband's goal is to bring broadband services to underserved populations throughout the county. ACRPC continued to help MapleBroadband in the current year with GIS work, marketing, and serving as Clerk and advisor to Maple Broadband's Full Board and Executive Board.
- ACRPC concluded its work with VTrans and the City of Vergennes to study and find solutions for the issues created by heavy truck traffic within the City Center. The Planning and Environmental Linkages Study ("PELS") took a hard look at the land use planning impacts of any proposed solutions to ensure that the transportation design component of the project increases the overall economic vitality of all areas studied and to serve as a precursor to the federal NEPA process for the solutions chosen.
- ACRPC continued its work with Middlebury College to develop a master plan for the College's Champlain Valley land holdings. ACRPC staff conducted public outreach and data analysis to create a database and interactive app to inform future planning on and allow for more transparent and informed land management decisions.
- ACRPC continued its work in collaboration with the Green Mountain National Forest to create a master plan for the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area. The master plan will evaluate current conditions in the national recreation area and lay out possibilities for the future.
- ACRPC worked with Conservation Commissions throughout the Region to create a collaborative working group to share knowledge and collaborate across municipal boundaries. ACRPC has created a website and listserv and has also hosted several meetings on development and vision for the group.

## **‘AT WORK’ MAP**

ACRPC has updated its At Work Map depicting the range of services provided to its member municipalities in FY25. The map is available on the next page, and online at: <https://vapda-report-vapda.hub.arcgis.com/>

# ACRPC At Work-FY2025

