

Lamoille County Planning Commission

Lamoille County
Planning Commission

Fall, 2011

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Funding

In the wake of this spring's severe flooding, a federal disaster was declared in Lamoille County for damages sustained between April 23 and May 9. This declaration entitled impacted municipalities, homeowners, and businesses to apply for financial reimbursement through FEMA. While recovery from the floods is ongoing, the time to plan for long-term mitigation is now! Vermont municipalities are again eligible to apply for federal HMGP funds to support mitigation projects for public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and culverts. More information on HMGP is available through the Vermont Emergency Management website (<http://vem.vermont.gov/>). Although letters of intent to apply are not due until November 4, 2011, municipalities that may be interested in HMGP funds are strongly encouraged to contact Steve Munroe (steve@lpcvvt.org or 888-4548) as soon as possible to discuss program requirements.



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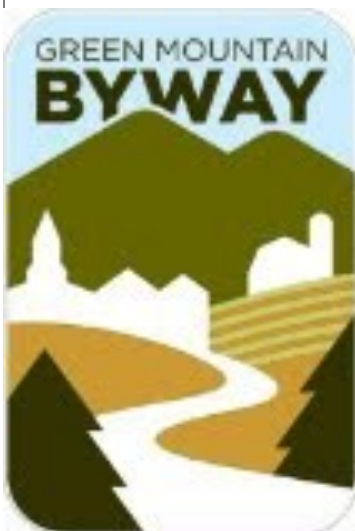
Upcoming Meetings

- 8/20, 6pm: Local Emergency Planning Committee #11, Johnson Municipal Offices, Johnson
- 8/27, 7pm: LCPC Board Meeting, LCPC Offices, Morrisville
- 8/28, 12-1:30pm: Transportation Advisory Committee, LCPC Offices, Morrisville

Green Mountain Byway Receives Grant

On behalf of the Byways partnership, LCPC applied for and received a 2011 National Scenic Byway grant award for \$41,625 to develop interpretive signs, brochures and website. The project aims to tell the byway's story to enhance visitor experience and encourage greater appreciation and protection of the Byway's resources. The Green Mountain Byway extends along Rt. 100 through Waterbury and Stowe. To find out more about the Byway and the Committee contact Amanda Holland at 888-4548 or amanda@lpcvvt.org

http://www.vermont-byways.us/green_mountain





Smugglers Notch Scenic Highway -- Barnes Camp Business Plan Underway

For nearly two decades, LCPC has worked with six partner organizations to implement the 1995 Smugglers Notch Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan. The Smugglers Notch Scenic Highway is a 3.7 mile stretch of VT 108 between the Spruce Peak entrance of the Stowe Mountain Resort and the Madonna Base area at Smugglers' Notch Resort. Past accomplishments have included building and upgrading parking areas, constructing two composting toilet facilities, installing area-appropriate guardrails, and improving drainage and erosion control.

LCPC and its partners are now ready to undertake the capstone effort of the Corridor Management Plan -- renovation of the historic Barnes Camp to serve as a visitor's center and hub for activities occurring throughout the Notch. Barnes Camp was originally built as a logging camp and once provided food and shelter to hikers and skiers alike. When renovated, Barnes Camp will once again welcome visitors to this unique scenic area.

With assistance from Johnson State College Business Professor Jim Black, LCPC has completed a draft business plan for operations and maintenance of Barnes Camp. The business plan outlines oversight, staffing, hours of operations, and future programs for the Barnes Camp Visitor Center. LCPC must raise \$300,000 in order to complete the renovations and other associated improvements. Fund raising is scheduled to begin in September of 2011. For more information, contact Seth Jensen at 888-4548 or via email at seth@lpcvt.org.

MUTCD Sign Standards Assistance

LCPC staff offers assistance in developing sign inventories to address new retroreflectivity sign standards. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rule requires that towns must develop a program to inspect and upgrade roadway signs. All signs along public roads must meet the new retroreflectivity sign standards, which increase the Compliance dates include **January 9, 2012** where all street name signs require 6" lettering height for upper case, 4.5" lettering height for lower case (no longer all upper case letters), on 12" aluminum stock of High Intensity Prismatic sheeting grade. Towns must inventory their signs and establish a process to upgrade existing sub-standard signs by **January 22, 2012**. Staff has worked with Vermont Local Roads, VTrans, other VT RPCs and road foremen to develop a simple Excel spreadsheet to manage the inventory. All regulatory, warning and ground-mounted guide signs must comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) rules by **January 22, 2015** and street name and overhead guide signs by **January 22, 2018**. Please contact Amanda Holland at 888-4548 or amanda@lpcvt.org for assistance.

Emergency Planning Campaign

In July, members of Local Emergency Planning Committee 11 (LEPC 11) voted to allocate up to \$1,500 to support the United Way of Lamoille County (UWLC) in the annual update of its Emergency Planning for Special Populations database. In coordination with the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department and Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board, UWLC will sponsor a series of advertisements encouraging residents that require special assistance during an emergency to self-report their condition. This information will allow Lamoille County first responders to more safely and efficiently serve the region's public safety needs. All records are kept confidential. For more information on this program, please contact Dawn Archbold, UWLC Executive Director, at 888-3252.



Bridging the Digital Divide

The Department of Public Services has released the 2011 Vermont Telecommunications Plan (<http://publicservice.vermont.gov/telecom/2011TelecommunicationsPlan.pdf>). At 22 pages, this is a quick read and provides a glimpse of the State's goals and benchmarks and where State funds will be directed in the next few years. Vermont and other states have quickly realized that access to broadband service is critical, but access alone isn't going to effect change; it's knowing how to use it once we have it that is key.

Lamoille County Planning Commission is part of a statewide effort to develop strategies for maximizing the benefits of universal high-speed broadband availability. Local government, schools, business, non-profits, and others are participating in this effort, lead by Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions. Each regional team is developing a strategic plan that identifies needs and opportunities related to new technologies, provide strategies to drive adoption of broadband, identify key partnerships that will benefit from the coordinated use of information technology (such as government services, education, health care, business, etc.) and encourage innovation among those key partnerships. Participants will also identify broadband technology gaps, set achievable goals for improving use, and convene local & regional events to inform the public about Regional and State Telecommunications Plans. The regional strategies and plans will be used by state, regional and local officials, including the Vermont Telecommunication Authority. For more information on the Technology Teams effort, please contact Seth Jensen, Lamoille County Planning Commission, at seth@lpcvt.org or 802-888-4548.

Morristown and Cambridge are focusing on broadband utilization as part of the e-Vermont program, sponsored by the Vermont Council on Rural Development. E-Vermont is a community broadband project helping rural Vermont towns take full advantage of the Internet to advance a wide variety of local needs including economic development, school innovation, job creation, downtown marketing, community engagement, and e-commerce. Both communities have developed specific workplans to encourage digital literacy, including workshops and trainings, school-based initiatives, and other efforts. Cambridge established a strong focus on digital literacy and connecting residents and businesses. Morristown is considering whether to implement a downtown wifi district. For more information on the e-Vermont program and the community efforts, visit www.e4vt.org.

2013 is rapidly approaching, and with it will come statewide broadband access for Vermont. How ready is your community to join the knowledge economy?

Explore the VT E-911 Board's Portable Map Format!

On Tuesday, August 17th Angus McCusker of the Vermont Enhanced 911 Board visited an LEPC #11 meeting to demonstrate ways to utilize the state's interactive Published Map Format (PMF). PMF is essentially a free statewide map viewer that uses the software program ArcReader in connection with a Global Position System (GPS) locator. Originally created for emergency call-takers, PMF includes the most up-to-date spatial data in Vermont, which is flagged for field verification and updated monthly. PMF contains many useful spatial data layers, including infrastructure, natural resources, and land use characteristics.

For more information on PMF, visit <http://e911.vermont.gov/> or contact Steve Munroe at 888-4548 x109 or steve@lpcvt.org.



Complete Streets Bill Signed into Law

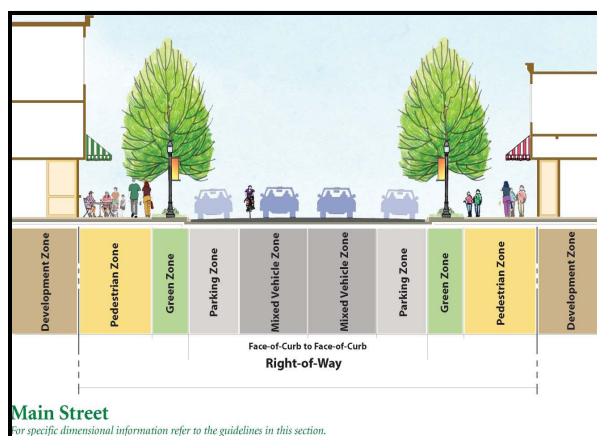
In May Governor Shumlin signed Vermont's Complete Streets bill (H.198, Act 34) into law, effective July 1. Complete Streets principles are principles of safety and accommodation of all transportation system users, regardless of age, ability, or modal preference.

The purpose of the Complete Streets bill is to ensure that the needs of all users of Vermont's transportation system—including motorists, bicyclists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities—are considered in all state and municipally-managed transportation projects and project phases, including planning, development, construction, and maintenance, except in projects or project components involving unpaved highways. The policy applies when new roads are being constructed and in the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of paved roads. Note that the bill is not a mandate to retrofit existing roads.

To help you and your community better understand how the law may or may not impact your work contact Amanda Holland at 888-4548 or amanda@lcpvvt.org.



Complete Street example on East Boulevard in Charlotte, NC
Charlotte DOT



Complete Street Diagram, USDOT

2011 Zoning Bylaw Readiness

In 2004, comprehensive changes to Vermont's zoning enabling laws were passed in Act 115. With those changes came two compliance deadlines: 2005 and 2011. The 2005 deadline dealt with several mandated provisions requiring all zoning bylaws to come into statutory compliance on Statutory Definitions; Required Provisions; Limitations; Adoption, Administration, Enforcement; Appropriate Municipal Panels; and Appeal Procedure. The September 1, 2011 compliance deadline was the expiration of the "Savings Clause." With the exception of the 2005 provisions, the Savings Clause allowed zoning bylaws in existence prior to the passage of Act 115 to continue until September 1, 2011, at which point they must comply with the rest of the provisions. The 2011 deadline dealt with enabling provisions not mandates. An enabling provision is one that a Town may take advantage of, but is not required to have. These provisions are found in Title 24, Chapter 117, Sections 4414-4433 of the Vermont Statutes. Some examples of enabling provisions include waivers, interim zoning, unified bylaws, subdivision bylaws, and transfer of development rights. The key to understanding required language is to make sure that whenever "shall" is used in the statutory language, your zoning bylaw complies with that directive.

If you have questions about the 2011 compliance deadline or would like technical assistance with bylaw revisions, contact Steve or Seth at steve@lcpvvt.org, seth@lcpvvt.org, or 888-4548.



New Municipal Energy Planning Resources Available!

In recent months, the combination of volatile oil prices and an increase in high-profile alternative energy proposals has created a renewed interest in energy planning at the municipal level throughout Vermont. LCPC and its partner organizations across the state have resources available to assist communities plan for a sustainable energy future. To this end, the following publications are now available to help municipalities achieve a variety of energy-related goals:

- The Vermont Natural Resource Council (VNCR) recently published its updated [Energy Planning and Implementation Guide for Vermont Municipalities](#). The guidebook serves as a how-to guide for citizens and local officials interested in proactively addressing energy efficiency and conservation.
- The Two-Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission has also published a valuable tool in the form of its [Planning & Zoning Guide for Small-Scale Wind Energy Systems](#). This 10-page guide outlines how communities can plan for small-scale wind energy and formulate regulations that encourage their development.

For additional information or support in planning energy projects in your community, please contact Steve Munroe, LCPC's Regional Planner, at steve@lpcvt.org or 888-4548.

Go Vermont Pilot - Support for Local Energy Committee

Through a partnership with the LCPC, VTrans will provide a \$500 grant to participating local Energy Committees to assist in building a statewide outreach and advocacy network for the Go Vermont Program (www.connectingcommuters.org).



ConnectingCommuters.org

Go Vermont is a web-based clearinghouse for all transportation modes in Vermont, featuring an automated carpool, vanpool and public transit matching service, a vanpool program, and information for State Park and Ride locations. Placing materials at local municipal buildings, tabling events, and presenting this program to the town Select Boards are some of the ways these committees can use their considerable energy and talents to bring this program to the local community. This initial grant is a pilot program, VTrans is expecting this project to be the first step in partnering

with active energy committees to learn what more Go Vermont can do at the local level. **Interested parties should submit a Letter of Interest by September 16th.** Contact Ross MacDonald at or 828-5577 for

Stormwater Management in Morristown's North End

This past spring's flooding and most recently, the devastation brought by Tropical Storm Irene have underscored the concern of stormwater runoff in urbanizing areas. Stormwater runoff negatively impacts local and regional water resources by increasing pollutant loads, contaminating groundwater, degrading aquatic habitat, altering fluvial morphology, and increasing the probability of flooding. Low Impact Development is a stormwater management strategy that seeks to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution. Through funding awarded from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, LCPC was given the opportunity to further efforts to implement LID practices in the North End of Morristown. LCPC digitized impervious surfaces (roads, sidewalks, railroad, parking lots, and building footprints) using recent aerial imagery. LCPC worked with Morrisville Water and Light to update sewer and water line maps and mapped the stormwater system using GIS data provided by the VT Department of Environmental Conservation in the North End. Information on the stormwater, sewer, and water infrastructure and impervious surfaces will be used to facilitate discussions with business owners and town officials regarding effective water quality management and identification of existing problem drainage areas in the North End Commercial District. Additionally, LCPC met with Morristown's Planner to discuss projects that will address stormwater concerns in the study area and prioritize a list of four projects to implement.



Encouraging Increased Broadband Service in Your Community

Vermonters agree they want cellular and broadband services expanded throughout the state. Initiatives to advance broadband and cellular, information, access, and adoption are underway (descriptions available at <http://www.broadbandvt.org>), and statewide broadband service is within Vermont's reach. If your community would like to support increased service actively, LCPC is available to assist communities with the following actions:

Updating Local Ordinances – Was your ordinance written in the early 2000s when local communities first experienced the rapid expansion of towers? Telecommunication is a changing field. It is important to continue to review and update bylaws and ordinances to keep abreast of the changing technologies. Updated ordinances can provide for municipal review while removing unnecessary barriers for applicants.

Verifying Available Service – What type of service is available in your community, and where are the gaps your community wants to fill? What are the challenges that need addressing? BroadbandVT.org is a resource to learn about current service available to any address and future plans and activities of mobile and fixed broadband service providers. It also provides the opportunity to verify whether current service information is accurate. LCPC can map this information for your community and assist in documenting gaps and making the case to providers for increased service.

Identifying Tower Locations – Has your community defined or mapped acceptable or unacceptable locations for towers and other infrastructure? Do you market acceptable locations to service providers? LCPC can assist your community with viewshed analysis, identifying environmental constraints and concerns, and other factors to identify locations.

Participating in Public Service Board Reviews – Do you actively participate in Public Service Board (PSB) review of projects in your community? Municipalities are partially preempted from regulating renewable energy and wireless communication facilities through zoning. Petitions for most of these facilities go before the Public Service Board to obtain a Certificate of Public Good according to Vermont law (30 V.S.A. § 248), instead of local zoning or Act 250. This process is different than Act 250, and it's important for municipalities and local citizens to understand how to participate before a facility is proposed for your community. LCPC provides training for municipal officials on PSB participation.

Creating Incentives – Does your municipality offer incentives to broadband providers? Do you work with providers to access state and federal funds for network development?

Creating or Participating in Broadband Adoption Programs – Does your community work to increase broadband adoption and use through e-Vermont or other activities? Higher potential use (take rates) can help communities make a business case to telecom providers for new or increased service. A variety of education and training programs exist to help residents and businesses use broadband more effectively.



Municipal Guidance in Reviewing Cell Towers

Adapted from an article by the Windham Regional Commission

In recent years there have been legislative and procedural rule changes that have made it possible and attractive for developers of cell towers to apply to the Public Service Board for a Certificate of Public Good under 30 V.S.A. §248a. This permitting forum allows proponents to avoid Act 250 jurisdiction and essentially pre-empts municipal regulations. Current cell tower applications are being fast-tracked by the desire to rapidly complete a statewide network of cell coverage in Vermont. Recognizing this, in conjunction with the fact that many municipalities have not had much experience participating in §248a proceedings, LCPC is offering general guidance and technical assistance to the region's municipalities in addressing the process and issues involved.

Several issues to consider when assessing these projects include:

Tower Height - Two primary issues involved regarding the height of proposed towers are:

- 1) The propagation, or extent of cell coverage to be provided from a given tower, and
- 2) The ability for the applicant/ owner to rent space on the tower to other carriers.

Access Roads & Related Environmental Issues – Construction of any access road will have potential impacts on local roads and the environment that should be addressed; these include:

- 1) Potential for run-off and drainage issues, such as erosion on steep slopes and impacts on local roads and waterways, and
- 2) Winter and emergency access, potential for abuse by motorized vehicles, and the impacts on connecting local roads.

Aesthetics - Aesthetic considerations may range widely depending on the site, but include:

- 1) Tower design, whether a “brown stick” or “stealth pine” is a better fit in site context, and
- 2) Screening and landscaping requirements for the base perimeter of the tower, to conceal the required security fence and soften the appearance from the ground.

Decommissioning – There should be a decommissioning plan for removal of the tower and appurtenant facilities, including access roads, if or when the tower is no longer in use.

Municipalities receive notice of the §248a filings and may provide comments, but they are not statutory parties to the proceedings. LCPC may be able to offer technical assistance to municipalities regarding their participation in the §248a process, as well as in addressing site specific issues. Another source of information is the Public Service Board's website: <http://psb.vermont.gov/> that provides links to information on participating in §248 proceedings and on the Board's standards and procedures for issuing a certificate of public good for communications facilities. For more information, contact Steve at steve@lcpcvt.org or 888-4548.



**Lamoille County Planning
Commission**

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New Staff

Seth Jensen recently joined the LCPC staff as Senior Planner. Seth will be working on broadband, forest stewardship, the Barnes Camp renovation and other Smugglers Notch Scenic Corridor projects, and brownfields. Seth grew up in Westford, Vermont and is a 2004 graduate of Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. After graduation, Seth completed a two year term of service with Ameri-Corps in Morrisville. Seth was previously the Town Planner for the Town of Jericho, Vermont. In addition to his planning experience, Seth is a certified interior firefighter and member of the Westford Volunteer Fire Department.

Melinda Scott recently joined LCPC as the GIS Planner. She will be providing mapping support for transportation, natural resources, emergency planning, municipal planning, forest stewardship and other projects. Melinda grew up in Maine and moved to northern Vermont after graduating from Williams College with a BA degree in Biology and Environmental Studies in 1985. After working for a number of years as a carpenter and remodeling contractor, Melinda decided to pursue a career in the environmental field. She attended Antioch University New England, where she attained her master's degree in Environmental Science in 2008. In addition to her position at LCPC, Melinda teaches Wildlife Ecology at the Community College of Vermont.

Jackie Coats Cassino recently joined LCPC staff as Assistant Planner. She will be working on several projects including: transportation studies, emergency management projects, municipal plan updates, and natural resources programs. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Jackie received a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Berry College in 2003. After working in the wilderness therapy and expedition field for five years with Outward Bound, she earned a Masters of City and Regional Planning from Clemson University. As a graduate intern, Jackie has worked for the City of Burlington, Vermont's Planning and Zoning Department as well as the City of Greenville, South Carolina's Economic Development Department.