



Lamoille County Planning Commission

Summer 2012

2012 Jim Marvin Awards

The Lamoille County Planning Commission is pleased to announce the recipients of our 2012 Jim Marvin Awards.

One in every nine college students at Johnson State College (JSC) majors in visual or performing arts. In 2008, JSC launched a master plan to reinvigorate its campus. The effort culminated with the renovation and reimagining of the *College's Visual Arts Center (VAC)*, a premier teaching and learning space for the visual arts at JSC. The project involved the complete renovation of the existing arts center and increased the total size of the building by nearly 50 percent, for a total of over 14,000 square feet of space dedicated to the visual arts. Nominated by the Town of Johnson, the project received the Commission's Excellence in Project Design award for the College's vision to make it both an academic center and a community gathering place. In addition to dedicated spaces for students and faculty, the VAC also includes a dedicated community space and two galleries open to the public.



The team of Todd Thomas and Tricia Follert, Morristown Town Planner/Zoning Administrator and Community Development Coordinator respectively, received the award for Excellence in Community Service. In his nomination, Town Administrator Dan Lindley noted that while each individual is very successful and motivated in their own respects, together they have formed a team that has taken the revitalization of downtown Morristown in a new direction. Through a variety of events, projects and activities, grant writing, and communication, they have brought more community involvement to Morristown and created a new excitement about the potential for Morrisville and have energized the business community. Their spirit and passion for the community have, in a very short time, blended together and created a sense of community pride that most communities envy.



The Commission offers its congratulations to the awardees and to all of this year's nominees.



Statewide Map of Biking Routes

The Vermont Department of Tourism (VDT) has generated a map of road biking routes in Vermont, as recommended by cycling enthusiasts. Several of Lamoille County's roads were included in this edition: Route 100, 108 North of Jeffersonville, and Route 12. The map can be accessed at <http://vermontvacation.com/biking.aspx> or by contacting the VDT. This map is the first attempt to create a statewide cycling resource. Feedback on the features identified can be shared at <http://VermontVacation.Com/Feedback>.

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Meet Our Staff

Bonnie Waninger, Executive Director, provides the overall management at LCPC under the direction of the LCPC Board of Directors, and represents LCPC on regional and statewide organizations and committees. She also manages the Lamoille County Brownfields Program. Prior to joining LCPC, Bonnie was Assistant Director at the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in St. Albans where, for 12 years, she managed diverse programs, projects, and committees, including managing \$1 million in EPA Brownfields funding and developing the national award winning "Shoreline Stabilization Handbook". Bonnie has worked as a municipal recreation director, a landscape architect in private practice and with the National Park Service, and as a community forestry volunteer for the U.S. Peace Corps. Bonnie can be contacted at bonnie@lcpvt.org.



Seth Jensen, Senior Planner, works on broadband, forest stewardship, Barnes Camp renovation and other Smugglers Notch Scenic Corridor and municipal planning projects. Seth grew up in Westford, VT and is a 2004 graduate of Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. After graduation, Seth completed a two year term of service with AmeriCorps in Morrisville. Seth was previously the Town Planner for the Town of Jericho. In addition to his planning experience, Seth is a certified interior firefighter and member of the Westford Volunteer Fire Department. Seth can be contacted at seth@lcpvt.org.



Amanda Holland, Transportation Planner, manages LCPC's Transportation Planning Program and provides planning services related to our natural resources and land use programs. Amanda provides technical assistance on transportation regulations, funding, infrastructure inventories, and assists with focused transportation studies. Amanda has both a Bachelors and Masters of Science in the natural resources field. Prior to LCPC, Amanda worked for six years on environmental research projects involving urban ecology, carbon sequestration, disease ecology and utilizing GIS technologies. Amanda can be contacted at Amanda@lcpvt.org.



Melinda Scott, GIS Planner, provides mapping support for transportation, natural resources, emergency and 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. After working for a number of years as a carpenter and remodeling contractor, Melinda pursued a career in the environmental field, attending Antioch University NE, 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. Melinda can be contacted at Melinda@lcpvt.org.



Georgeana Little, Bookkeeper /Office Manager, joined LCPC from a small statistical consulting company in Burlington where she ran the office for 5 years. Before that, she served as Programs and Grants Manager at the Vermont Humanities Council. Georgeana is a Massachusetts native and has lived in Cambridge, Vermont for over a decade. She has a PhD in Archaeology from Boston University and finds rooting around in account books requires the same skills as rooting around in the ground. Georgeana can be contacted at Georgeana@lcpvt.org.



Meghan Rodier, Assistant Planner, grew up in rural Franconia, NH where she discovered her passion for the environment. While obtaining her Bachelors of Science Degree in Environmental Planning at Plymouth State University, she started her planning career as an intern at the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. After graduating with her Masters in Geography from Ohio University, Meghan moved back to New England and joined the LCPC team. Since April, she has been assisting with transportation, land use and emergency management projects. Meghan can be contacted at Meghan@lcpvt.org.



Regional Planner, a new Regional Planner will join LCPC's team later this year.



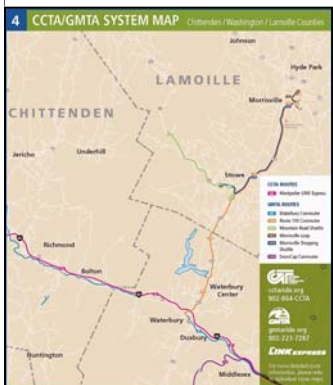
Encouraging Increased Broadband Service in Your Community

Vermonters agree that 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) reviews of projects in your community? Municipalities are partially pre-empted 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 is 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 educational and training programs exist to help residents and businesses use broadband more effectively.



Public Transit Development Plans



Public transit agencies servicing Lamoille County are working on Transit Development Plans (TDP). TDPs evaluate the performance of an existing transit system, identify unmet service needs, and suggest transit system improvements.

Lamoille County is served by two transit providers. The Green Mountain Transit

Agency (GMTA) currently operates the Morrisville Loop, Morrisville-Waterbury Route 100 Commuter, Stowe Mountain Road Shuttle, and Morrisville Shopping Shuttle. Rural Community Transportation (RCT) currently operates the Craftsbury-Morrisville Ridge Runner Shopping Shuttle, Johnson-Morrisville Shopping Shuttle, and van and volunteer driver demand response service for Medicaid participants, elders and persons with disabilities.

Phase II of GMTA's Transit Development Plan covered Lamoille County. A draft of the full TDP is available at <http://gmtaride.org/resources/transit-docs.html>. Two presentations, "Market and Needs Analysis" and "Strategies and Vision", provide the meat of county-specific information.

The Lamoille County "Market and Needs Analysis" outlines the existing conditions of the four routes including coverage area, service changes, and ridership. The Market Analysis of the region used the 2010 census and American Community Survey to analyze residential density, persons over 65, low-income households, zero-vehicle households, employers, and trip generators. This analysis found that the needs of the region include: increasing rural mobility, addressing needs of an aging population, making connections to employment in Morrisville, Burlington, and Montpelier, and providing more information and facilities.

The "Visions and Strategies" describes a vision to increase ridership, serve both choice and transit-dependent riders, employ advanced technologies, build an integrated system and shape future development. Facility improvements would include shelters, bike racks, vandal-proof schedule boxes, trip planning software, real-time passenger information and wireless internet on buses.

Interregional expansion would create Cambridge-Burlington and Morrisville-Hardwick-St. Johnsbury connections. *GMTA will be submitting a grant application later*

this year to initiate the Cambridge-Burlington Rt. 15 commuter service. If awarded funding, service would begin in 2013. Other expansions within Lamoille County would link Cambridge to Morrisville along Rt. 15 and provide seasonal service from Cambridge to Smugglers' Notch. There are no immediate plans for the implementation of expansions other than the Rt. 15 commuter.

RCT's main service area is the Northeast Kingdom. It provides limited shopping service from Johnson and Wolcott to Morrisville, as well as Medicaid, elderly, and disabled services within Lamoille County.

It's "Market and Needs Analysis" found that the needs of the region include: increasing mobility for rural and vulnerable populations, and making connections to employment centers.

It's "Visions and Strategies" describes a vision to increase ridership and serve both choice and transit-dependent riders. Facility improvements would include shelters, bike racks, vandal-proof schedule boxes, a maintenance facility, trip planning software, real-time passenger information, and wireless internet on buses.

Recommended expansions affecting Lamoille County would include a St. Johnsbury-Morrisville Rt. 15 commuter, a Newport-Jay-Jeffersonville commuter, and upgrading shopping shuttle service to bi-weekly by 2017 or sooner.

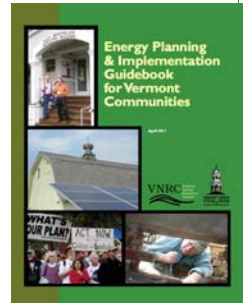
Both GMTA and RCT provide service based on a balance between demand and budgetary constraints. Start-up costs for most transit services are typically funded through 3-year, federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) demonstration grants. All parts of Vermont are currently "in attainment" for air quality standards as defined in the federal Clean Air Act, and the State has full discretion on how to allocate its CMAQ funds. A portion of CMAQ is used for paving and other projects not directly related to congestion mitigation or air quality. If a portion of Vermont falls out of attainment of air quality standards (most likely Chittenden County), the State would be required to spend all CMAQ funds in the non-attainment area and on projects that would help the area get back into attainment.

LCPC supports the proposed improvements highlighted within these Transportation Development Plans, and looks forward to helping GMTA and RCT prioritize new routes and services. For more information, contact Amanda at Amanda@lcpvvt.org or 888-4548.



New Energy Resources Available!

The Vermont Natural Resource Council (VNRC) 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. *Communities Tackling Vermont's Energy Challenges* offers a snapshot of the innovative, entrepreneurial, and proactive approaches Vermonters are taking to help save money, reduce energy consumption, transition to renewables, and combat climate change. This document describes over three-dozen Vermont success stories.



Visit <http://www.vnrc.org/energy/resources/energy-planning-implementation-guidebook-for-vt-communities>.

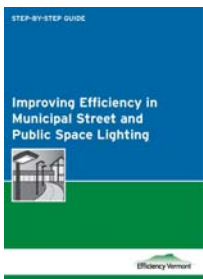
The Two-Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission has published *Planning & Zoning Guide for Small-Scale Wind Energy Systems*. This 10-page guide outlines how communities can plan for small-scale wind energy and formulate regulations that encourage their development.

Visit <http://www.trorc.org/pubstools.html>.

The Northeastern Vermont Development Association has published *Renewable Energy for Your Home or Business: How-to Guides*. Guides are available for the home or business owner explaining how to use solar, small wind, geothermal, and pellet or wood stove technology.

Visit <http://www.nvda.net/TopNavBars/RenewableEnergyHowtoGuides.html>.

The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission's *Energy Policies & Standards: A Guide For Southern Windsor County Communities* provides model language for energy policies and standards that can be incorporated into municipal plans and zoning.



Street lighting can account for one-quarter of a municipality's electrical bill. Efficiency Vermont has developed a step-by-step guide, *Efficiency Vermont's Guide to Improving Efficiency in Municipal Street and Public Space Lighting* to encourage municipalities to evaluate their present use of older, less efficient street and public space lighting, eliminate unnecessary lighting, and replace remaining lighting with LED lighting systems. Municipalities and regional planning commissions can borrow high-quality light meters from Efficiency Vermont for 30 days. These meters help to measure lighting levels and ensure that current and planned lighting levels are appropriate for specific outdoor applications.

Visit http://www.encyvermont.com/for_my_business/solutions_for_me/municipal_and_state_government/general_info/municipal_street_lighting.aspx

For additional information or support in planning energy projects in your community, please contact Assistant Planner, Meghan Rodier

2012 Commodity Flow Study Update

In the Spring of 2012, LCPC staff began conducting a Commodity Flow Study to track transport patterns of hazardous substances and materials throughout Lamoille County. Initiated by the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), this study was designed to enhance first responders' emergency management capabilities when responding to a hazardous materials incident. During observation periods, hazardous substance carriers are identified along VT Route 15 and 100 by their placard number (chemical #) and company name.

At this point, study observations are well under way as LCPC staff move into phase IV in late August, 2012. Commodity Flow Study results will be available and presented to the LEPC in late September, 2012. For more information contact LCPC's Assistant Planner, Meghan Rodier.

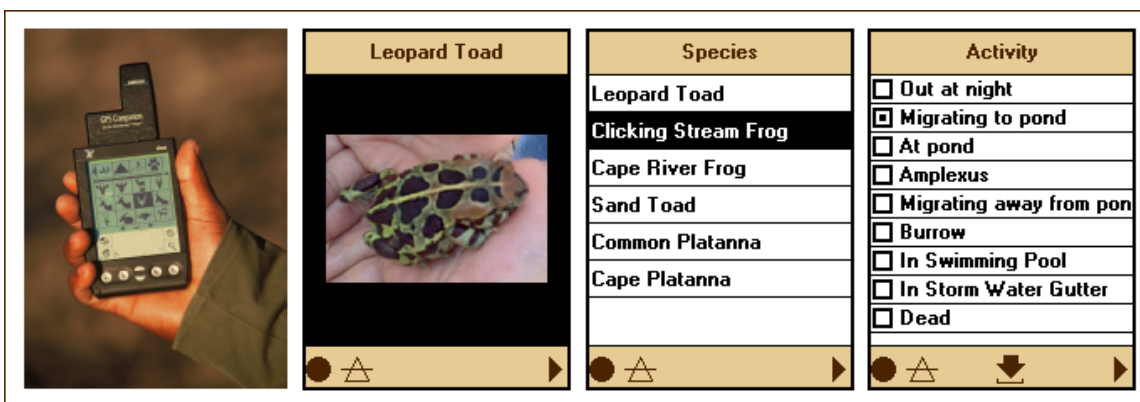


Placard: Kerosene
Source: US Department of Transportation, 2012



Stormwater Management in Morristown’s North End

Last year’s flooding underscored the concern for 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, railroads, 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 North End stormwater system using GIS data provided by the VT Department of Environmental Conservation. Information on the stormwater, sewer, and water infrastructure and impervious surfaces will be used to facilitate discussion 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. For more information, contact Amanda Holland at Amanda@lpcvt.org or 888-4548.



Mapping Town Resources Using a Smartphone

If you want to monitor wildlife in your town or inventory town assets such as road signs, culverts or hydrants, one way to accomplish it is to use paper datasheets and a pencil to record the location, type of asset, and other attributes, and then file these datasheets in a file cabinet at the town office. Later, you might realize that it would be really handy to have a map of these assets, which requires deciphering the locations from the datasheets and manually drawing dots on a map. Of course it would be even better if the inventory was consolidated into a spreadsheet, so that it could be shared and updated easily, but you don’t have time to transcribe multiple pages of handwritten data.

You can accomplish all this in a single step using a Smartphone or other handheld mobile device and a software program that is free and easy to use. The free software package CyberTracker offers the ability to create forms for data input on a handheld device, eliminating the tedious and time-consuming task of transcribing hand-written data. This program is very easy to use and requires no computer programming skills. It affords the ability to collect data and map it in a single step using GPS functionality.

LCPC is offering workshops and demonstrations for communities interested in deploying this technology. For more information, contact Melinda Scott at Melinda@lpcvt.org.



Staying Connected Walk and Talks

Summer is a great time to explore the rich natural areas and working landscapes that make Lamoille County our home. The Staying Connected Initiative has organized a series of guided Walk and Talks through some of the most beautiful areas of Lamoille County and the Worcester Range. In addition to getting outside and exploring the local landscape, these Walk and Talks are an opportunity to learn more about local environments from people who work in them every day.

Remaining Walk and Talks include:

Saturday August 11, 11am-1pm -- Zack Woods and Ponds, Hyde Park – Learn about the environment and ecosystems found in Zack Woods and Ponds. The Walk and Talk will be guided by Alexis Dane, Zack Woods Land Steward. *(Directions, Heading north on Garfield Road in Hyde Park, turn right onto Zack Woods Road, park at small parking area)*



Credit: Jerry & Marcy Monkman



Saturday, August 18, 2pm-5pm -- Chickering Fen, Calais -- Liz Thompson, conservation biologist for Vermont Land Trust, will be taking us into Chickering Fen, a well preserved wetland in Calais. This is a great chance to learn about the plants and animals that call Vermont's wetlands home! *(Directions, heading South on Route 14, turn left onto Lightning Ridge Road in Calais, park on Road by Town Highway 49)*

Saturday September 1, 10am-2pm – Morristown Town Forest, Learn how this Town Forest, located in the heart of Lamoille County, is being managed to produce timber while supporting wildlife habitat. Learn how these forestry techniques could be used on your own forestland. *(Directions: From Mud City Loop in Morrisville, turn onto Beaver Meadows Road. Follow the road to end.)*

For more information, Contact Neahga Leonard of the Staying Connected Initiative at neahga.leonard@gmail.com.

Lamoille County Pavement Schedule for State Highways

Summer roadwork in Lamoille County is still in full swing, please allow at least 5-10 minutes extra time for your drive. Survey work for the Jeffersonville roundabout is underway; the roundabout in Hyde Park has seen some fixes; and Johnson's Main Street project is nearly finished. The VTrans District work on Route 104 and the Route 15 Cambridge-to-Johnson pavement leveling project has finished although there will be additional paving work in Johnson village this year. Please use caution as you travel our state and local roads to keep paving and construction crews safe.

Lest we forget what traveling those bumpy roads was like, the following is a poem by Jennifer Kahn, a VT resident, about her travels to work this past April prior to this year's improvements.

Oh Route 15
you are obscene
I spilled my coffee in between

my legs twice already
how I wish for a rock steady
road
to carry my load
to safety
instead
I bang my head
as I wobble along
to a skipping song
hoping I don't pop a tire
or require
a mechanic
while I panic
that I'll get carsick
for now, I look forward to the day
when it's all paved
and I have one less thing to complain about
but for now I will shout
from Cambridge to Johnson and all points in between
please fix route 15!

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LCPC Assisting Towns with Sign Inventories

Many towns throughout Vermont are looking at ways to better manage their road signs, from general maintenance, to plans to replace them with new signs that are more reflective. A sign inventory can help. LCPC can assist municipalities by creating a database and map of the all road signs on town highways within a municipality. This inventory will also meet the federal and state MUTCD requirements to implement a retroreflectivity assessment by June 13, 2014. If your town is interested in completing a road sign inventory and would like help, contact Amanda Holland for more information.

