

## WRC STAFF ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**This summary highlights staff activity during the month of FEBRUARY 2026**

The lead staff person is listed in parentheses by each programmatic area heading.

### **Brownfields Redevelopment** (*Susan Westa*)

- Brownfields Committee – Met and approved one new project for a Phase I.
- Bellows Falls Train Station – Addressing questions as project moves forward.
- South Newfane General Store – Participated on call with town and consultant about next steps.
- 81 Royal Rd., Brattleboro – Preparing final cooperative agreement.
- Weston FEMA buyout site – Working with consultant to address next steps.

### **Community Development** (*Susan Westa*)

- Southeastern VT Housing Coalition – Participated in Housing Development Subcommittee meeting.
- Vermont Statewide Land Bank – Attended webinar about this new program.
- Southeastern VT Economic Development Strategies (SEVEDS) – Attended monthly meeting.
- BDCC Leadership Lunch – Attended presentation by VT Dept. of Labor.
- Downtown Brattleboro Alliance – Facilitated Board meeting
- Londonderry Village Wastewater Project: Matt assisted with general project coordination between the Town, Village Wastewater Committee, and Engineer on the development of design plans, property owner easements, and funding opportunities for the wastewater projects in the south and north villages. The south village is anticipated to be bid for construction in March 2026. The north village project is expected to be bid later this year.

### **Emergency & Resiliency Planning** (*Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Response to Award Conditions for Weston Village Flood Resilience “CDBG-DR” (Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery) grant award:
  - Met with Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to discuss where WRC is with responding to the Award Conditions. Response needed by March 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - Met with DHCD and Stone Environmental to discuss Environmental Review needs. This will require an extension.
  - Input all received Award Condition response items into DHCD’s GEARS online grant portal.
  - Maintained an updated tracking sheet for monitoring progress on all Award Conditions.
  - Attended a Special Town Meeting held in Weston on February 14th to share information and answer questions of the public about the project and the grant award. A town vote about acceptance of the award was held and it overwhelmingly passed so progress will continue.
  - Coordinated with Meghan Arpino of Stone Environmental about the Environmental Review and landowner outreach.
  - Met with Devon Hannah of DHCD to discuss questions about outstanding Award Conditions.
  - Sent draft extension request letter to DHCD for feedback.
  - Met with the Weston Treasurer.

- Met again with the Weston Planning Commission regarding the update of the flood hazard bylaw. The draft will now await roll-in during the full zoning update later in the year.
- FEMA Consultation Coordination Officer (CCO) meeting held at WRC on February 5th. Sent follow-up information to towns encouraging them to review the map changes.
- Participated in the annual Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) led Spring Flood Seminar.
- Participated, along with VT Department of Environmental Conservation staff, in a Rockingham Planning Commission meeting to discuss the draft flood regulations and floodplain administration. Questions from the town were shared prior to facilitate the discussion.
- Spoke with Mike Winn of SW NH Fire Mutual Aid about upgrade needs for 10 E911 dispatch towers in the Vt towns they serve (which is most of the region and several towns beyond). I sent outreach to a contact at Senator Welch's office to inquire of Congressional Directed Spending as a potential funding source.
- Whitingham Municipal Culvert Upgrade project received an extension through the end of May for final paving and finish pieces.

#### **Energy** (*Mike McConnell & Anand Fedele*)

- Continued work on Wilmington Enhanced Energy Plan; WRC attended February meeting of Wilmington Energy Committee meeting to discuss draft document and current use analysis.
- Advised Rockingham Energy Committee on a strategy for finalizing and adoption their Enhanced Energy Plan.
- Attended site walk through with Wardsboro's selected insulation contractor and finalized contract.
- Led bid process for window restoration for Londonderry Town Hall; town signed contract at end of month; WRC attended the bidder walkthrough and several renovation committee meetings.
- Outreach to Vermont Division of Historic Preservation (VDHP) to better understand permitting requirements.
- Conducted research on EPA Portfolio Manager and potential for future projects that support town energy data management.
- Worked with Athens to get Town Garage construction materials reimbursed through MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program).
- Attended insulation site visit in Grafton to understand project needs.
- Working with MERP Implementation Grants awarded towns to finalize RFP documents and engaging with non-Municipal Planning Management towns on Grant Administration services.
- Engaged with MERP Mini Grant awardees on possible ways to spend down those grants.
- Staff made another round of contractor calls for boiler, window, thermal envelope projects; specific outreach to HVAC engineers and installers to support MERP implementation.
- Attended data center and battery storage facility webinars.
- Looked for general contractor and engineering services firms for MERP.

#### **GIS/Mapping** (*Jeff Nugent & Lisa Donnelly*)

- Updated Putney's conservation lands map.
- Updated Wilmington's highway pavement data layer; updated road centerline data and road maps; submitted pavement changes to Vtrans.
- Conducted website work: addressed full calendar issue; and posted housing document.
- Worked on Grafton septic pumping ordinance: set up geodatabase for GIS data; created draft pumping area data for Houghtonville, Grafton village, and Cambridgeport; and developed data for labeling maps with parcel numbers.

- Sent information to Conway School students on GIS data for their project.
- Participated in monthly TPI (Transportation Planning Initiative) meeting.
- Attended Vermont Trails and Greenways Council's monthly membership committee and board meetings.
- Completed draft Whitingham natural resources town plan map, and minor updates to community facilities; generated stats on current use acreage data.
- Act 181/future land use: completed final draft future land use areas and maps for Jamaica, Rockingham, Putney, Dummerston, and Wardsboro; first draft of Westminster; spoke with a Windham Planning Commission member about village centers; and updates to Act 181 page on WRC website.
- Windham: reviewed and made final edits to draft road maps, culvert inventory map, and road erosion inventory map; generated list of road segments that need work; created online maps for highway department tablet; and made final edits to surface waters data.
- Downloaded/clipped new wetlands, natural heritage, and parcel GIS data.
- Updated the Windham Region planning landscape map to include Athens now having a town plan.
- VT Culverts: met with consultant from Stone regarding VT Culverts issues (backups, email verification, logins, appendix A), and follow-up; began attacking to-do list from last week's meeting; verifying account email addresses; updating map pop-ups; began updating data structure list; reviewed data back-up procedure; backed up statewide bridge and culvert data; and met with Abe from Vtrans to discuss VT Culverts data and use by towns.
- Spoke with both Stratton and Townshend about VT Culverts login issues, and helped Wilmington highway superintendent with information on how to do filters in VT Culverts.
- Created a map of the Deerfield River basin for a Deerfield River Watershed Association grant application.
- Drafted letter of support for the Town of Northfield, MA for the Schell Bridge project.
- Looked into repairing broken links for image services, and the best way to repair them.
- Sent thank you emails for trail manager's meet-up.
- Guilford: final updates to new E911 address map, updated trails data and trails on map, and sent to town.
- Wilmington town plan maps: created template of new design for town plan map series update.
- Met with Jamaica town clerk, selectboard member, and road foreman to talk about their upcoming Road Erosion Inventory update for the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- Prep work for update to Brookline's road maps and culvert map.
- Assembled summary of TPI work for Chris's testimony before the House transportation committee.
- Updated our on-line pedestrian and bike count maps to include 2025 data.
- Worked on surface water edits in Brookline.
- Completed the first two North Atlantic Connectivity Collaborative training modules for non-tidal aquatic and terrestrial protocols.
- Re-downloaded and processed several traffic counts from 2025 to include bikes, processed as bike counts, updated the bike count master spreadsheet and existing summary sheets, and added count locations to the shapefile.
- Brookline: drafted updated road maps, and culvert inventory map.
- Assisted Vtrans in resolving a Grants In Aid reimbursement issue with Athens.
- Collected bike parking data in Brattleboro for February.

### **Municipal Planning Assistance** (*Matt Bachler & Mike McConnell*)

- Weston Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Assisted town with notice requirements for Planning Commission public hearing in March.
- Dover Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Met with Planning Commission to review draft revisions to Planned Unit Development, affordable housing, and general standards in zoning bylaws.
- Brookline Town Plan Re-Adoption: Attended Planning Commission public hearing on draft town plan. Worked with town on next steps for Selectboard public hearing in March and consideration of town plan adoption.
- Received request from Athens for WRC review of town plan and confirmation of municipal planning process. Began staff review and scheduled public hearing for April.
- Assisted Londonderry with public hearing requirements for zoning bylaw amendments.
- Worked on contract with the town of Wardsboro to assist Planning Commission with Town Plan update.
- Provided technical assistance to Halifax Planning Commission on town plan update process.
- Wilmington Town Plan Update – Sue attended Planning Commission meeting to review Housing and Economic Development sections and began updating those sections. Drafted final edits to Introduction and Community Facilities chapters. Calls with Patrick Moreland DV Fiber, VT Representative Emily Duncan, Gretchen Havreluk and Sam Kondracki, Wilmington Works to get their input on updating sections. Alyssa reviewed Wilmington draft Town Plan flood resilience section and provided comment.
- Continued work on the Whitingham Town Plan update, including revisions to the Natural Resources chapter, mapping updates, meeting with the Planning Commission and compiling municipal comments into chapters and maps. Sue reviewed housing section.

### **Natural Resources & Water Quality** (*Margo Ghia*)

- Began planning a WRC-led Vermont Conservation Plan listening session for municipal conservation commissions (funded through a Vermont Housing and Conservation Board mini-grant).
- Provided technical assistance to Green Mountain Conservancy on applying for a Clean Water Enhancement Grant on a conserved parcel in Dummerston.
- Continued work on the Imtec Lane Stormwater/Economic Development project, including a Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) interest form submission and meetings with NBRC, Vermont Economic Development Authority, and the Vermont Recovery Office regarding project eligibility and funding stacking.
- Participated in a regional partners Tactical Basin Plan meeting.
- Assisted with Deerfield Wild & Scenic VT Fish & Wildlife Watershed Grant submission. Jeff created a Vermont Deerfield Watershed map.
- The Green River Watershed Alliance is focusing efforts to reclassify the Green River in Vermont to a higher standard. Reviewed presentation materials.
- Provided technical assistance to the Town of Halifax regarding environmental considerations for paving vs. not paving dirt roads.
- Participated in a Connecticut River municipality gathering in Massachusetts related to the Resilient Deerfield Watershed Coalition.

### **Project Review** (*Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Project Review Committee meeting held in February.
- Drafted and submitted a comment letter to Act 250 for the Windham Foundation project in Grafton (2W0157-7).

### **Regional Plan Update** (*Matt Bachler & Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Act 181 (Matt):
  - Worked on draft revisions to 2025 Regional Plan to address Act 181 reforms.
  - Attended the monthly project meeting with other regional planning commissions.
  - Continued work on draft regional land use mapping based on Act 181 standards.
  - Continued with outreach to towns to provide draft regional land use maps and set up times to meet with towns about Act 181. WRC staff attended meetings in Wardsboro, Brookline, and Weston to review draft regional land use maps.
  - Responded to general inquiries from towns and members of the public about Act 181 and Act 250 jurisdiction changes.
- Act 181 (Alyssa):
  - Responsibilities were divided amongst staff for WRP update needs and completion of the checklist that will be submitted to the Land Use Review Board with the draft plan.
  - Draft maps shared with: Dummerston, Putney, Stratton, and Rockingham.
  - Staff participated in the monthly Act 181 roundtable with other regional commissions.
- Began working on verbiage updates to the WRP.
- Margo conducted data research for the new Environmental Justice section of the Regional Plan.
- Anand drafted housing chapter language and analysis to meet state requirements.

### **Transportation** (*Colin Bratton*)

- Continued to provide project management support for Spring Hill Road culvert replacement project in Londonderry. Awarded contract to GPI for Construction Inspection Services. Project was bid and a bid opening was held in late February. Project is expected to be awarded by the end of March and construction beginning this summer.
- Reviewed invoices and payment documentation for multiple municipal projects, including Stratton Grout Pond Road Improvements, Windham Route 121 Culvert Replacement, and Windham Bank Stabilization.
- Participated in the Windham Bank Stabilization project kickoff meeting and reviewed related RFP materials.
- Provided technical assistance to Town of Newfane regarding installation of a fabric-covered salt shed, including reaching out to the Town of Ripton for feedback on their process.
- Continuing to work with Brattleboro, Hinsdale, Southwest Region Planning Commission (NH), and local trail organizations about reuse of the iron rail trestle across the Connecticut to join the West River Trail (VT) and Fort Hill Trail (NH).
- Chris provided testimony before the House Transportation Committee on the work of the WRC in transportation, and especially in support of towns.
- Chris presented VT RPC roles in disaster recovery before the American Association of Metropolitan Planning Associations.
- Held Kick off Meeting for Athens Brookline Road Culvert Replacement project with Hammond Engineering.
- Held Kick off Meeting for Guilford Slate Rock Road Culvert Replacement Project with Dubois and King Engineering.
- Stantec was selected as the Design and Engineering firm for the Newfane Village Sidewalk project.
- Met with students from the University of Vermont Engineering program to discuss design ideas for improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as parking configuration in Townshend Village as part of the Senior Capstone Engineering project.

- Met with students from the University of Vermont Engineering program to discuss design ideas for Jamaica Depot Street bridge as part of the Senior Engineering Capstone project.
- Met with town of Rockingham to discuss continued delays to Depot Street bridge replacement project and potential for Congressionally Directed Spending from Senator Welch's office to make up funding shortfall.
- The Southeast Vermont Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Committee met.
- The Windham Regional Transportation Advisory Committee met.
- Reviewed and provided comments to VTrans on the draft update to the Vermont Statewide Roadway Design and Multimodal Guidance Document.
- Windham Regional was approved as the Municipal Project Manager for the Bellows Falls School Street Extension crosswalk and intersection improvement project in front of the Bellows Falls Elementary School.
- Staff met with Rockingham Town staff and Selectboard to discuss next steps for the Bellows Falls Riverfront Trail project and potential sources for additional funding.
- Attended the monthly VTrans Transportation Planning Initiative meeting with staff from Vermont RPCs to discuss ongoing work across state.
- Met with VTrans staff to discuss Transportation Impacts of Act 181 in Windham Region.

#### Other

- Chris continues to represent the RPCs on the Vermont Evaluation of Rural Technical Assistance committee. He is also the point person on a UVM student research project about councils of government and how they might work in the Vermont context to support intermunicipal collaboration and cooperation. He was recently a discussant on Vermont Edition about the challenges of intermunicipal cooperation within the context of the absence of county government in Vermont. <https://www.vermontpublic.org/show/vermont-edition/2026-02-23/brave-little-state-digs-into-vermonts-lack-of-county-governance>
- Matt is working with other RPC staff to update the Essentials of Land Use Planning training.
- VT Planners Association – Sue attended Executive Committee meeting.
- RPC Meetup – Sue participated on call planning for spring workshop.
- Mike worked on the Grafton septic pumping ordinance project and engaged with the State of Vermont, EPA and private septage haulers on best practices and practical solutions.
- Bond Bank project (Alyssa):
  - Attended monthly check-in with other regional commissions.
  - Met with Putney and RCAP Solutions to discuss what RCAP can do to assist the town with planning for a secondary well.
- Margo:
  - Began reviewing and scoring State Forest Parks and Recreation Grant proposals as part of the grant review team.
  - Participated in a Local Jurisdiction and State Hazard Mitigation Coordination webinar.
  - Provided guidance to the Town of Putney regarding gravel pit stormwater permits and update process.
  - Initiated and coordinated work with UVM intern Emily Lelli, including introductory meetings, resource sharing on forest blocks and wildlife connectivity, and coordination with staff regarding future collaboration and research topics.