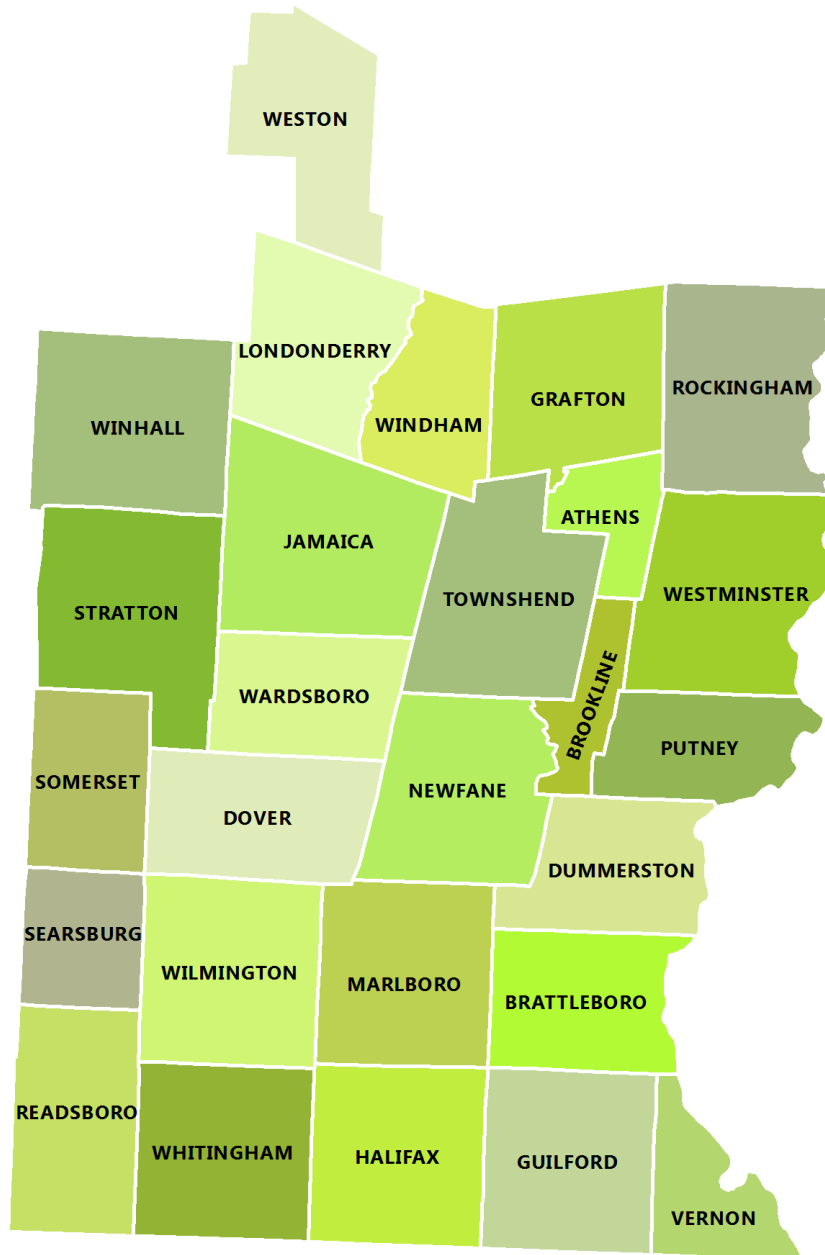


Windham Regional Commission

Annual Report

State Fiscal Year 2026*



*This report is prepared annually for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development as part of our performance-based grant with the agency. As such it relates to the contract period which is the state fiscal year, July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. The WRC fiscal year runs October 1 through September 30.

Windham Regional Commission

FY 2026 Annual Report

Celebrating our 61st year, the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is an important resource to 27 towns in southeast Vermont, including all of the towns of Windham County, the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg, and Winhall in Bennington County, and the town of Weston in Windsor County. In the absence of county government, we are an essential link between local, state, and federal government. Our mission is to assist towns in Southeastern Vermont to provide effective local governance and work collaboratively with them to address regional issues.

Each town's Selectboard determines who will represent the town on the WRC. Each member town can appoint two [commissioners](#) who represent that town's interest in regional affairs. The exception is Somerset, where a town supervisor is appointed by the Governor. Additionally, the WRC has up to 9 citizen interest [commissioners](#) who represent other regional interests such as business and industry, healthy communities, agriculture, natural resources, energy, and housing. The WRC is organized around several committees. These [committees](#) are where most of the work gets done and the decisions made. Commissioners serve on these committees and make the decisions. The WRC has 11 highly-qualified [staff](#) who provide support to the committees, and execute the Commission's [program of work](#).

PLANNING & ZONING

RPCs act as a cost-effective professional planning and plan implementation staff in support of many of Vermont's municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education, municipal consultation, bylaw modernization, and implementing new requirements for housing, flood resiliency, forest blocks and habitat connectivity, energy, and water quality planning. Clear and up-to-date plans and bylaws are essential to smooth state and local permitting. We also recognize capacity constraints for local planning and zoning administration, and that intermunicipal approaches may be beneficial in the future.

RPCs also coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related plans and studies, such as the regional enhanced energy plan. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors. RPC's planning and zoning work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions, and other grants. The technical assistance and regional planning provided this year is shown on the At Work map; some highlights were:

- Provided general assistance to towns in updating and adopting town plans (11 towns) and land use regulations (9 towns). Updating town plans included assisting towns with addressing new Act 181 land use planning standards, Act 174 enhanced energy planning standards, Act

171 planning standards for protection of forest blocks and habitat connectors, planning for housing needs, addressing flood resiliency, providing updated town plan maps and community data, and responding to general procedural and statute questions. Updating bylaws involved assisting towns with amendments to increase housing opportunities, updating flood hazard area regulations, including protection of river corridors, addressing new requirements in statute, and administration and enforcement of such regulations.

- Provided general technical assistance to towns on topics including Chapter 117 statutory processes and requirements, Act 171 (forest blocks and habitat connectors), Act 174 (energy planning), HOME Act (municipal zoning reforms to encourage housing), Act 181 (state land use planning framework reforms) and general administration and enforcement of land use regulations.
- Hosted two trainings on the basics of land use planning and regulation: Town Plan Implementation Strategies and Making Effective Local Land Use Decisions.
- Provided customized presentations for Planning Commissions and others (e.g., Selectboard and Zoning Board of Adjustment or Development Review Board members), as requested.
- Hosted a workshop for municipal officials on what towns can do to support more housing development.
- Conducted four municipal consultations with towns to discuss town planning, regional planning commission review and approval of town plans and confirmation of towns' planning processes, and regional commission programs and assistance to towns.
- Assisted five towns in developing and submitting Municipal Planning Grant applications. Three of these Municipal Planning Grant applications were funded.
- WRC contracted with the towns of Jamaica, Townshend, Westminster, Wilmington, and Whitingham to work on Town Plan updates. WRC also worked with the town of Athens on developing the town's first Town Plan. Several of these communities received funding through the Municipal Planning Grant program to complete these projects over the last two funding cycles.
- WRC contracted with the towns of Weston and Dover to draft zoning bylaw amendments.
- WRC completed its work on updating the Windham Regional Plan and the plan was adopted on July 29, 2025. The plan focuses on how to support compact development in our village centers and downtown areas, how to make settlements more climate adaptive and resilient, and how to maintain and improve habitat connectivity within the region. The updated regional plan is web-based and WRC hired a consultant to assist with the design and development of the website that will host the plan. The purpose behind this is to provide communities with a more accessible and useful planning tool and source of information.
- WRC assisted with administration and project management for the Municipal Planning Grant received by the towns of Brattleboro, Rockingham, and Wilmington for the completion of a Cultural Plan for Southeast Vermont. The plan identifies arts and cultural assets and their

economic impact, and provides a set of goals and action steps to ensure the continued strength of the creative sector in southeast Vermont.

- Provided Londonderry with project coordination services for the development of community wastewater systems in the villages of North Londonderry and South Londonderry under State ARPA grants.
- Project Review - During this reporting period the WRC reviewed five major Act 250 applications and two Section 248 applications. Act 250 applications included those related to a campground in Jamaica, Stratton Mountain Resort, Grace Cottage Hospital expansion, additional events at the Windham Foundation in Grafton, and a campground in Grafton. The Section 248 applications were for a solar project in Vernon and a telecommunication tower in Dummerston.
- Led a 4-town flood resilience and adaptation study and charrette for the towns of Dover, Readsboro, Whitingham and Wilmington in collaboration with the UMass-Amherst Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning graduate program and the American Institute of Architects Communities by Design Program.
- Engaged the Conway Graduate School of Planning and Landscape Design in the development of a Historic Village Flood Adaptation Guide.
- Engaged the Architects Foundation Communities By Design Program, and the UMass-Amherst Graduate Scenario Planning Studio, in a flood adaptation project for Dover, Wilmington, Whitingham, and Wilmington in the Deerfield Valley, which included the creation of a flood adaptation board game called Ready or Not. The UMass studio won a national American Planning Association Award for the project.

STATE DESIGNATIONS/REGIONAL PLAN ENGAGEMENT

- Following the adoption of the Windham Regional Plan update on July 29, 2025, WRC began working with member towns in Fall 2025 on updating the Regional Plan to address the new regional planning requirements under Act 181.
- Created and maintained a 2026 Regional Plan Update project page on WRC's website to provide background information on Act 181 and Regional Plan Update requirements, post draft Regional Future Land Use maps for member towns, and provide information on upcoming public meetings.
- Met with each town in the region at least once to review and finalize the draft regional future land use map, go over local housing targets, and discuss the purpose and role of the Regional Plan. Share revised versions of maps with towns based on local input as needed.
- Hosted two meetings specifically about the Act 250 reforms under Act 181 and the new Tier system in response to numerous questions from town officials and members of the public. These meetings were attended by a member of the Land Use Review Board.
- Met with Housing Coalition of Southeast Vermont to review draft Regional Future Land Use Map and regional housing targets.

- A final public in-person meeting was held in Brattleboro in May 2026 and a virtual meeting was held in May 2026 to present a summary of the revisions to the 2025 Regional Plan.
- A draft of the 2026 Regional Plan Update was submitted to the Land Use Review Board for review in June 2026.
- WRC continued to participate in an effort led by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) to develop a Statewide Future Land Use Mapping Methodology to ensure consistency with mapping the new Act 181 regional future land use districts statewide.

BROWNFIELDS

- The WRC [brownfields program](#), since its inception in 2000, has brought a total of \$7.7 million dollars in federal brownfields funds to the region for assessment and cleanup of brownfields sites. In FY 26, we received an additional \$37,500 in assessment funds from the state.
- During this past year WRC Brownfields program has worked on the following sites:

Site	Town/Village	Brownfields Work	Reuse plan
37 Main St.	Saxtons River	Phase I	Plan to redevelop site for housing.
81 Royal Rd., Morningside Shelter	Brattleboro	Cleanup complete.	Groundworks demolished an existing structure and built a new homeless shelter.
108 Rockingham St.	Bellows Falls	Phase II underway.	Redevelopment for two new housing units.
Bellows Falls Bike Project	Bellows Falls	Cleanup underway.	Nonprofit Bike Project purchased the site for continued use.
Bellows Falls Train Station	Bellows Falls	Cleanup underway.	Town will continue to use the building as a train and bus station with the addition of a café or brewery.
Boys & Girls Club	Brattleboro	Indoor air assessment complete.	May demolish existing structure and build a new structure.
CF Church	Brattleboro	ECAA/CAP and pilot testing underway.	Continued commercial use.
The Garage	Bellows Falls	Offsite vapor plume delineation complete.	Affordable housing constructed.
Leonard Block	Brattleboro	Phase II and VI Supplemental Sampling complete.	Redevelopment for housing has been stalled.

Penta Wyman	Bellows Falls	CAP complete.	Plan to redevelop as part of CT River Heritage Center.
S. Newfane Store	Newfane	Supplemental Sampling complete.	Restore greenspace as part of FEMA buyout.
TLR	Bellows Falls	Pilot testing and ECAA complete.	Plan to redevelop site for CT River Heritage Center.
FEMA Buyout Site	Weston	Phase I complete.	Restore greenspace as part of FEMA buyout.
Wheelpad/WW Building Supply	Wilmington	Supplemental Sampling complete.	Reuse site for manufacturing of new accessible bed and bath units.
Windham School Site	Windham	Partial Phase II underway.	Town is purchasing closed school. May use for office or other community space.
Winston Prouty	Brattleboro	Supplemental Sampling and ECAA complete.	Plan to develop site for new housing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help position Vermont for long-term economic gain.

- Participated on the Southeastern VT Economic Development Strategies Board of Directors.
- Participated on the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance Executive Committee.
- Continuing to provide support to towns as they deliberate on the needs and potential benefits of community water and wastewater systems. Working directly with the town of Londonderry in support of their wastewater grants.
- Active at the state level in advocacy for state support for community water and wastewater systems in order to retain existing homes and businesses in villages and to make compact settlement possible per state, regional, and municipal policy.

HOUSING

- Participated on the Southeastern Vermont Housing Coalition, its Planning Committee and the Housing Development Subcommittee.
- Working with Winston Prouty Center, located on the former Austine School for the Deaf campus in Brattleboro, in a community planning effort to explore the development of a new neighborhood that could host 300 new homes.
- Presented regional webinar for member towns entitled “Housing - What Can Towns Do?”
- Provided brownfields funding for new housing projects in Brattleboro and Rockingham.

- WRC assists towns with zoning bylaw updates and Town Plan updates to support additional housing opportunities.
- Met with towns to review draft municipal housing targets based on the regional housing targets provided by VHFA and strategies for towns to support housing development.
- Engaged the Conway Graduate School of Planning and Landscape Design in the development of a Historic Village Flood Adaptation Guide, which included recommendations on housing development within historic villages.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Through contracts with VTrans, RPCs coordinates the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont's transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). 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.

The following five categories are performance measures reported to VTrans as part of their report to the legislature.

- **Objective 1 - Enhance Cooperation and Coordination Between Vtrans, RPC Regions And Municipalities:**
 - WRC held 5 Transportation Advisory Committee meetings with representatives from towns in the Windham Region.
 - WRC provided coordination between VTrans and our Municipalities, including:
 - Annual meetings with VTrans District 1 and District 2.
 - Coordination with VTrans District 1 related to concerns about Stratton Mountain Access Road and accompanying infrastructure needs.
 - Communication with VTrans staff and the Town of Marlboro related to local concerns about pedestrian access and safety on the Hogback Mountain section of VT-9
 - Coordination with VTrans and the Town of Rockingham related to the Depot Street bridge project.
 - WRC together with the Mt. Ascutney Regional Planning Commission, held 7 meetings of the Southeast Vermont Older Adults & Persons with Disabilities Transportation Committee.
 - WRC with VTrans and Agency of Natural Resources staff hosted a region wide training for towns on the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- **Objective 2 - Better Connect Federal, Regional and Statewide Transportation Planning:**
 - Executive Director serves on the Southeast Vermont Transit Board.

- The Windham Regional Transportation Plan is active and is incorporated within the Windham Regional Plan.
- **Objective 3 - Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities:**
 - WRC hosted four Road Foreman meetings with participation from staff and volunteers for twenty Windham Region Municipalities.
 - WRC provided technical assistance to nine municipalities on applications to six transportation grant funding programs including; VTrans Better Roads, Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Transportation Alternatives programs, the FHWA Federal Lands Access and Safe Streets and Roads for All programs.
 - WRC worked with the University of Vermont Senior Capstone Engineering program to develop transportation infrastructure project feasibility studies for three towns.
 - WRC provided technical assistance to four towns, Londonderry, Wilmington, Dover and Whitingham, on updating the Transportation Element of their Town Plans.
 - WRC completed or continued work on 22 municipal transportation infrastructure inventories, including culvert, road erosion, short structures and sidewalk inventories.
- **Objective 4 - Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans:**
 - WRC completed 86 data collection activities, including traffic counts, pedestrian counts and bicycle counts.
- **Objective 5 - Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education:**
 - WRC continues to facilitate discussions with Brattleboro, Hinsdale (NH), Southwest Regional Planning Commission (NH), Connecticut River Conservancy related to the re-use of the existing Fort Hill railroad Bridge as a Bicycle and Pedestrian connection between Downtown Brattleboro and Hinsdale. This is a multi-partner project with scoping work moving forward on the New Hampshire side, while improvements to infrastructure in Brattleboro will ultimately improve connectivity directly to Downtown. This project is ongoing and would provide a direct link to Vermont to over 20 miles of bike path, ultimately connecting with Keene, NH.
 - The Windham Regional Commission worked with the University of Vermont Senior Capstone Engineering Program to develop transportation project ideas and conceptual designs for Rockingham, Townshend and Jamaica. This was a unique opportunity to work with the University students and provide valuable project definition work to our towns. This included major improvements to the intersection of US-5 and VT-121 in Rockingham for bicyclists and pedestrians, providing potential plans to make one of our region's busiest and most pedestrian hostile intersections safer and more efficient and improve general walkability in the Village of Bellows Falls. Similar work was done for VT-35 in Townshend, again encouraging towns to think about transportation infrastructure improvements for safety and efficiency for all users.

EMERGENCY PLANNING & DISASTER RECOVERY

RPCs play a key role in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPCs also help update floodplain bylaws and hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans, and serve as local liaisons between towns and the State Emergency Operations Center in hazard events like the July 2023 flooding and the Covid-19 pandemic.

- WRC's Executive Director coordinates closely with VEM through his role as the Chair of the Emergency Planning Committee of VAPDA. In addition, he served on the legislative Dam Safety Emergency Operations Planning Committee and the board of the Mountain Towns Long Term Recovery Group. He's also a member of the Vermont Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Project Review Committee, the National Flood Insurance Program Study Committee, the River Corridor Working Group, and the State Hazard Mitigation Plan Implementation Working Group.
- WRC's Emergency Planner completed the training requirements to become a Vermont Certified Emergency Management Director.
- Currently working with interested towns on updating of flood hazard bylaws in conjunction with new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps expected in 2027.
- The WRC develops local hazard mitigation plans for our towns, with the exception of Brattleboro, which maintains its own. A Plan template is maintained to expedite these updates. Engaged with Stratton, Townshend, Marlboro, Athens, Jamaica, and Vernon to discuss progress and needs for LHMPs.
- WRC submitted final documents for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program applications.
- WRC staffs the Regional Emergency Management Committee, which holds quarterly meetings for Emergency Management Directors (EMDs) and others actively involved in emergency management. Topics are chosen by the participating members.
- Following any significant event, WRC serves in a liaison role to collect damage information from towns for VEM to use in determining whether to seek a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration.
- WRC holds and arranges for trainings, exercises and meetings for EMDs and Floodplain Administrators assist in their continued learning and engagement in those local roles.
- WRC maintains a Certified Floodplain Manager on staff who works with interested towns on developing updated flood hazard bylaws which incorporate state-designated river corridors.
- WRC supports the development of grant applications for hazard mitigation projects and the project management of awarded grants from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant, HUD's Community

Development Block Grant – Disaster Resilience, and VEM’s Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF).

- WRC maintains an updated emergency related contact lists for the towns we serve.
- WRC staff participated in numerous FEMA sponsored trainings as part of the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) training program including a local liaison exercise of the new VEM liaison protocol and WebEOC reporting
- Staff attended the annual Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) conference.
- WRC staff participate in monthly VEM meetings with all regional planning commissions.
- WRC staff supported the development of a successful CDBG – Disaster Resilience grant application for the Weston bridge and dam project and supported the Town of Weston with next steps to secure grant funding.
- WRC supported the construction phase of the Whitingham Municipal Center culvert replacement project.
- WRC supported efforts to secure funding for the Southwest New Hampshire Department of Fire Mutual Aid for tower upgrades in Vermont.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- WRC has addressed these issues by assessing and cleaning up contaminated sites for redevelopment throughout the region. The majority of these sites are located in Bellows Falls and Brattleboro where there is a concentration of contaminated sites due to past industrial uses. These are also the locations of lower income populations. See the Brownfields Section above for details.
- Bicycle counts on roadways and multi-use pathways were done at 10 count locations in eight towns to track recreation and alternative transportation activities. These included several counts in Grafton to feed into their outdoor recreation report.
- Provided mapping support to the Friends of the West River Trail, the Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development, and Wilmington Trails Committee, all of which have trails close to population centers, and two of which have higher levels of accessibility.
- GIS Planner serves on the board of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, which hosts the Trail Accessibility Hub. Staff have made local trail groups aware of accessibility improvements that could be made, and have worked with organizations to enhance their TrailFinder pages with accessibility information.
- Worked with towns to incorporate recommendations and policies in Town Plan updates to encourage healthy communities, including addressing housing quality, water quality, and active transportation.
- Continued to support our regional Elders and Persons with Disabilities Transportation program to provide on demand transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities to medical appointments, shopping, meals, and social engagements.

- Provided Londonderry with project coordination services for the development of community wastewater systems in the villages of North Londonderry and South Londonderry. The projects would address several health and sanitation concerns related to both potable and surface water quality in the two villages.
- Our Executive Director serves on the Vermont Climate Council representing municipalities, and in that role also serves on the Steering Committee and the Rural Resilience Subcommittee.

MAPPING

In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects. In many cases the maps you see in town offices and garages were produced by the WRC.

- Mapping support to town planning efforts is at the core of WRC's mapping program. Town plan maps, and corresponding data, were updated for town plans in Brookline, Halifax, Jamaica, Londonderry, Whitingham, and Wilmington. Village center designation mapping was finalized for Winhall. Zoning bylaw mapping support was provided to Londonderry and Wardsboro (Wardsboro's updated map was finalized). Maps for hazard mitigation plans were done for Marlboro, Stratton, and Vernon.
- With the Windham Regional Plan undergoing an update, staff completed an initial draft of our future land use map, and created town-specific maps to support public outreach meetings with each town.
- GIS staff provide extensive support to **town highway departments** in myriad ways. We've helped over a dozen towns use tablets for mapping and inventory work through training and developing on-line maps. We updated Wilmington's pavement map. One well-attended regional road foremen's meeting was held, with the primary topics being the basics of capital planning, salt purchasing, and road crew hiring and retention. VLCT and Vermont Local Roads participated. In addition, we helped Vermont Local Roads host an MRGP Roundtable in Westminster.
- GIS staff continues to provide support for transportation-related inventory and mapping work. We completed a detailed **culvert inventory update** of both highway and driveway culverts for Windham, started a full update of highway and driveway culverts for Stratton, and continued to work on updates for Wilmington. We also updated culverts in a half-dozen other towns, not part of a comprehensive town-wide inventory. We continued to inventory and **photograph large bridges** in culverts in our region's towns. We completed sidewalk inventories for all towns in the region with the exception of Brattleboro, who maintains their own inventory. We continued to provide training and outreach to towns on how to use the VtCulverts tool to both view and manage their culvert data.
- Support for towns as they continue to work on compliance with Vermont's **Municipal Roads General Permit** has been ongoing, including outreach on the newly revised permit. We

completed a road erosion inventory update for Windham, began inventory work in Athens, Londonderry, Stratton, Townshend, and Weston, and continued inventory work in Halifax and Wilmington. In addition, we continue to provide assistance to over a dozen towns on their Grants in Aid projects.

- **Town road maps**, which include all public and private names, road ownership and class, and surface type, have long been provided to towns. This year we updated maps for Brattleboro, Brookline, Guilford, Whitingham, and Windham, and provided the corresponding updated data to Vtrans. We continued working with Vtrans on a project to ensure all roads surface type codes are correct in the state's master road centerline GIS data.
- Continued our effort to study bike parking in downtown Brattleboro, by conducting an inventory of bike racks, and on one day each month of bikes parked in the downtown district.
- WRC continues efforts to provide support for our communities **regarding trails and recreation paths**. We provided mapping support to the Friends of the West River Trail, updating their lower section trail map, and creating maps of trail connections in Brattleboro and Hinsdale to support their work with the Town of Brattleboro on connectivity. We created new trail maps for the Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development, and Wilmington Trails Committee's Hoot, Toot, and Whistle Trail. We continue to support the Town of Grafton with trail and recreation sites mapping. WRC's GIS planner serves on the board of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council and helped plan and put on their annual meeting. In conjunction with VTGC, WRC held a first regional trail manager's meetup, with 28 people from both large and small organizations, including pedestrian, mountain bike, snowmobile, and ATV groups. VTGC applied for and received a grant from the Vermont Recreational Trails Program to work with WRC and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to continue this work, hosting additional meet-ups and trail workshops. WRC staff attended the Vermont Conference on Parks, Trail, and Recreation, and co-presented at a session on trail counts.
- WRC provides mapping and grant writing support to towns and non-profit organizations when they apply for various grants, including VTrans Better Roads Grants (Athens, Grafton, Halifax, Newfane, and Wilmington), Bike Ped Program grants (Newfane), and a Recreational Trails Program Grant (Grafton).
- VtCulverts is Vermont's on-line municipal bridge and culvert data inventory tool. WRC is one of two Regional Planning Commissions that help manage and administer the tool for all RPCs and towns in the state. This year we worked with a consultant to get a new data guide created.
- GIS staff led an extensive bicycle and pedestrian count program. We conducted 34 pedestrian counts in five towns. These counts were on sidewalks, multi-use pathways, trails, and at crosswalks. Our counts in Rockingham were a detailed analysis of patterns at two intersections in the village. Bicycle counts on roadways and multi-use pathways were done at 10 count locations in eight towns. WRC maintains online maps of our bicycle and pedestrian counts; we updated these maps with 2025 data.

- At the request of ten towns (Brattleboro, Guilford, Readsboro, Rockingham, Searsburg, Stratton, Westminster, Weston, Whitingham, Wilmington), we conducted 27 different traffic counts, recording data on vehicle volume, speed, and class.
- Staff created completed an updated E911 map of Guilford and Marlboro, and began a project with Guilford to map neighborhood hub zones for checking on residents during an emergency event.
- Staff attended the Vermont Walk-Bike Summit in Bennington, and the Vermont GeoForum in Plainfield.

ENERGY PLANNING & 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 planning, 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.

- WRC continues to assist municipalities in the Windham Region with the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP, Act 172) that launched in early 2023. 12 of the region's municipalities received implementation grant funding to support weatherization, fuel-switching, and resilience projects in public buildings. With a shift in focus toward project delivery, WRC continues to provide regional technical assistance to grant awardees and has also contracted directly with several towns to serve as a municipal project manager for MERP.
- WRC finalized updates to the Enhanced Energy Plan/Energy Chapter for the Windham Regional Plan and received a determination of energy compliance under Act 174 from the Vermont Department of Public Service. In addition to finalizing the Plan itself, WRC completed a series of municipal energy data profiles to support towns in local energy planning efforts.
- In collaboration with the Climate Action Office, WRC organized a Public Input Session for the 2025 Climate Action Plan Update and provided meeting support.
- WRC closed out the Resiliency Zone Project, a collaboration between the Commission and Green Mountain Power to support the creation of resiliency zones through planning and public outreach. Advancements in GMP's capacity to accelerate line undergrounding and storm-hardening shifted the focus of utility resilience planning in the region away from partial strategies to a systemwide approach. This shift made home and business-specific engagement and planning less relevant, signaling a need to end the project. WRC continues to support conversations between GMP, public officials, town energy committees, and other stakeholders to foster collaboration on utility resilience work and the evolution of strategies used to advance it.
- WRC assisted Townshend, Rockingham, and Wilmington in developing new Local Enhanced Energy Plans, and supported Jamaica in updating its Plan to be compliant with new Act 174 requirements.

CLEAN WATER & INFRASTRUCTURE

RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to implement the state's Clean Water Initiative through basin planning and assistance to municipalities in meeting statutory and regulatory requirements. RPCs also work with municipalities and watershed organizations to implement river corridor assessments and storm water master plan projects and into local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions.

- WRC worked with Vermont DEC to initiate and provide input into Stormwater Master Planning for municipalities in the region. Three municipalities are currently underway, two municipalities are just beginning planning process, and we are reaching out to remaining communities to gauge interest.
- WRC is continuing to work with the Town of Dover, Mount Snow, ANR, the Connecticut River Conservancy and others to remove the Snow Lake impoundment at Mount Snow and restore the natural flow of the north branch of the Deerfield River.
- WRC is working in collaboration with the Town of Rockingham, private businesses, VTTrans and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to address stormwater runoff issues in three business parks. The goal of this work is to manage stormwater runoff and restore the landscape affected by washouts.
- Participated in various collaborative watershed efforts, including:
 - Supported the Deerfield River Watershed Alliance in their efforts to nominate the Deerfield River and its tributaries as a federally designated Wild and Scenic River.
 - Hosted water quality public meetings in cooperation with Vermont DEC to solicit public input on the completed Basin 12 (Deerfield) Tactical Basin Plan.
 - Worked with the Connecticut River Joint Commission's (CRJC) Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee to link and represent Connecticut River towns to relevant planning issues along the River. WRC continues to serve on the CRJC Full Commission and serves as an officer on the Vermont Commission.
 - WRC works with the Connecticut River Conservancy and Deerfield Watershed Alliance to promote water monitoring results for major rivers and tributaries throughout the region.
 - Acting as grant administrator for the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program in one municipality.
 - Submitted three applications for clean water funding to support the advancement of green stormwater solutions for projects in two municipalities.
 - Working with the Rockingham Conservation Commission and Connecticut River Conservancy on three nomination petitions for Outstanding Resource Waters.
 - Working with the Deerfield River Watershed Alliance on the nomination study of the Deerfield River Watershed for the Federal Wild and Scenic designation.

GRANT WRITING & ADMINISTRATION

- Assisted five towns in developing and submitting Municipal Planning Grant applications.
- Provide grant administration support for four Municipal Planning Grant projects.
- Serving as Municipal Project Manager for two salt shed projects, one culvert scoping study, one transportation flood resiliency scoping study, one trail scoping study, four culvert replacement projects, and one road improvement project.
- Supported VTrans Better Roads Grants (Athens, Grafton, Halifax, Newfane, and Wilmington), Bike Ped Program grants (Newfane), and a Recreational Trails Program Grant (Grafton, and Vermont Trails and Greenways Council).
- Administered a brownfields assessment grant and two cleanup grants from EPA and a brownfield grant from the State of Vermont.
- Developed an EPA brownfield assessment grant application.
- In conjunction with municipal partners, submitted three Clean Water Enhancement grant applications.
- Administering four (across three towns) awarded projects under the Enhancement Development, Design, and Implementation Block Grant (EDDIBG) program.
- Assisted one municipality in the development of a Community Development Block Grant: Disaster Recovery project. Assisting the municipality in meeting all pre-award conditions.
- Writing an Economic Development Agency proposal for one municipality.

UNMET NEEDS & OTHER

- WRC supports professional development by participating in planning for the NNECAPA conference and VPA workshops, as well as RPC Meetups. Also, participate on the VPA Executive Committee.
- Working with the University of Vermont through the Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships on the mapping of all public/community wastewater systems in Vermont and collecting data on their capacity. The goal is to provide both a high-level and localized picture and of where these systems do and do not exist in order to inform understanding as to where public wastewater-dependent development, such as housing at scale, is possible.
- WRC continues to participate in the Vermont Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel and has so since its inception.
- WRC has led engagement with UMass-Amherst, UVM, and the Conway School to increase awareness of and connections between both the Windham Regional Commission and the state's other regional planning commissions. The goal is to further expand this outreach to other universities in the New England region.
- WRC is beginning to work on a Municipal Bond Bank sponsored project to learn about the needs of public water suppliers in the region, provide administrative support as to assist the suppliers on a temporary basis, and work to help them expand system capacity.

- WRC has participated in elevating the need for municipalities to engage in capital planning and capital financing strategies, and participated in a forum held by the Vermont Bond Bank about providing financing options for municipalities in the wake of disaster.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

Virtually all of the WRC's revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines, and/or performance measures. This means that the WRC has limited control over how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through town assessments is the exception, which makes this funding stream particularly important because it gives us the greatest latitude to respond to WRC-identified needs in the region. Town assessments, and the funding received through the WRC's performance contract with the state, are also necessary to provide matching funds required by grantors. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires matching funds, and typically non-federal matching funds. Required match ranges from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant). Our budget and work program is available on our [About the WRC page](#) on our website.

The WRC has an audit on an annual basis, and a single audit as required by Federal rules. Audits and financial statements can be found on the [WRC Finance Committee webpage](#).

The WRC has adopted a [Municipal Services Policy](#) that is intended to provide guidance for the Commission in the delivery of professional services to member municipalities. It describes technical assistance available to member towns as part of the commission's core activities, and the opportunities for expanded service when funded as a special project.

'AT WORK' MAP

A map depicting the range of services provided by the WRC to member municipalities is included on the next page.