



Windham Regional Commission

WRC Newsbrief

May 2009

WRC receives \$400,000 in EPA Brownfields Grant Funding

The Windham Regional Commission was recently awarded \$400,000 in EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The stimulus funds, consisting of \$200,000 for hazardous substance sites and \$200,000 for petroleum sites, can be used to conduct environmental assessment and planning for eventual cleanup at Brownfields sites. Brownfields are land and buildings whose expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

These funds allow the continuation of the successful Windham Region Brownfields Reuse Initiative (WRBRI), a program that was started in 2000. The WRBRI has brought a total of \$1,350,000 in federal funds to the region. The funding has been instrumental in helping revitalize former industrial and commercial sites, turning them from underutilized properties to productive business and community uses.

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Two of the WRBRI program sites, the Bellows Falls Waypoint Center and the Brattleboro Transportation Center, leveraged \$10,770,000 redevelopment dollars, 195 construction jobs and up to 15 new jobs. Both redevelopments have provided a positive contribution to the downtowns in which they are located. Other recent highlights of the WRBRI program include:



Brattleboro Transportation Center

Commercial Growth: A former industrial garage in Bellows Falls is now a thriving restaurant, market, and auction house.

Infill Development: The completion of a Phase I environmental site assessment (ESA) gave the confidence to a local community group in Putney to purchase a village property and construct a 9-home planned community.

New Affordable Housing: Four new units of affordable housing were constructed following a Phase I ESA in Algiers Village in the Town of Guilford.

Historic Preservation: A local community interested in purchasing an important historic landmark in Readsboro Village was given the confidence to proceed with the building's purchase after a Phase II ESA found that there was no contamination on the property. The group intends to restore the historic building and redevelop it with a mix of uses.

New Greenspace: Working with the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program, the non-profit Bellows Falls Historical Society is creating a Riverfront Park and Trail system on approximately 9 acres of land that was once home to a large paper manufacturing complex.



Connecticut River Byway Waypoint Interpretive Center, Bellows Falls

If you are interested in learning more about the WRBRI or have a site that might benefit from the program, please contact:

Susan McMahon at x114 or e-mail at susan@sover.net, OR Sue Fillion x112 or email at sdf@sover.net

Dummerston, Stratton and Wardsboro Get New Town Maps

The WRC has been working with the towns of Dummerston, Stratton, and Wardsboro on updates to their town plan text and maps. As a result, updated road name maps for the three towns are now available. The standard 11x17-inch maps can be downloaded from the WRC web site; single copies are available for free at the WRC office. Large-sized road maps (24x36) for Dummerston and Stratton are also available. Single copies are \$10; each additional copy is \$2.50.

Dummerston Maps: <http://www.rpc.windham.vt.us/gis/maps/dummrstn.htm>

Stratton Maps: http://www.doververmont.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={F4221B77-B160-4A04-ABC4-0F7D77F94EAE}

Road Name Maps: <http://www.rpc.windham.vt.us/gis/roadname/index.htm>

Transportation Infrastructure Projects funded through the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA)

Earlier this year, President Obama signed the ARRA and provided Vermont with \$125 million to reinvest in its' transportation infrastructure. The ARRA, under transportation, has been divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2; with at least 3% of the total going to Transportation Enhancement projects (i.g. sidewalk improvements). Phase 1 called for each state to allocate \$44 million of the total amount within 120 days, from the March 2nd ARRA signing date. The Federal requirement regarding how this money is spent included:

- The Interstates and National Highway System (examples include I-91 and US Route 103)
- Urban and rural principal arterial routes (generally numbered State and U.S. highways).

Other connector highways that provide motor vehicle access between arterial routes, including "major collectors" on the town highway network.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) moved quick and allocated \$44.8 million in paving and bridge improvements. This included resurfacing Route 103 in the Town of Rockingham. These projects will be completed during the Federal Fiscal Year 2009. Phase 2 dedicated stimulus money for Vermont must be obligated within one year of apportionment. In essence, the only town roadways eligible for Phase 2 stimulus funds are Class 1 roads as well as some Class 2 roadways that meet the definition of a town highway "major collector," of which there are about 800 miles statewide. This will include resurfacing VT30 in the Towns of Newfane and Townshend.

A portion of the Phase 2 stimulus funds have been allocated towards Structure and non-Class 1 Paving projects. Just recently VTrans received applications from towns regarding resurfacing non-Class 1 sections of roads and Transportation Enhancement projects. Current estimates have Vermont spending 30% of the total \$125 million on town highway projects.

VTrans will continue to work with towns as well as the Regional Planning Commissions allocate all of the \$125 million of Stimulus funds. For more information go to the <http://apps.vtrans.vermont.gov/Stimulus/Default.aspx> or contact Matt Mann, x120, with any questions transportation infrastructure funding under the ARRA.

GIS Assistant: Jason Saltman

Jason Saltman of Wilmington has begun working part-time as a GIS Assistant at the WRC. Jason spent many years as an optometrist in State College, Pennsylvania before changing career paths and pursuing a graduate degree in Environmental Science from Green Mountain College and obtaining a GIS Certificate through Penn State's on-line program.

Jason is involved locally with the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum, the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association, and the Wilmington Trails Committee, and teaches science at Mt. Snow Academy.
