



Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD) Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) **2023 Vermont Planning Survey Results**

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Survey Summary, Content & Responses

Overview

The Department received 123 survey responses, collected from May 17 through June 9, 2023 (approximately 3 weeks). Respondents took an average of 29 minutes to complete the form¹. Responses were solicited via email through the Department of Housing and Community Development newsletter mailing list, several Regional Planning Commission newsletters, the Vermont Planners Association listserv, the Zoning Administrators listserv, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns newsletter, and was sent directly to Regional Planning Commission directors. The survey was not designed to be statistically significant from a random sample. It offers insights and feedback from voluntary participants. We are truly grateful for the quality of suggestions on ways the State can strengthen and improve our programs.

¹ Note that only responses under 3 hours are included in average; several responses were likely left open in browser for longer (12+ hours).



Key Findings

Participants

Survey respondents hold a wide range of roles, with 35% identifying as ‘other’ and specifying their roles. This year’s survey drew a large amount of interest from non-planners, such as real estate developers, community development professionals, and community members. The group included professional planners at all levels, with the majority serving small and medium-sized municipalities from all counties in Vermont.

Community Planning Priorities

Housing was identified as the top general planning priority, by a large margin; 1/3 of all priorities (108/330) fell under the category of housing, and the vast majority (73%) identified it as one of their top three. Other top priorities included water/wastewater planning; economic development; and smart growth / land use planning or needed updates to zoning and bylaws. Conservation and Municipal capacity were also high on municipal lists. When asked for the top three incentives or policies that would help address these priorities, many respondents indicated that more funding for housing and wastewater systems would be helpful. Lack of funding was identified as the biggest obstacle to achieving priorities, with lack of municipal capacity coming in second. When asked for solutions, many respondents identified strategies already underway or under consideration by DHCD and our partners, such as streamlining permitting and other requirements for developers, designation reform, and more funding. Many also ask for tools to help with community and stakeholder engagement in the planning process.

We asked respondents what emerging trends they thought the planning community should focus on. Interestingly, many identified climate adaptation and encouraging emigration to Vermont to combat our aging demographics as priorities, though these issues were not generally identified as municipal priorities.

We asked respondents what top three resources or training materials were needed. Most seemed to favor development of basic explainers or trainings for new zoning administrators, selectboard members, and town administrators. Many would like help with grantwriting. Some advocate for more public engagement on S100 changes and public education about the planning process and how zoning will help solve community problems.



Municipal Planning Grant Program

55% of respondents indicated they have experience with the Municipal Planning Grant Program, while 45% indicated they did not. In keeping with the rest of the survey, respondents identified housing as their top priority planning area (82.4% high priority) for the MPG program, with finance, building, facilities, infrastructure & service delivery second (71.6% high priority) and land use, design, and the built environment third (61.3% high priority). They identified diversity, equity, inclusion & justice and public health & environmental justice as low-priority areas (with 33.8% and 33.3% respectively selecting them as low-priority). Most identified municipal plans (57.6% high priority) and specific-area plans (60% high priority) as highest priorities when asked which categories of planning projects should be prioritized; special-purpose plans were identified as lowest priority (24.2%).

When asked why MPGs are valuable, many of the respondents answered that the Municipal Planning Grant program is one of the only sources of funding for municipalities to do planning work. Others noted that they are particularly helpful for smaller municipalities without the capacity to do this work; the grants allow them to hire professional consultants. Many noted that the funding incentivizes towns to do this work, which may not otherwise happen.

Respondents cited Project Readiness & Need as the scoring factor most important to the overall success of a MPG-funded project (27%), followed by Work Plan (24%). Several respondents favored consideration of equity and need in scoring.

Many respondents seem at a loss for effective methods of engaging underrepresented members of their communities in planning processes, though others advocate for using a range of engagement activities that take place where people are (from the farmers' market to the transfer station) or offer resources such as childcare and incentives to attend meetings.

Most respondents favored increasing the maximum grant amounts for single municipalities (56.1%) and for consortiums (52.3%). They generally advocated for leaving the minimum grants of \$2,500 as-is (43.1%) and for leaving the 10% local cash match as-is (47.8%). Most favored a \$50,000 maximum grant amount (28%), with 18% and 19% of respondents respectively advocating for no increase from the current \$26,400 maximum and an increase to grant amounts over \$65,000.

Program staff and materials were generally rated very highly, with 29.4% rating the overall program as 'excellent' and 49% rating it as 'good'. 51.9% rated state program staff assistance as 'excellent'. Interestingly, 48% selected 'no opinion' on private consultant assistance, perhaps due to difficulties (noted elsewhere in the survey) in securing private consultants. The lowest-rated area was the online application and grants management system, which 25% of respondents rated as "poor" and 25% rated



as “average”; one respondent said they had opted not to apply for the program because of having to use the GEARS system.

Bylaw Modernization Grant Program

Most survey respondents (69%) were not familiar with the Bylaw Modernization Grant program. Of the 38 who went on to answer questions about the program, most thought that reforms around housing were the most important priorities, as well as identification of municipal water and wastewater service areas and constraints.

In terms of scoring factors, respondents thought Community Need was most important to the success of a BMG-funded project (28%), followed by Work Plan (27%) and Location-based Priorities (18%). When asked about the most effective ways to conduct public outreach to communicate bylaw changes to the public, particularly to underrepresented participants, many had similar strategies to those in the Municipal Planning Grant program, such as holding meetings at different times of day or in various community settings, direct outreach, or conveying information online. Many also noted success with visual tools like renderings and even walkaround tours of municipalities to show examples in the built environment of what bylaw changes are trying to accomplish.

Most respondents would like an increase in grant amounts, with 56.8% advocating an increase in the \$25,000 maximum for single municipalities, and 27% hoping for an increase in consortium maximums. 27% also think the \$2,500 grant minimum should be increased. 70.3% think the forgivable 10% local cash match should stay the same. When asked for recommended grant amounts, 29% of participants then said there should be no increase; 23% favored \$30,000; 17% favored \$50,000.

Overall, respondents seemed to have a favorable view of program materials and staff. 28.1% rated the overall program as ‘excellent’ and 50% as ‘good’. Program staff assistance was rated by 40.6% as ‘excellent’ and 40.6% as ‘good’. Respondents were happy with the local match forgiveness, with 46.9% rating it as ‘excellent’ and another 25% as ‘good’. Once more, many respondents had no opinion or a low opinion of private consultant assistance.

Most (53%) of the respondents who have been awarded a BMG still have projects in progress. Of those remaining, 4 (13%) are seeking contractors/consultants, 4 have hired consultants, 4 are in hearings, and 2 have been partially adopted. None have been fully adopted, and none have been rejected. Most (13) are unsure when they will apply for Neighborhood Development Area designation, and 9 are not planning to pursue the designation. However, 4 are pursuing it this year, 6 in 2024, and 1 in 2025 or after.



Demographic Information

For the first time, we added a section to the survey that asks demographic information of respondents. The reasoning behind this was that we want to know who Vermonters involved with the planning community are, and how representative they are of the people and communities they serve.

Of 117 respondents, 42% were 45-60 and another 42% were 65+; 15% of respondents were 30-44, and only 2 respondents were under age 30. 42% of respondents use he/him pronouns, 35% use she/her, 7% (8 respondents) use they/them or other pronouns, and 17% preferred not to answer. 92% of respondents identified as white/Caucasian, with two respondents (2%) identifying as BIPOC and 7 (6%) preferring not to answer. No one self-identified as AAPI, Hispanic/Latinx, or with another race or ethnic background.

Out of 115 respondents, 90 (78%) identified as homeowners, while only 5 (4%) identified as renters; 67 (59%) moved to Vermont as an adult, while 39 (34%) were raised here. 9% were first- or second-generation immigrants, 9% identified as LGBTQIA+, 7% as veterans, and 3% identified as having a physical disability. 14% identified as a parent or caretaker, and 5% as low-income.

These demographics underscore the need for the planning community to consult with and consciously account for historically underserved, underrepresented, and underresourced groups when thinking about future development, particularly younger and non-white residents, and those who do not own their own home. The need to develop better outreach and engagement strategies – and importantly, to share those strategies – is clear from the results of this survey.



Survey Responses

Please note: full lists of responses to open-ended questions are collected in the Appendix, with short selections of responses listed here. For an interactive version of the survey responses, please see [the results directly in Microsoft Forms online](#).

Participant Information & Community Planning Priorities

Please identify your role in Vermont's planning community.

123 Responses (note respondents may select multiple options)²

- ▶ 16% Local planning commissioner
- ▶ 16% Selectboard / alderman / council member
- ▶ 16% Professional planner
- ▶ 13% Zoning administrator
- ▶ 8% Municipal manager / town administrator / town government / community development
- ▶ 7% Regional planning commissioner
- ▶ 7% Developer / real estate / business
- ▶ 5% Community members / retired planners
- ▶ 5% Advisory committee/commission member
- ▶ 2% Zoning/development review board member
- ▶ 1% State government
- ▶ 1% Consultant
- ▶ 1% Other (unspecified)

² Note that because 20% of respondents selected 'other', we have recategorized this data into a fuller list.



If you are a professional planner, please identify your primary role.

38 responses



● municipal/local planner	14
● regional planner	9
● state or federal agency planner	3
● non-profit planner	1
● private consulting planner	11

If you work for or serve in a municipality, what is its size by population?

107 responses

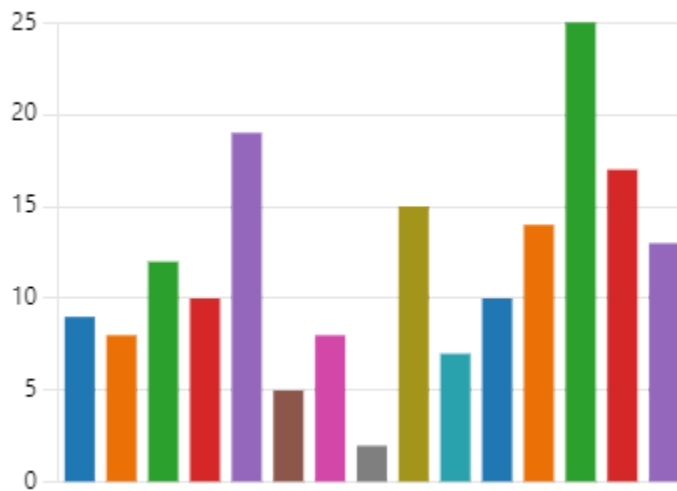


● small (< 2,000 residents)	43
● medium (2,000 > 5,000 residents)	35
● large (> 5,000 residents)	17
● not applicable	12



Which county (or counties) do you work or serve in?

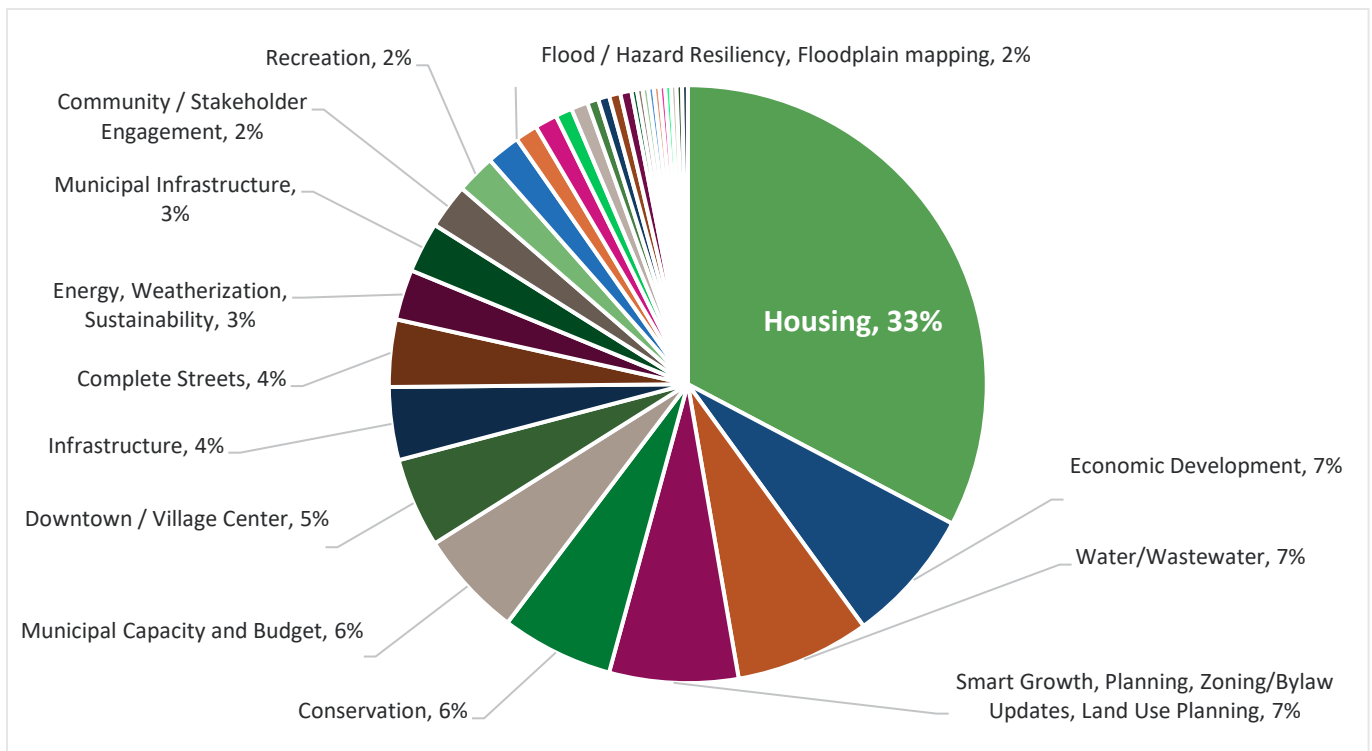
123 Responses



All Counties: Statewide	9
Addison	8
Bennington	12
Caledonia	10
Chittenden	19
Essex	5
Franklin	8
Grand Isle	2
Lamoille	15
Orange	7
Orleans	10
Rutland	14
Washington	25
Windham	17
Windsor	13

What are the top three priorities for the municipality/municipalities or organizations you serve?

117 Responses, with 330 priorities identified – [see full responses in Appendix](#).





Example responses:

- ❖ 1. *Housing - increasing the supply*
 2. *Smart Growth - increasing incentives*
 3. *Planning -- improving state, regional, and local*
- ❖ 1. *Housing for moderate income and aged population*
 2. *Purchasing privately owned water company and building infrastructure to allow more housing*
 3. *Repairing aged infrastructure - school, town hall, waste water treatment plant*

Equitable options for housing (mixed use in village centers and downtowns, affordable options to improve existing housing stock, more multi-unit housing for all ages and incomes i.e. condos); energy (weatherization programs, targeted-by-income subsidies to switch from fossil fuels); broadband and cellular - better coverage in rural areas.

What top three incentives or policies would best help your community address your priorities?

118 Responses – [see full responses in Appendix.](#)

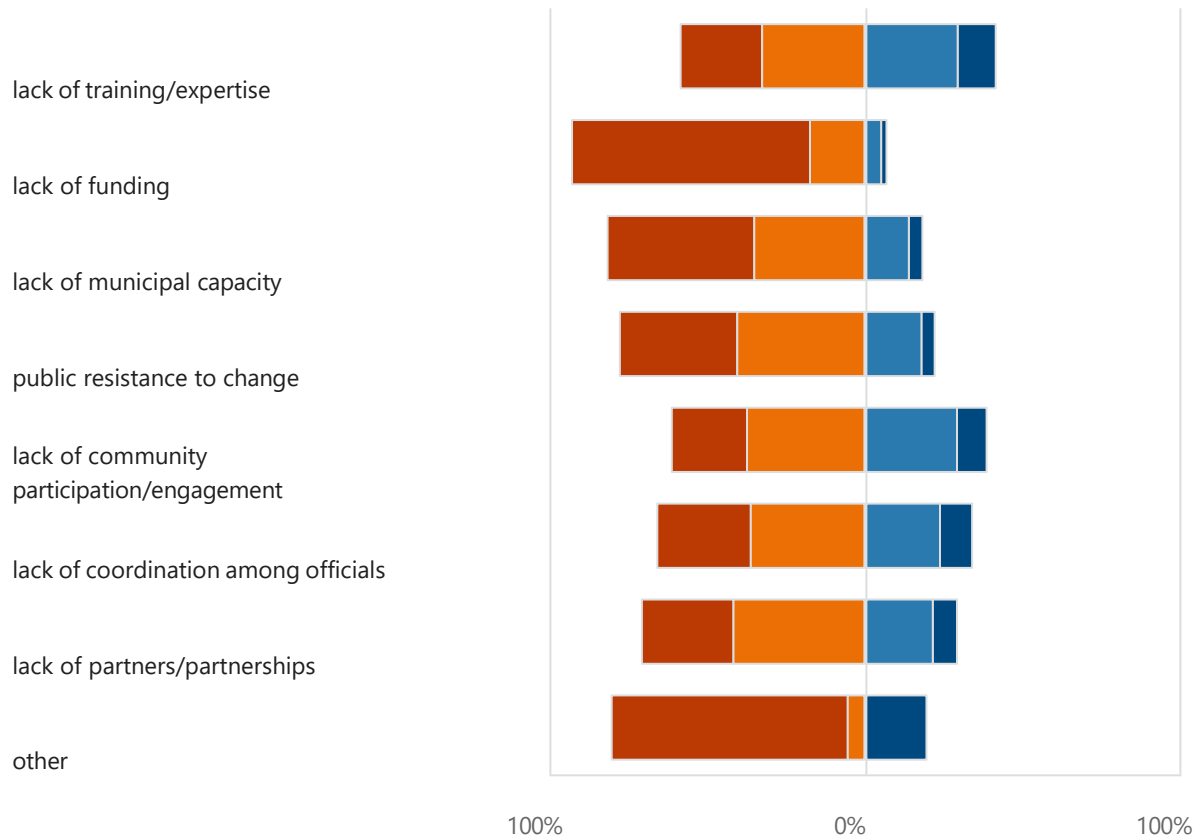
- ❖ 1. *incubation centers for grassroots entrepreneurs*
 2. *complete streets phased funding: vision/concept planning, scoping, engineering, and construction using appropriate standards MUTCD and VTrans standards make centers less safe and vital for all users*
 3. *land banking structures and funding to get vacant, blighted properties into productive use, esp. for housing*
- ❖ 1. *Wastewater infrastructure*
 2. *Funding and technical support for housing*
 3. *Additional funding and technical support for active transportation*
- ❖ 1. *Easing the path to getting essential infrastructure (WW, water, broadband) so existing centers can provide housing, meet needs of residents in surrounding rural; 2. more flexibility about use of State Highway within villages to create settings where people want to be, meet local needs without adopting Class 1; 3. more flexibility about locating NDA.*



To what extent are the following factors obstacles to achieving your priorities?

119 Responses

■ large ■ medium ■ small ■ not an obstacle



If you answered "other" above, or would like to add more detail to your response, please specify.

31 Responses – [see full responses in Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *Permitting in the state is extremely difficult. That hoops are many, the costs and risks are high and discourages creation of affordable and workforce housing.*
- ❖ *Time - with volunteers having to do most of the work in properly warned open meetings, it takes a REALLY long time to do things.*
- ❖ *It's not that we don't have public engagement/participation -- it's just that there should be better tools and methods for absorbing and collecting public feedback, so that people know that they are heard and their feedback can be more efficiently processed/ incorporated*



What solutions would most help overcome your top obstacles?

111 Responses – [see full responses in Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *Communications tools to help with public information (and misinformation), education, and build trust. Grant funding can be complicated, difficult to access, and difficult to manage. A dedicated grant writer/manager.*
- ❖ *More funding opportunities. Some form of "tapped in" matchmaker who can help bring in partners for community development*
- ❖ *Increased funding and removal of State permitting requirements for bike/ped infrastructure and housing in downtowns and growth centers.*

What emerging trends do you think Vermont's planning community ought to focus on?

113 Responses – [see full responses in Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *Flexible zoning to allow/encourage denser development in targeted areas, particularly near existing infrastructure.*
- ❖ *Climate change (and related things like increasing use of electricity for transportation and thermal power) will make things like river corridor zoning and electric grid resilience more important; it would be good if that (and other things like it) was easier to implement and more strongly encouraged.*
- ❖ *"Missing middle" housing; Promoting senior friendly development; Sustainable/resilient community design*

What are the top three resources or training materials needed by planners, zoning administrators, elected/volunteer officials, and the general public?

103 Responses – [see full responses in Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *Information in the form of consistent, high quality data to understand demographics, economic outlook, development trends, infrastructure capacities, critical natural resources, land conservation trends, etc. Mandated training requirements for government staff, elected officials and citizen volunteers.*
- ❖
 1. *One-pager on Planning and ZBA rules and responsibilities (not a full handbook)*
 2. *Model rules of order for planning commissions*
 3. *List of activities Planning Commissions are encouraged to study beyond the zoning bylaw*
- ❖ *Resources that provide the ability to envision what does not exist is critical for rural communities. More access to VCRD type community discussion/visioning. Pattern books of building and lot types appropriate for rural village and town infill. Open source sketch up modeling with Google*



Earth that can help people see how change and development could be beneficial.

Municipal Planning Grant Program

Do you have experience with the Municipal Planning Grant Program?

123 Responses

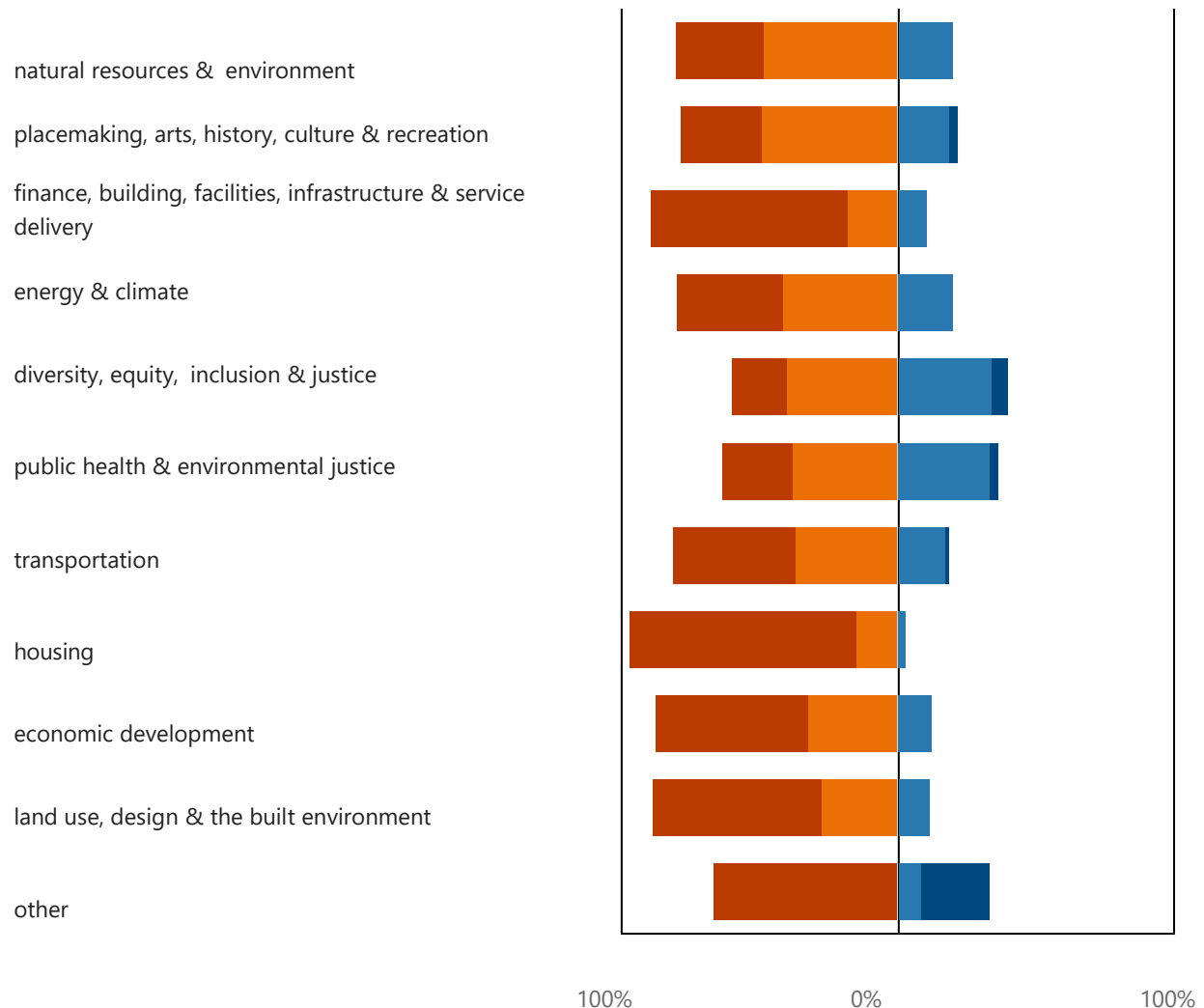
▶ 68 (55%) Yes

▶ 55 (45%) No

What areas of planning should be high or low priorities for MPG Funding?

68 Responses

■ high priority ■ medium ■ low priority ■ no opinion





If you answered “other” above, or would like to add more detail to your response, please specify:

9 Responses

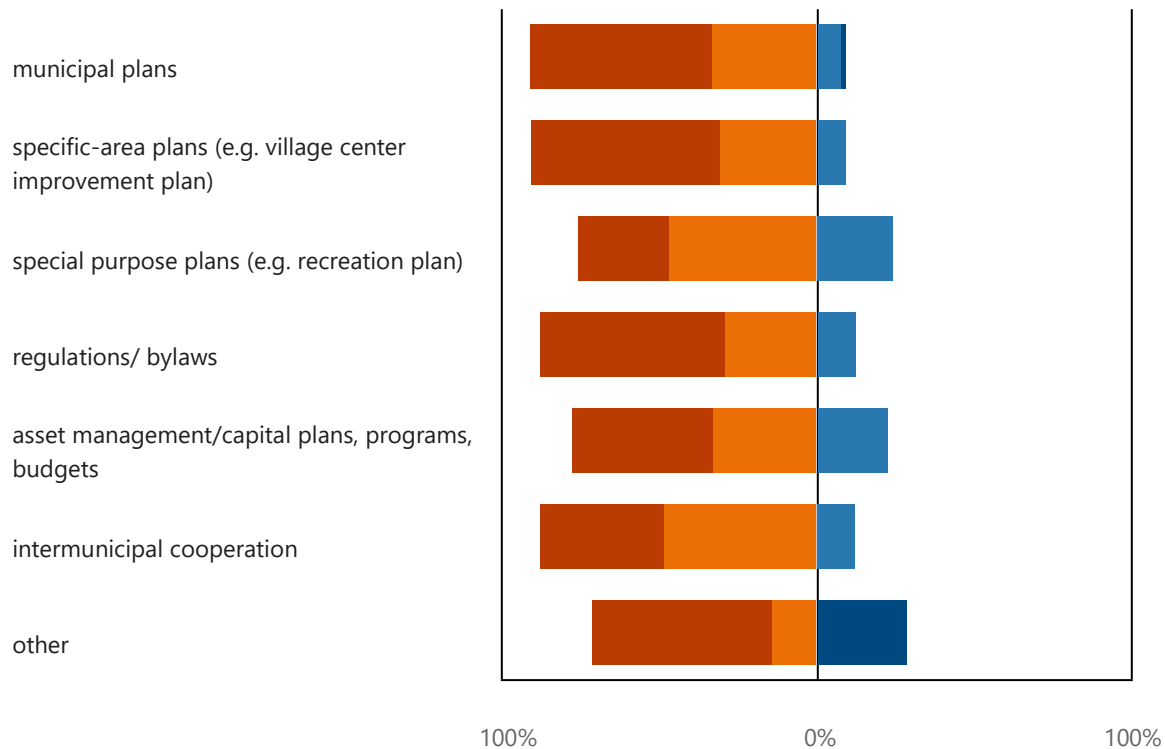
- ❖ *Statewide regulation of short-term rentals with oversight from the state Fire Marshalls.*
- ❖ *There are other funding sources for economic development and infrastructure needs.*
- ❖ *It's hard to prioritize these items because they are all so intertwined. I suppose there are more grants available specific to environmental projects*
- ❖ *workforce, affordable and missing middle housing specifically*
- ❖ *Even your questions show the problem. DEI?, Environmental Justice? What do they do to help?*
- ❖ *More capacity in the existing energy grid to accomplish the states goals of reducing "greenhouse gas" emissions.*
- ❖ *Encouraging participation from all sectors of the community would be necessary to achieve any success.*
- ❖ *Resolving the problems associated with recreation - parking, access, lack of respect of property owners and residents, conflicting types of recreation (e.g., hiking and climbing vs hunting).*
- ❖ *Some of these topics are intertwined for me, for ex, energy/climate and equity should be incorporated into every topic.*



What categories of planning projects should be high or low priorities for MPG funding?

68 Responses

■ high priority ■ medium ■ low priority ■ no opinion



If you answered “other” above, or would like to add more detail to your response, please specify:

7 Responses

- ❖ *Aging-in-place development initiatives in sewerred communities.*
- ❖ *We have a Town Plan, we look at it only when it is required to be renewed.*
- ❖ *Again, it's difficult to say that any of these are a low priority*
- ❖ *workforce, affordable and missing middle housing specifically - am I being redundant?*
- ❖ *If you backed off we would need your funding.*
- ❖ *Any change to the community would need to encourage all aspects of the Town to be committed and involved. Some sign up and are discouraged when progress is not made. and leave the group. Important to keep interest by reviewing progress.*



- ❖ *The priority given to specific-area plans (e.g., village and neighborhood centers) is frustrating for a town that doesn't have the ability to qualify.*

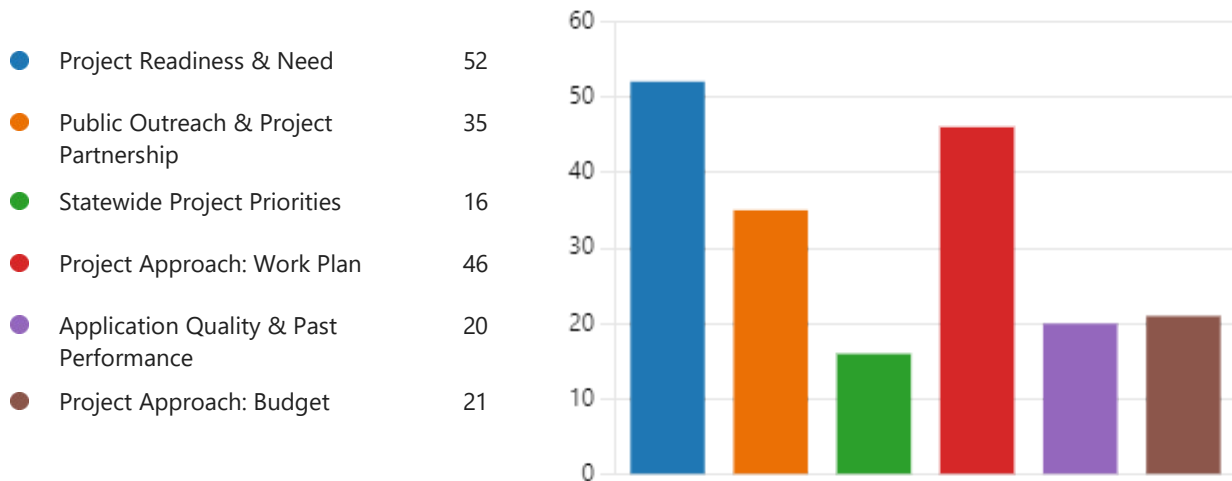
In a short answer, why are MPGs valuable?

59 Responses – [for full responses, please see Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *"It is the primary source of funds to help cities and towns hire the expertise they need to plan and implement projects."*
- ❖ *"MPGs give municipalities the opportunity they may never have to properly research and develop plans to support future developments."*
- ❖ *"They are the catalyst for communities to think about themselves and where they want to go."*
- ❖ *"We couldn't afford to do a good job without the assistance provided by MPG's."*

Which three of the following application scoring factors are most important to the overall success of a MPG-funded project?

65 Responses



Are there factors that should be considered, but are not, or other changes you would recommend to the scoring categories?

23 Responses – [for full responses, please see Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *"Increase the focus on need and lack of capacity at the local level."*
- ❖ *"Expand upward population of towns that RPCs can be the no bid consultant on for MPGs. Capable consultants are in short supply and RPCs outside of Chittenden function as de facto planning staff in communities. They have relationships with community members and know the challenges they face -*



these relationships and limited (or nonexistent) local capacity mean the RPCs are the best equipped to assist these communities. Rethink this arbitrary population threshold which just makes good projects more complicated and harder in rural communities.”

❖ *“measurement of plans put into action.”*

What public outreach method(s) have you found most effective at engaging non-traditional, under-represented, or historically discriminated participants?

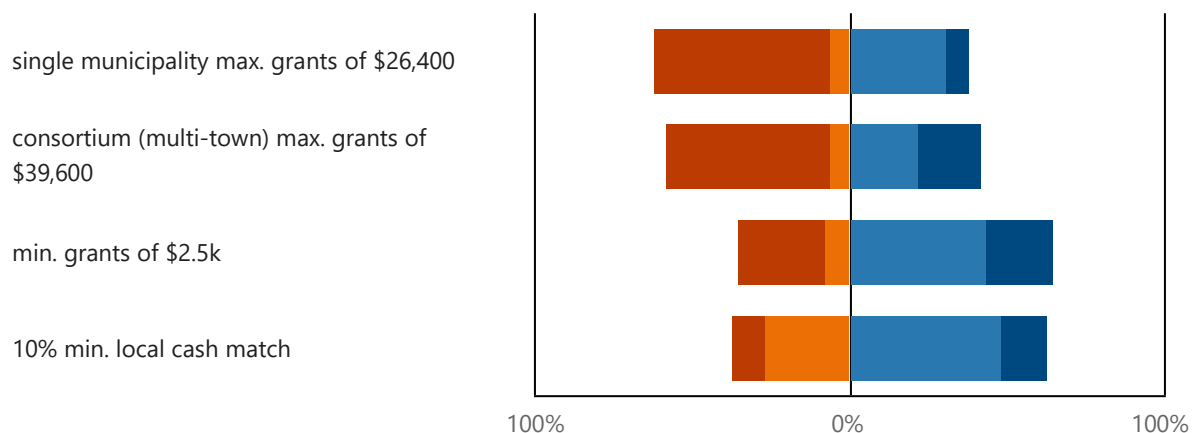
49 Responses – [for full responses, please see Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *“1. Municipal Booth at farmers markets festivals etc. to talk with people about projects, 2. Creating digital surveys that can be posted on our website and social media pages, 3. Going door to door at businesses in commercial districts to speak with workers who may not live in the area”*
- ❖ *“Offering online surveys which are advertised via Front Porch Forum because they are open and advertised to all residents and there are minimal participation obstacles, only Internet is needed.”*
- ❖ *“Non profit collaborators; Community organizations (schools, churches, etc), 1:1 contact with leaders from those communities.”*

Please evaluate the program's eligible grant amounts and local match requirements.

67 Responses

■ increase ■ decrease ■ leave as-is ■ no opinion

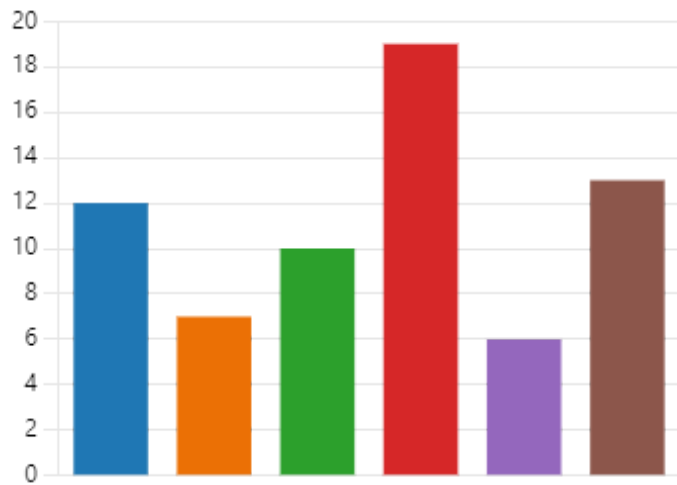




What would you recommend as maximum grant amounts?

67 Responses

● No increase	12
● \$30,000	7
● \$40,000	10
● \$50,000	19
● \$60,000	6
● More than \$65,000	13



If you have recently applied for an MPG, please rate the program materials and staff.

■ excellent ■ good ■ average ■ poor ■ no opinion





If you have opted NOT to apply for an MPG in the past, why not?

10 Responses – [for full responses, please see Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *Gears is awful. So incredibly awful that some small communities avoid the program because of it. Not program staff's fault, but please make it less awful.*
- ❖ *Lack of capacity to apply and administer a grant.*
- ❖ *Past elected officials had no interest in anything like this so we're just getting up to speed.*



Bylaw Modernization Grant Program

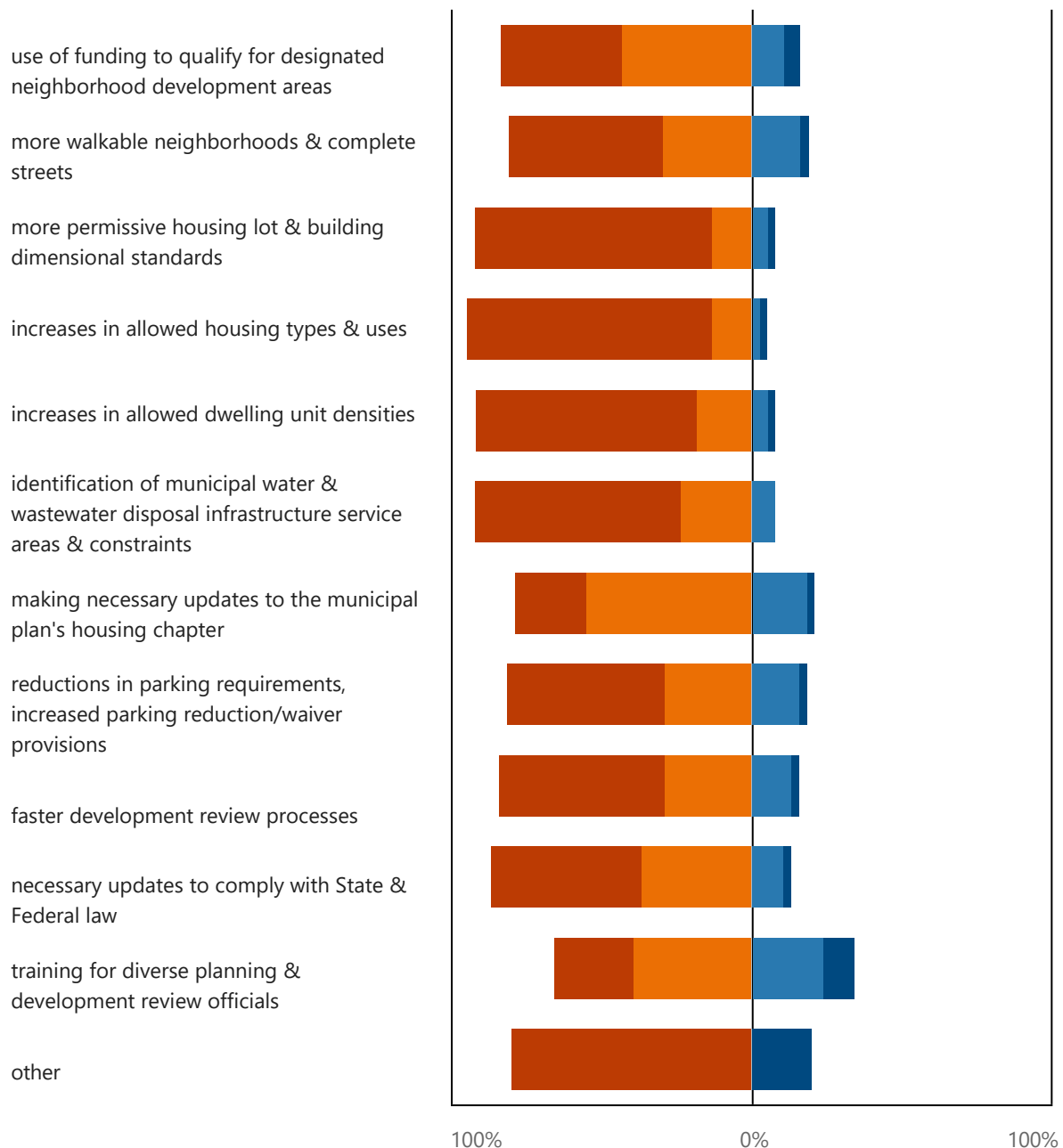
Do you have experience with the Bylaw Modernization Grant Program?

► 38 (31%) Yes

► 85 (69%) No

What topics of reform should be priorities for BMG Funding?

■ High Priority ■ Medium Priority ■ Low Priority ■ No Opinion





If you answered “other” above, or would like to add more detail to your response, please specify.

7 Responses

- ❖ *1. technical courses for Development Review folks to learn how to utilize their municipal plan and bylaws to thoroughly review. 2. Increased clarity/checklists(?) in the bylaws for exactly what the applicant will be expected to submit to an AMP. 3. Targeted technical training for planning commissions on how to create work plans and how to get public engagement at the early stages of planning.*
- ❖ *Training funds should come from elsewhere. Infrastructure funding too.*
- ❖ *Training for ANY planning commission members*
- ❖ *I think municipal plan updates should be covered by MPGs, not BMGs. BMGs should be more focused on implementation*
- ❖ *Let the market determine and we will all prevail.*
- ❖ *These reform topics all presuppose the answers to local issues: increase, reduce, more permissive; it would be nice if the grant just supported Towns in doing what they want (that's not at odds with state policy).*
- ❖ *Visioning for the town - how can you get buy in if there isn't a vision for the community that most of the community agrees with?*

Which three of the following application scoring factors are most important to the overall success of a BMG-funded planning project?

● Community Need	29 (28%)
● Project Approach: Work Plan	28 (27%)
● Project Approach: Budget	14 (13%)
● Location-based Priorities	19 (18%)
● Public Outreach	15 (14%)



Are there other factors that should be considered, but are not, or other changes you would recommend to the scoring categories?

5 Responses

- ❖ *Evidence of community support for housing-friendly bylaw reform (beyond staff / PC)*



- ❖ *I think making the grant programs more accessible and accommodating for neurodivergent people would be very helpful to the organizations and individuals responsible for writing and submitting applications.*
- ❖ *Community need can be misleading - maybe the Town is fine with outdated bylaws, but actually the bylaws are preventing progress. Maybe scoring should consider if last update is more than 5 years ago or something, or scoring should look at community stats - if housing prices trending higher, or walkability getting worse...*
- ❖ *Reduce restrictions*
- ❖ *More grant money where the population is greater. And more diverse. That's equity.*

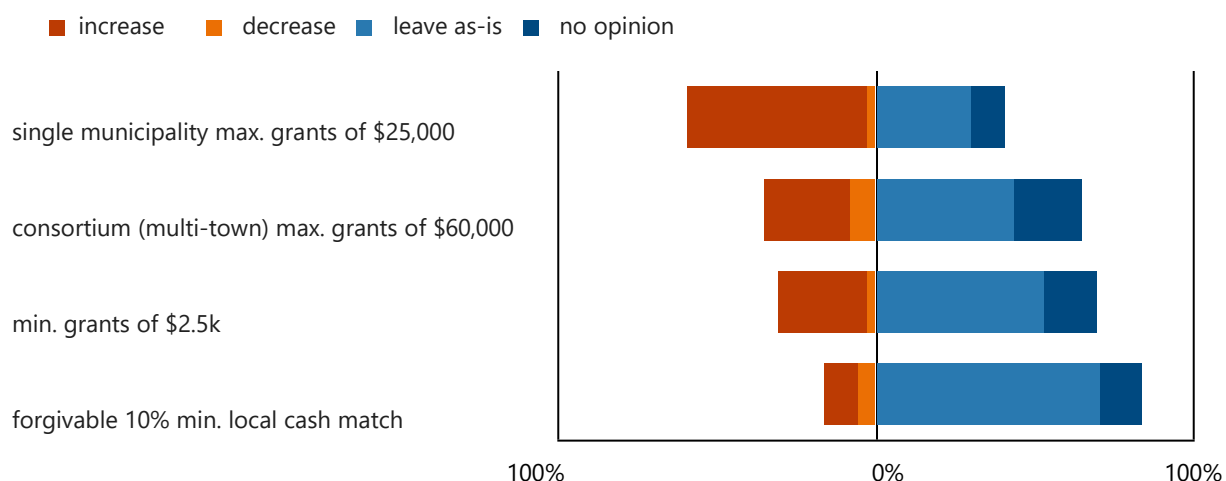
Communicating changes to complex bylaws is difficult. What public outreach method(s) have you found most effective at engaging non-traditional, under-represented, or historically discriminated participants?

28 Responses – [for full responses, please see Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *“Community conversations with free food in non-municipal settings like church halls, ski area lodges, barns and school cafeterias.”*
- ❖ *“Taking time to explain housing terms, discuss housing types and forms -- ideally based on local examples -- before discussing in zoning/bylaw terms.”*
- ❖ *“Visual images in teaching the public about potential change on the horizon.”*

Please evaluate the BMG program's eligible grant amounts and local match requirements.

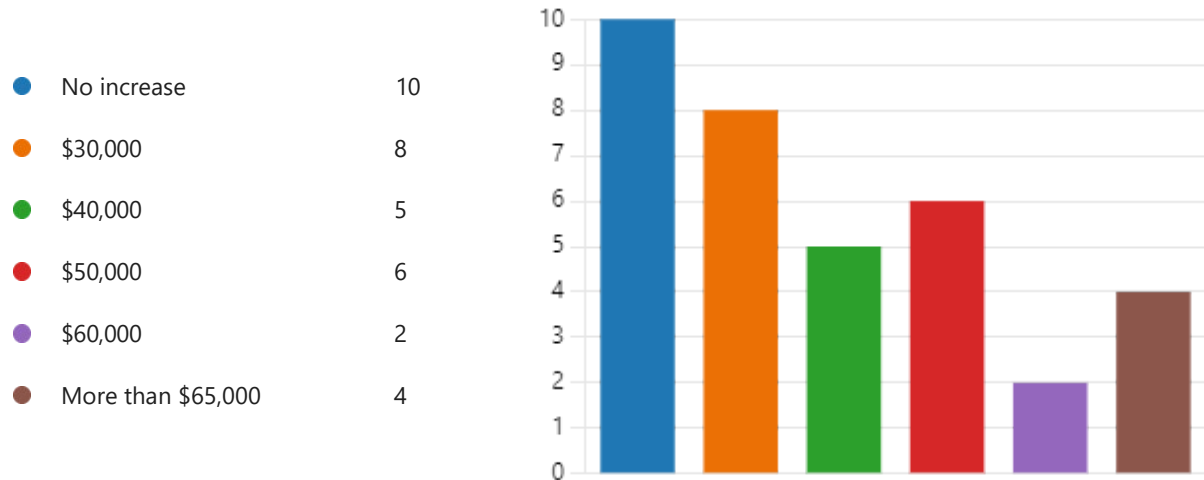
37 Responses





If total funding were to increase, what would you recommend as maximum grant amounts?

35 Responses



If you have opted NOT to apply for a BMG in the past, why not?

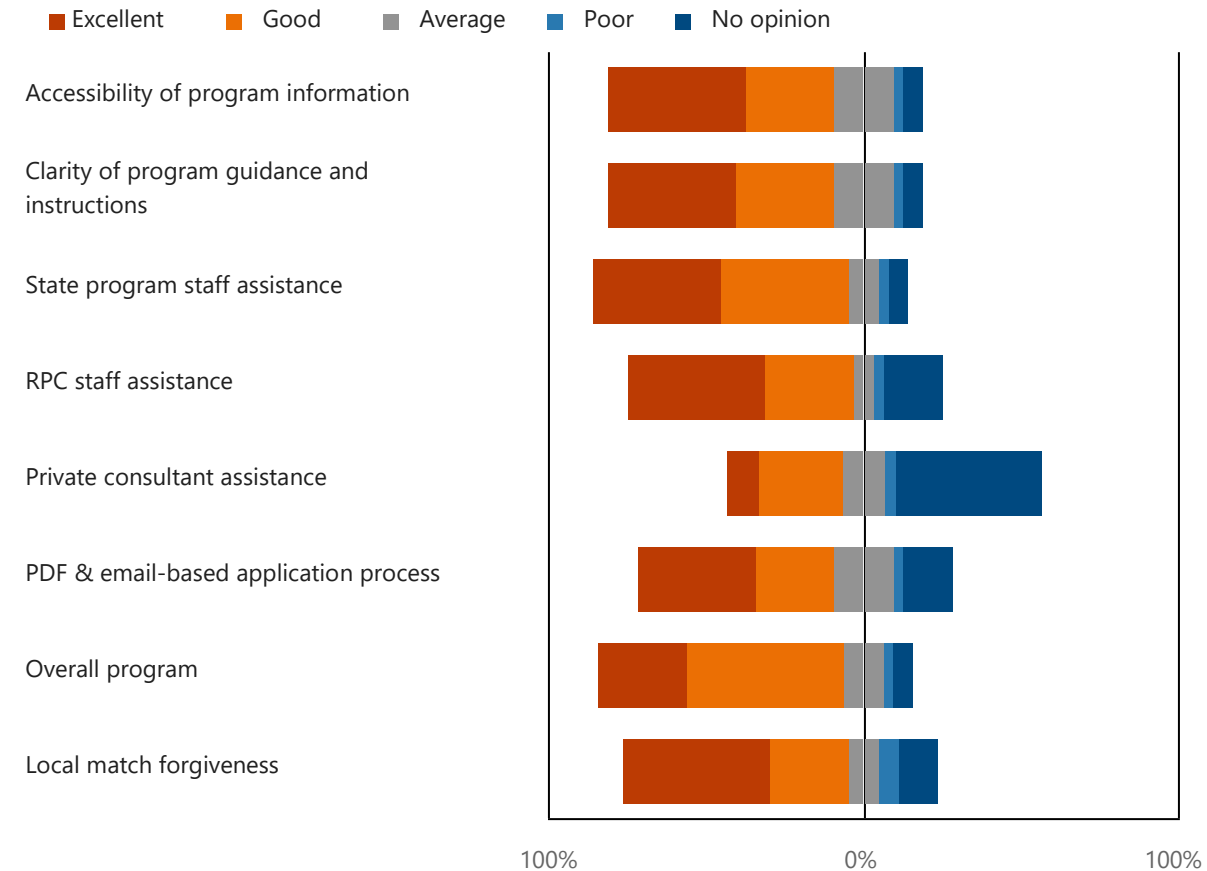
4 Responses

- ❖ Previous application was not funded
- ❖ PC initiates the process locally.
- ❖ Lack of staff capacity
- ❖ Bureacracy



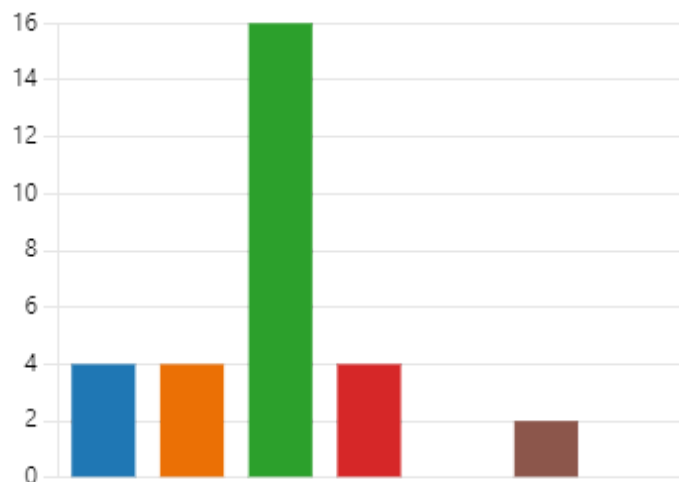
Please rate the program materials and staff:

32 Responses



If you have been awarded a BMG, what is the current status of your project?

- Seeking a contractor/consultant 4
- Contractor/consultant hired 4
- Project in progress 16
- Proposed reforms in hearings 4
- Proposed reforms fully adopted 0
- Proposed reforms partially adopted 2
- Proposed reforms not adopted 0





Following bylaw modernization, when do you anticipate applying for Neighborhood Development Area designation?

33 Responses

2023	4
2024	6
2025 or after	1
Unsure	13
Not planning to pursue neighborhood designation	9



Please share any other program feedback, including opportunities for program improvement or lessons learned throughout the process.

44 Responses – [for full responses, please see Appendix.](#)

- ❖ *Communities will need state guidance and funding and - professional technical assistance to update local bylaws and implement provisions in S.100.*
- ❖ *Basically small towns need longer windows of opportunity to process applications and also often need help in the application process. Again as stated earlier in this survey, an annual "calendar" issued at the beginning of each year listing all available grants and their respective application deadlines would be helpful for small town boards to determine what to apply for.*
- ❖ *Would like to see the bylaw modernization grant available to municipalities to establish zoning regulations and not just update them.*

Demographic Information

What is your age range?

117 Responses

18-29	2
30-44	17
45-60	49
65+	49





Which pronouns do you use?

113 Responses

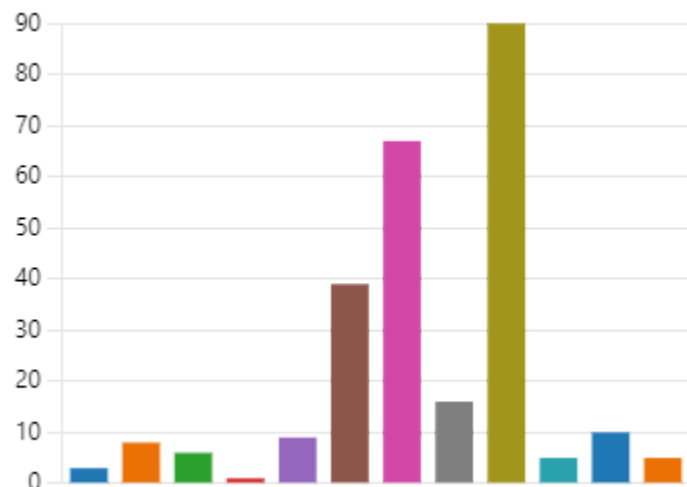
● She/her	44
● He/him	52
● They/them	6
● I use other pronouns	2
● I prefer not to answer	21



Would you describe yourself as: (check all that apply)

114 Responses

● Having a physical disability	3
● Veteran	8
● Low-income	6
● First-generation immigrant to U.S.	1
● Second-generation (parent born...	9
● Raised in Vermont	39
● Moved to Vermont as an adult	67
● Parent or full-time caretaker	16
● Homeowner	90
● Renter	5
● LGBTQIA2+	10
● None of the above / Prefer not to answer	5

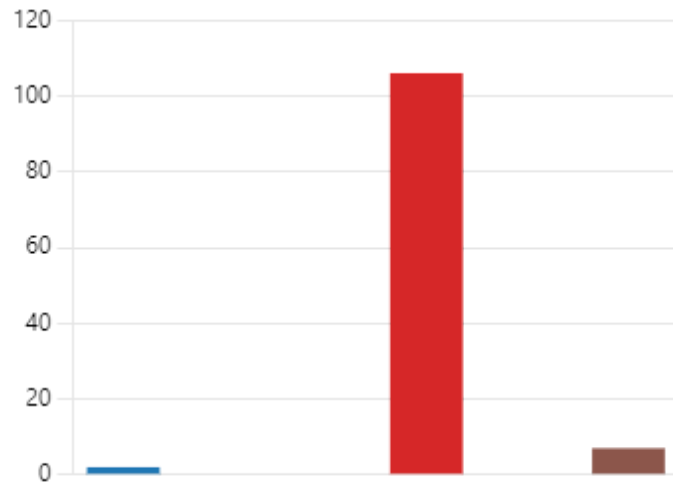




Which race or ethnicity best describes you? (select all that apply)

115 Responses

● Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color	2
● Asian / Pacific Islander	0
● Hispanic or Latinx	0
● White / Caucasian	106
● Other background	0
● I prefer not to answer	7





Appendix: Open-ended survey responses

What are the top three priorities for the municipality/municipalities or organizations you serve?

117 Responses

1. housing homelessness
2. asset management capital planning
3. multi-modal transportation traffic calming complete streets

1. Housing - increasing the supply
2. Smart Growth - increasing incentives
3. Planning -- improving state, regional, and local

municipal sewer expansion
add more administrative permit reviews
Village design standards (form-based)

Updating Bylaws.
Updating Town Plans.
Capital Budgets/Planning.

(1) housing (primarily affordable but also implementing statutory changes)
(2) stagnation or decline (population and economic opportunity)
(3) forest conservation (implementing Act 171)

1. Housing for working class individuals
2. Directing development to the town center
3. Adding opportunities for neighborhood-serving retail

1. Municipal Infrastructure (i.e. roads, bridges, town garage/office) 2. Housing (across the spectrum) 3. Downtown and Village Center Development

Town Forest, Town Village Wastewater, Broadband

1-affordable housing 2- wastewater/water infrastructure 3- bike/ped connectivity

Infrastructure, Housing, Economic vitality, all balanced with conservation and responsible development goals.



Housing for all; smart planning of undeveloped areas; economic development

1. Housing for low- and moderate-income people
 2. Supporters the historic settlement pattern of vibrant villages surrounded by rural countryside
 3. Safe, environmentally friendly, efficient, and integrated active transportation network
-

1. Missing Middle Housing -- inc. addressing infrastructure barriers, bylaw updates, site planning, etc.
 2. Water/wastewater planning, need analysis
 3. Rural Village Community Development -- planning/visioning, transportation and public space placemaking, etc.
-

Village Center development including housing of many forms, transforming rural roads to welcome safe non-car transportation & connectivity especially walking/biking, conserving natural resources and landscapes - how to balance housing needs with need/desire to maintain rural spaces.

Housing for low and medium housing per town vision.
Waste water/ water management in a flood plane.
Economic revitalization.

Local plans and zoning reforms to facilitate housing creation, diversification and choice.

Middle (in terms of size and cost) housing.

Community infrastructure necessary to support compact mixed use development in and near village centers.

Allow needed development at all financial levels without losing our rural character.

long term rental properties for people who wish not to purchase houses

finding the balance between maintaining rural community while allowing for new commercial/industrial development

conserving the lands natural resources and forests while still allowing for residential development

Housing, Jobs & budget

1. Trails, 2. low income housing/workforce housing, 3. walkability



Housing for low and moderate income people
Water and sewer management
Education

Housing
Wastewater
Downtown revitalization

1. Housing for low-moderate income.
2. Cleaning up Lake Champlain as most residents get water directly from the lake.
3. Supporting & expanding local economy while building a sense of community.

1. Housing, especially affordable types, in walkable settings, 2. transformation of State Highway and restoration of Village Main Street, 3. make it easier to get wastewater and other essential infrastructure necessary for housing and commercial.

- 1-developing safe, outdoor recreational areas -Pedestrian paths for health, commuting, and tourism. Cycling trails and lanes.
- 2-Preserving nature, climate change preparation
- 3- Planning efficient, sustainable community focused on health, safety, enviroment.

1. Community-Level Septic in our Village
2. Concern over New Development in our Town without Underlying Zoning
3. Culvert Replacement Cost - Flood Resiliency

1. historic preservation
2. more rental housing
3. more affordable housing

New Town Center Development
Recreation
Housing

High speed internet and adequate cell phone service; having a small grocery, gas, and convenience store in town; revitalizing and fostering community involvement/activity

Housing - for locals. Seems we have way too much short term rentals and not enough housing for the next generation.

Reduce wastewater plant fees
Economic development
Affordable housing for young families and seniors

Finances to help cover budget shortfalls
Grants: We need any and all we can get



Governing Member Trust: Our Town has been neglected for decades by elected officials. We need to rebuild trust of our Town leaders

Housing, wastewater, open space

-
1. Continue developing infill housing in our downtown while keeping the countryside rural
 2. Promote more home ownership, especially condos
 3. Ensure that there is enough housing supply to maintain affordability

Adequate staffing and training of municipal officials, housing and STR regulation, water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

Wastewater infrastructure
Bylaw modernization
Conflict resolution

-
1. Affordable housing
 2. sustainability & conservation
 3. vibrant downtowns

1. capacity (volunteers for local boards and municipal administrative support for the boards); 2. funding to support the statutory planning activities; 3. project management/grants administration (capacity and expertise to find/apply for funding to implement projects (i.e. transportation projects, economic development, maintaining muni facilities)

-
1. municipal infrastructure upgrades - water, wastewater, fire station, etc.
 2. increasing affordable housing
 3. filling open staff positions

-
1. Housing for moderate income and aged population
 2. Purchasing privately owned water company and building infrastructure to allow more housing
 3. Repairing aged infrastructure - school, town hall, waste water treatment plant

1. Preserving fragile environment 2. Preserving heritage 3. Affordable housing by reducing STR's

Rural character, village development, water quality

Housing, infrastructure for housing, housing.



- 1.housing with support services
2. Housing for the unhoused
3. Public safety

housing, especially affordable housing to first time homebuyers, housing for 120%-300% AMI, rehabbing existing affordable housing.

Economic viability
Housing for all income groups
Maintaining/enhancing a sense of community

Historic preservation of the built environment, including industrial archeology.
Preservation of traditional Vermont landscape.
Preservation of Vermont woodlands.

cogent and cohesive government that delivers basic services
housing folks can afford
aging population

1. Housing: providing "Missing Middle" housing;
2. Hamlet/downtown revitalization;
3. Adaptive re-use of community facilities (e.g., empty schools, churches, etc.)

Housing for all income levels, Downtown redevelopment, Improvements to Bike/Ped infrastructure

Conservation, Existing Infrastructure, Resident Wellbeing

The consumer, housing shortage, single level homes shortage

Moderate income.

Affordable housing
Land conservation
Ease of development / permit processing & costs

Housing for low- and moderate- income households; transportation (walkability, bikeability; road planning); Economic Development (new business, maintaining current business)

1. housing for low-and-moderate income people

Affordable housing, septic systems for old homes along the river, helping aging population to afford to stay in their homes



moderate income housing
municipal wastewater and potable water.
balancing development with protecting the open space.

1. housing for low, moderate income and older population who may have enough money but want to stay in the community in a home more amenable to aging in place.
2. maintain good habitat for wildlife
3. energy self-reliance through renewable energy and energy efficiency in homes and other buildings

Work Force Housing
Increased Density where sewer/water is available
Active Senior Housing sorely needed/overhoused single seniors

- 1) Grow the Grand List in an environmentally sensitive way
- 2) Eliminate zoning regulation barriers to responsible growth
- 3) Work to get maximum community involvement in the planning process

Access to housing security for all as a human right. Correction of structural inequities built over generations due to racial and power/wealth gaps which are hard to identify and even harder to change. Outreach to members of communities who are marginalized, to listen to their needs and to prioritize meeting them in ways that create permanent change and improve the safety and health of all community members.

1. Mixed income housing; 2. Excellent design; 3. Reasonable profits

1. Housing low to moderate income
2. Alternative energy - where to place it
3. Short-term rentals - how to control the growth in a fair way

housing for moderate income people, taxes too high, more housing for seniors

Make these grants easier for small towns that do not have professional staff is my main priority.

1. Small, Affordable, zero carbon footprint housing
2. More roof mounted and ground mounted solar power generation
3. More walkable spaces and better mass transit connecting us to nearby communities

affordable housing

Missing middle housing, new buildings for town vehicles, better location for the fire station.



workforce housing, affordable housing and housing for the missing middle

All we do is deal with over regulation. The state of VT makes it impossible to do anything. This is because the jobs of the regulators has to be protected. And you still can not figure out why there is a housing shortage.

Land use planning to protect working lands, unfragmented forests and wildlife corridors with compact development to prevent sprawl

Housing with plenty of outdoor green space so children can play and people can feel the outdoors, hear birds, plant gardens.

30 by 30 and 50 by 50—protecting Vermonters and Vermont.

Provide adequate Utilities, Water and Wastewater.

Equitable options for housing (mixed use in village centers and downtowns, affordable options to improve existing housing stock, more multi-unit housing for all ages and incomes i.e. condos); energy (weatherization programs, targeted-by-income subsidies to switch from fossil fuels); broadband and cellular - better coverage in rural areas.

1. Economic Development
2. Industrial/Commercial Park development
3. Recreation & Trails
4. Single family, owner occupied housing

village green completion, down town organization and cross walks, clean up trash/junk area

Village walkability; affordable housing; recreation development

Rental housing availability, housing affordability, senior housing.

1.Re-invigorating the town center; 2. Developing a wastewater treatment system for the town center; 3. updating our zoning ordinance

1. Preserving our working lands (primarily agricultural) from subdivisions
2. Having effective energy policies and goals (despite having an enhanced energy plan)
3. Getting over the mindset that zoning is a bad thing

Affordable Housing
Infrastructure
Conservation



1. Housing for all
2. Targeted economic development
3. Future energy planning

Improving housing stock, create community center and protecting forest block fragmentation

Brining in new business-Vermont's taxes don't help nor lack of broadband.
Affordable housing -moderate income
Bringing people who want to work in the Derby area and keeping our kids here.

Planning for the future of our community /housing for all levels of residents;
encouraging population growth; helping local businesses grow

Workforce housing, transportation, affordable housing

"development" in rural areas = increase ag ?
marrying density in village centers with conservation aspirations
sustainability

Affordable housing.
Transportation issues.
Infrastructure issues. Water sewer improvements

Dealing with steep slopes, flood zones and recreation

15 minute community downtown Brattleboro
safety for walkers and bikers
housing for middle income people

-
- 1 - Clarifying the priorities, goals, objectives, and tasks that we have to make sure they align and are realistic (SMART).
 - 2 - Applying available funds (mostly ARPA at the moment) wisely to achieve Town objectives.
 - 3 - Adjusting Zoning Bylaws to support projected (slow but steady) development (including housing but balanced with businesses, agriculture, and conservation)

1. housing for 20-29 year olds- studio and 1 bed for rent under \$1,000/mo; 2. homeownership programs, education on becoming a homeowner, and assistance with downpayment. 3. older people housing walkable to town center, low maintenance, with shared amenities, in communities of 8-10 units. 4. conversion of historic properties to housing - lessening code requirements which make it impossible.

Affordable housing for families and for wanting to downsize



1. Wastewater infrastructure. 2. Housing 3. Other infrastructure to support housing
(transportation, etc.)

Develop Home Ownership opportunities
Improve/expand Municipal wastewater services
Simplify the requirements for designation programs

Starter/End Housing
Small Business generation
Updating Mobile Home Parks

Housing
Infrastructure for housing
Community engagement

Recreation
Land use conservation
Public schools

Public safety, accessibility to businesses and recreation, diverse housing
opportunities

water/wastewater infrastructure; housing; economic development

Housing but NOT only for just low/moderate-income people,. For ALL people
Infrastructure - Roads/Highways and how to fund

Housing for everyone; Lack of Infrastructure; and Lack of Municipal Capacity

Municipal Finances/Budget Shortfalls; Municipal Plan writing; Transfer Station
revamping

municipal facilities, floodplain mapping, other hazard mitigation

1.Housing for low income people
2.Housing for low income people
3. Housing for low income people

Increasing available housing inventory for mid-income individuals and families,
revitalization of Greensboro Bend and maintaining good environmental policies and
practices.

1. workforce housing
2. affordable housing for first-time home buyers
3. flexible housing options for older residents who wish to age in place



creating sub division ordinance
rewrite flood hazard bylaws
create plan for class 4 roads

1. Aging Bridge Replacement (2 minimum) and associated culvert work
2. Updating our Flood Maps to accurately reflect our Post-Hurricane Irene Status
3. Ensuring that all our residents have full service communication capability to facilitate emergency response

1. Update bylaws to allow more housing density in village centers
2. Secure outside resources to scope construction of community wastewater & water systems
3. Resident engagement on why we should expand housing supply and support local businesses

housing
energy efficiency
policing and emergency services

1. Infrastructure improvements
2. Public access to healthy outdoor spaces
3. Law Enforcement

- 1) Safe, healthy, and flourishing neighborhoods.
- 2) A sustainable, flourishing environment and infrastructure.
- 3) Transparent government.

municipal priorities: 1. affordable housing (incl. middle inc); 2. preventing sprawl; 3. community economic development

smart growth
weatherization
developing renewable energy and grid resilience

We need in fill downtown housing now - at market, workforce and low income - and the only way that this will happen is to change the regulations and density to incentivize or just allow developers to include at market or affordable housing into the mix. The current structure and planning is only supporting historic conditions and existing home owners. We are not allowing for growth and evolution. Local leadership (planning and selectboard etc) is not motivated to evolve. They own their homes. They don't want change or they don't want to face the NIMBYs in their towns. They do not have the up to date or accurate information. We must push them to see the world has changed and they must push for changes. Plus the market conditions - costs of construction and financing - mean that developers can only afford to offer



luxury or high end housing OR short term rentals. Funding to support equitable housing of all types is required.

1. economic development
2. developing and gaining approval for BASIC subdivision and other land use bylaws. (None currently)
3. housing for low- and moderate income people

What top three incentives or policies would best help your community address your priorities?

118 Responses

1. incubation centers for grassroots entrepreneurs
2. complete streets phased funding: vision/concept planning, scoping, engineering, and construction using appropriate standards MUTCD and VTrans standards make centers less safe and vital for all users
3. land banking structures and funding to get vacant, blighted properties into productive use, esp. for housing

1. Subsidies for infill housing
2. By-right local approval homes
3. Funding to implement complete streets

funding for community outreach
0% loans for village wastewater systems
expand GMTCC training programs for skilled labor

Funding from MPGs for these needs.

(1) reform of the state regulatory processes that are strangling housing and economic development

(2) meaningful planning for and investment in public water and sewer infrastructure by the state

(3) replacement of current use with a smaller program benefiting not to wealthy second homeowners but working Vermonters engaged in actual farming and forestry as their primary source of income

1. More funding to RPC for planning
2. Pre-approved state ADU design
3. Building code revisions re: single stair/elevator rules



1. Reduced grant match for small/rural communities 2. Housing Rehabilitation Funding 3. Development Incentives (i.e. tax credits, grant programs, design guidelines,)

1- Relaxing of Act 250 2- Increased state or federal investment or subsidies/programs for support 3- incentivize infill housing 4-coordination of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program at Regional or State level

1. Infrastructure funding, the involvement of people with technical expertise, and increased project management capacity or assistance.
2. More data gathering around: short term rentals, long term housing displacement by seasonal home owners/workers, and demographics/migration as it relate to housing prices and affordable housing supply.
3. Incentives for homeowners to upkeep their homes and keep their homes as long term housing.
4. Housing plans for rural communities, including strategies for balancing conservation with subdivision and development, examples of land use regulations that could be implemented to drive that balance.
5. Economic sustainability actions specific to rural resort/vacation communities.
6. Creation of municipal wide fund allotments to incentivize or create the ability to engage more public engagement in municipal government.

I couldn't stop at 3. Sorry.

Additional funding for utility installation (municipal water/sewer); funding for a housing incentive program; less state involvement with regulations

1. Wastewater infrastructure
2. Funding and technical support for housing
3. Additional funding and technical support for active transportation

1. Clear funding paths for village water/wastewater post ARPA
2. Process for securing land for future housing
3. Expand Village Center Tax Credits and Downtown Transportation Fund to 1/4 mile planning area radius

Professional guidance on how the town can drive specific development projects - the town needs knowledge and chutzpah and strategic criteria to intervene and drive private property and private developers to create town-desired results - like Dominic St. Cloud in St. Albans - we need to HIRE or CONTRACT with development pros who know projects and funding. We need expertise on approaching landowners for trails, conservation, donation, etc. We need to understand eminent domain - when should the town just force the issues for sidewalks, trails, connectivity?

Viable funding. Community by in. Sustainability



Adequate funding to do the necessary planning, regulations and investments

Help with the septic needs of our 2 population centers.
Funding for identifying possible development sites.

additional funding for housing

funding energy efficient programs for housing, specifically insulation, windows and doors

water and sewer infrastructure grants for new and existing municipal systems

Lower taxes, less regulation, more regionalization

Funding for municipal water and sewer management.
Funding for education overhaul
Regulation for short term housing.

Funding
Community education

1. Adding funding for housing.
2. Measurable results of Lake clean-up efforts.
3. Funding for building community.

1. Easing the path to getting essential infrastructure (WW, water, broadband) so existing centers can provide housing, meet needs of residents in surrounding rural; 2. more flexibility about use of State Highway within villages to create settings where people want to be, meet local needs without adopting Class 1; 3. more flexibility about locating NDA.

Funding, planning, and support to provide extensive safe pedestrian paths/areas linking community resources (schools with neighborhoods), when maintaining and re-paving roads prioritize safe pedestrian lanes whenever possible

1. Better Education and Funding from the State for Necessary Infrastructure in Small Towns.
2. Improved Policy and Program Priorities for Act 250.
3. Legislature with Political Fortitude to Impose Steam Buffers Statewide.

1. additional recognition given to historic home owners
2. additional funding for housing
3. additional funding for mass transit



Capital availability at low interest
Local Options Tax
Volunteers for Committees

Creation of infrastructures necessary for internet and cell service; outreach for possible business attraction in town; development and advertising of community events

This community is certainly not going to start building housing. I think regulations on the number or short term rentals would be helpful.

Funding for wastewater plant
Funding for affordable housing
Expansion of broadband

Grant funding for community projects
Assistance from regional and state planning committees
Funding for our former mill buildings to create a valuable resource

Funding, technical assistance

None - We have been doing this for a decade. No State or regional assistance is needed or desired.

Act 250 exemptions in downtowns and surrounding neighborhoods for new housing.

1 More STAFF at Vermont DEC to process wastewater funding applications
2 mandatory training for local officials on state law, funding, processes
3 longer term (I.e. minimum 24 month) and larger (\$65k) municipal planning grants

1. Removing or greatly reducing A250 influence on densely populated/developed areas, village center areas (with or without designation)
2. Creating a more straightforward pathway for communities to access wastewater funding. Right now, there is a chicken-and-egg scenario in which some communities need funding for infrastructure improvements, but they need to have zoning changes in place to access infrastructure funds. However, it doesn't make sense for them to update their zoning until infrastructure realities have been accounted for. This leads to inefficient and repetitive rezoning processes.
3. A state/regional smart growth plan to act as a companion to A250/associated improvements. The plan would identify critical issues with A250 and present a positive vision for smart growth in Vermont communities, big and small. This plan would hopefully address the issues with applying A250 in communities of very different sizes and with very different needs.



1. state grant funding for municipal wastewater system upgrades
2. expedited state permitting or exemptions for municipal infrastructure projects
3. state permit exemptions for housing development in areas planned for growth

1. Funding
2. By law changes
3. Recognizing second homes and taxing to increase funding for housing

1. A L.O.T. 2.Child Care funding 3. Restrictions of STR / AirBB situation

Municipal wastewater

1. Grants or loans. 2. Fewer NIMBYs 3. Regulatory reform that makes it harder for NIMBYs to block affordable housing.

Additional funding for the above
Contributions from communities with few unhoused
County coordination

1. Continue VHIP grants
2. low interest funding for middle income housing.
3. support for development of limited equity coops, either through financing construction of projects or support for member buy-in.

incentives for new business start-ups
funding options for both private and not-for-profit housing development
any incentive for village center development such as sewer/water systems,
remediation programs

Tax credits for preservation.
Education of volunteer committee members.
Public education of advantages of preservation.

property taxation that drives better housing outcomes
pricing in all natural resource impacts to development costs as initial and annual fees
increasing county/regional administration

1. Additional funding for housing coupled with continued/additional Technical Assistance on Zoning for Missing Middle Housing; 2. Additional funding for capital projects for adapting/reusing community facilities

Additional Funding for housing and removal of state permitting requirements for housing in Downtowns and Growth Centers (Act 250, in particular), Increased funding and removal of permitting requirements (ANR and Act 250) for bike/ped infrastructure.



Affordable housing.

Volunteer Programs, Community Events, Budget Allocation

Incentive for contractors to build single level housing.

Shared purchase initiatives, shared investment in tiny home coop communities or mobile home parks.

State permit process is cumbersome, expensive and takes far too long
Funding for projects to include additional costs with net zero homes
Allow urban development to keep out-lining land open

1. Funding for Housing
2. Small Business Microgrants
3. Scaled EV Charging Incentive

1. additional funding for housing
2. changes to Vermont law to incentivize small builders to add 1-10 unit residential spaces

one stop shopping, available in fill benefits

Funding for housing, funding for wastewater treatment systems in north and south villages, funding to subsidize elderly year-round residents cost of living so they can afford to stay in their homes

-Development Regulations that allow for smaller lot sizes to accommodate affordable housing

-

1. zoning that allows for more small, buildable lots while maintaining major tracts of forest/wilderness, as well as funding that will actually allow people to afford to get a house built that is energy efficient.
2. funding and planning assistance for community solar

Additional funding for developers building large scale housing or cottage courts
Mandatory training for Planning Commissions who are often revolving new volunteers
Additional funds for more paved public parking lots in the village

- 1) Look at and perhaps modify the state's position regarding code compliance for rentals
- 2) Stop making the towns the servants of the state with regard to state mandated programs



1. Maximize support for models such as the Champlain Housing Trust's which creates affordable homeownership for all. 2. Funding to adequately enforce safe housing regulations within our city and creation of policies that protect renters who report unsafe housing conditions. 3. Ensure that structures to enable renters to transition to safer housing when needed, including funding of space and services to make this possible.

1. Additional funding for housing - primarily workforce and senior housing 2. Additional funding for village infrastructure (wastewater, water) 3. Incentives for developers and builders to build primary housing in villages vs luxury vacation homes.

1. Tax abatements and incentives for multi family / mixed income housing construction. 2. Investment in training of the next gen of construction industry specialists 3. Education of community around the downstream implications of no fault evictions --- such policies are proven to lead to increase cost of housing for all residents and eliminate sympathetic mom & pop operations from the region (replacing them with institutional landlords). A community should wish for a balanced housing market (both rental and purchase), owned and operated by members of the community that supports ALL members of the community in their desire to find a safe and stable place to call home.

1. Help identifying housing
2. Help with Vermont Alternative Energy Programs - the constant changing landscape
3. Help with formulating Regulations

Additional funding for medium incoming housing, lower taxes or tax rebates, funding for senior housing

Make the application process more simple for small towns that do not have professional staff.

1. Grants to help fund infrastructure to make housing happen more easily
2. Return to incentivizing net-metered solar so that the economics encourage people to go solar
3. A carbon tax to disincentivize gas/diesel vehicles while simultaneously supporting mass transit and appropriate incentives to bring down the cost of affordable electric vehicles INCLUDING municipal heavy equipment (eg, dump trucks, graders, loaders, etc)

zoning changes

Additional funding, free professional support through the planning stages

1) Scrap Act 250 on affordable, WF and missing middle housing! It suppresses development, slows the process and adds cost.
2) Redefine "common plan of development" it also suppresses development, slows



the process and adds cost.

3) fund private workforce and affordable housing projects. Current funding models are too restrictive and disincentivise privately funded projects, which push developers to build McMansions where the profits are high and permitting is easier.

Reduce regulation

Policies to require planning for every town with physical and pictorial examples of how horrific it is to ruin the land.

Money to remove ugly development.

Requirements that sprawl be filled in with lots of housing.

Redundant water supply, adequate wastewater capacity and proper drainage for roadways.

community septic, community solar, incentives for landlords to weatherize and improve housing for renters.

-
1. People assistance in managing large, complex projects.
 2. Small business affordability and sustainability (tax rates, livable wage, insurance for employees)
 3. Large Grant money awards to assist in economic development
 4. Support the JOHNSON CAMPUS and Vermont State University and hold leadership (Trustees, Chancellor's office, and University Leadership accountable for the impact of their messages -- they produce the fabric of our state with educators, nurses, etc. We cannot survive without them!)

work on finishing up town green and its boundaries-
stay after the state on getting the junk yard cleaned up and out of town

additional funding for housing; technical assistance with planning; technical assistance identifying potential grants and with preparing grant applications

Zoning change guidance

-
1. Funding for wastewater system planning and implementation; 2. Funding for technical; support to revise the zoning ordinance; 3. Funding to implement existing plan for town center.

-
1. Help with convincing residents that zoning can be beneficial
 2. Help with convincing residents that land conservation can be beneficial
 3. Help with convincing residents that energy planning is needed and possible



Additional funding for varied housing options (individuals trying to build ADU or create Duplex, Small developers, Large developers).

No idea on infrastructure - ARPA seems to be helping with that right now

Coming from the development side of things, we need more communication between local conservation groups and housing groups and more community education to show that depending on the patterns of development we choose, they can walk hand in hand. They need to support each other because development is necessary and inevitable, yet we do not want to lose the forests and wildlife that make VT special!

1. Funding for housing
2. Funding for renewable energy development
3. Targeted funding for economic development

educating community members about programs to improve existing housing and add housing without harming ecosystems. Resources for funding establishing a community center and guidance for protecting natural resources

Lower business taxes

incentives like NY State has- 555- no property tax , no business tax, no tax on products 5 years

Make our colleges and universities more affordable. I sent Daughters to BU and UNH cheaper than in-state tuition to UVM. These schools offered more in Merit scholarships than UVM

Providing information and assistance for all levels of housing (including encouraging home residents to maintain their residents/homes); assist with historic preservation of local historic private and public structures.

Funding for commuting transportation, microtransit, funding for ADUs that are committed to long term housing.

like to see changes in the planning statute to accommodate 2023 -2050 better affordable housing in rural area with energy conservation is oxymoronic. better energy standards

Grants or no or low interest loans for housing and housing improvements.

Planning grants for future growth studies

Lessen restrictions on growth.

Funding for consultants. Funding for town administrator to do training, grant applications/administration

funds for downtown inventory - assess the vacancies/assets in 2nd and 3rd floor buildings

grants for small business to build out store fronts



funds for short/long term visioning - what is the future we want to see, how to get there

- 1 - (free) grant application and management assistance for Towns
- 2 - free regional support for things like GIS work (NVDA is fantastic, but has to charge for some services)
- 3 - bylaw modernization grant (thank you!)

1. Zoning/Land use & development regulations
2. Affordable Housing
3. Business and Economic Development

1. funding for downpayments; 2. funding for rehab and conversion of historic properties into housing. 3. grants to architects to develop ideas and design co-housing for developments fit for our time, not for the outdated last century.

Funding for affordable housing
Grants for municipal planning

Fund the Circumferential Highways Alternatives projects for the community, including all of Trader Lane Williston (not just the US2 intersection).

Help with grant writing
Allow municipalities to manage development (municipal delegation)
Provide incentives for home ownership

Better outreach to mobile home owners
Increase Act 250 unit threshold
training for planner commissioners and DRB members

ANR to be more proactive in solutions for housing including wastewater, water, and wetlands. ANR needs to work with municipalities that have designated growth centers and help the municipalities manage growth in growth centers, not force fragmentation of open spaces to accommodate 2nd homeowners.

Additional funding
Revision of Act 250 regulations
Additional funding for schools

Increase funding for public safety (police, fire, ambulance); increased funding for regional planning commissions; reduction in tax-raising and/or duplicative regulations (local/state).

Communities need more capacity to reach their goals. Selectboard members and town officials need support and training to demystify the grants and SRF navigation processes and what to expect. They also need public officials to help level-set



expectations so there is a broader understanding that these processes are taking multiple years to accomplish their goals.

Also, the infusion of funds from ARPA and IJA as reimbursable grants means there is a capital crunch at a time when interest rates are high, so finding affordable bridge financing for construction and lines of credit for working capital is very difficult.

Obviously more funding for Roads and Bridges
Not funding for housing that is an individuals issue

Funding for all kinds of housing; assistance planning for and implementing wastewater and/or water infrastructure; assistance addressing capacity needs - planning and zoning, administrative and grant writing

Funding for budget shortfalls; grants and grant writing assistance; examples of how other town's handle transfer station operations

more grants

1. additional funding for housing
2. more support services
3. more affordable housing options

Support from Rural Edge, grants for the Bend revitalization and grants to help re-write our 51 year old zoning bylaw.

1. funding to help with gap-financing
2. outreach to public to help explain existing incentives
3. not sure if there's an incentive or policy that will provide relief, but anecdotally, I seem to hear concerns about availability of professional services (engineering).

funding for professionals to assist with the work

Look to the answers in question #6 (above)

1. Continued access to state planning grants
2. Expert help in applying for scoping & engineering grants for community WW & water systems
3. Donated land & access to capital for building multi-family housing

additional funding for housing, including condo conversions
funding for heating updates
regional policing



1. Infrastructure funding
2. Inclusion and consistent implementation for All Vermont counties
3. Leadership with vision not tied to status quo land use

- 1) Promote inclusive citizen engagement.
- 2) Adequate funding.
- 3) Participating residents

1.

Increase the net metering rate or provide other incentives for solar projects.
Keep subsidizing broadband until fiber is fully built out.
Hate to say it, but dairy farms may need subsidy more than child care.

1. Force un-motivated and ill-informed local leaders on Planing and Selectboards to make changes to zoning regulations.
2. Funding for housing - at market to affordable.
3. Disseminate housing stats to all Vermonters to encourage public opinion to change regulations.

It's all about money, but particularly incentives that actually reach the "Mom & Pop" developers who are our best hope of expanding housing -- creating those duplexes, 4-plexes, and ADUs out of existing over-sized single-family homes. Seems like a lot of lip service for outlying communities, but when we actually try to get in the game, a successive list of "barriers" arise which may or may not actually have anything to do with developing housing -- sidewalks? public sewer & water? major bus route? mental health & other ancillary services? etc. etc.

If you answered "other" to question 8 (To what extent are the following factors obstacles to achieving your priorities), or would like to add more detail to your response, please specify:

Municipal Technical Assistance - longer term

Post ARPA funding uncertainty

Organizations like the Vermont Land Trust trying to change property values in our town without town input.

DEC processing times. Ridiculously short time periods to complete bylaw updates.re-write state law.

It's not that we don't have public engagement/participation -- it's just that there should be better tools and methods for absorbing and collecting public feedback, so that



people know that they are heard and their feedback can be more efficiently processed/ incorporated

Lack of buy-in by community to need for affordable housing and infrastructure to support it.

lack of belief in the utility of planning

I work in other states as well as Vermont. The quality of state/not-for-profit technical assistance in VT is unmatched.

Act 250 and other State permitting requirements.

There are a few mantras which has folks attention rather than looking to solve 'problems' in alternatives ways ... affordable housing isn't the only answer. Expand your thinking please, respectfully.

There is no one answer to housing shortages: multiple initiatives will help, not just one/one size.

The State process for developers is a huge burden to new, responsible development. I have been involved in several attempts at building only to walk away wasting my time and money, getting nowhere with permitting or even support from any agencies to move forward.

Need more flexibility in how to use grants to solve housing shortage

There is a lot of affordable housing funding, but we need more funding for building apartments or cottage court for work force (median income) families

For rural areas, due to small town nature and volunteer efforts by municipalities - there is needed expertise for a multitown regional effort regarding housing versus having each small town try to go at it alone. One town may have land, the other may have funds, the third expertise - how bring them together and collaborate and create a win-win-win for all?

I'm concerned that opportunities are given to select few organizations who know how to "work the system" leading to lack of diversity in thought/ideas, limited types of housing stock and a singular design focus that's not reflective of the community's rich history..

Inability to apply because town staff are basically volunteer and the elected officials do not have the training or time to apply for grants.

modify state wastewater permit requirements



Permitting in the state is extremely difficult. That hoops are many, the costs and risks are high and discourages creation of affordable and workforce housing.

ANR!

Failure to envision Vermont in the future. Failure to understand what we can not become. Need a field trip to other New England states. And to Shelburne road and Williston road.

Finding qualified part-time staff such as zoning administrator

Lack of workforce to complete design and construction work, High cost of work

Our Act 250 laws really discourage companies to build here or for Towns to expand.

State and federal funding is the biggest obstacle.

Lack of options for development.v

Time - with volunteers having to do most of the work in properly warned open meetings, it takes a REALLY long time to do things.

Rigidity of government structures that makes dialogue and change impossible. State government being silo-ed off from community partners.

Lack of a coordinating force at the state government level. We want to create a livable Growth Center and Vermont wants us to do so, but, we need the wastewater capacity to make it viable and we need VTrans to have the flexibility NOT to run two car-dominated state highways through a center we are trying to make livable and walkable. We want an interconnected system of paths and trails to move people between our natural areas, Village Center, and Growth center but projects are hampered by a lengthy and dispersed permitting process (often waitin many months to resolve simple archaeological resource issues, for example) or are facee with overwhelming costs to cross small Class II wetlands with multi-use paths. There has to be a balance. It's more important to have a uniform grid of streets in the Growth Center than it is for every gully to have a bridge crossing (where culverts are more economical). If we want "compact settlements surrounded by a rural landscape" we have to allo a development pattern that will support that compactness. I do not see such a balancing test happening until there is someone "at the wheel" over all the various agencies that contribute to the shape of the built environment.

top-heavy state project management; money leaves communities that could be used by communities for local initiatives



muni may have capacity but not relevant expertise/leadership; unwilling to ask for support (e.g. from RPCs), or doesn't understand support is needed.

What solutions would most help overcome your top obstacles?

1. New models for cross-discipline technical assistance teams for things like asset management, or rapid-action strategies, especially in capacity-constrained communities
 2. New models for design-based decision-making that empower neighborhood-scale design
 3. Education that involves, inspires and supports next generation municipal officials
 4. VTrans overhaul of State and MUTCD design standard application in urban centers, which do more bad than good in urban centers, we need urban street standards that lean on NACTO and truly multi-modal places.
-

Increased funding

private public partnerships and regionalization of government resources (state to local) - keep expanding capacity of regional planning commissions (understaffed and undervalued now)

Focusing MPG funding on these priorities

Consolidation and regionalization of government (including education) services - town government is not fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Replacement of Act 250 with a basic environmental permitting system. Get ANR out of land use planning and regulation!

Limit the number of bills legislators are allowed to introduce in any one session. Make less, but better laws.

Money to RPC, provision of specific state model zones that can be adopted wholesale that incorporate best practices. Preemption of certain zoning tools.

Change in funding schemes with more emphasis on rural equity

More Planning/Zoning Training

PR campaign about why municipal wastewater systems are important for villages and to eliminate fear response to the phrase "affordable housing" and dense housing



Restructuring of grant and state funding opportunities to be available to groups.
Housing plan examples from other rural resort towns that have proven successful.
More public engagement and willingness to serve in the municipal government.

Finding incentives to bring developers to our Town; funding for master corridor planning to help support clean water, housing, and infrastructure.

Training and funding of municipal officials, the public, etc.

Develop Clear funding paths for village water/wastewater post ARPA

More work should be done at the County level - as PC member it seems inefficient for a small group of volunteers to learn planning, funding, taxes, state law, development procedures, housing, natural resources, etc. Should more zoning, town plans, and more development consulting happen at the CCRPC?

Effective road maps and effective training. We have a vision

Adequate funding to support the community in its work.

Someone at the State level to help the conversations within the town. More emphasis on finding agriculture's place in our town.

Not raising and/or wasting state taxes to fund green carbon emission goals that are unrealistic and making the state impossible for residents to afford. The affordability of housing and taxes are pushing locals out and allowing second homes to become more dominant. Everyone cares about the environment, but this states carbon footprint is already one of the lowest in the country. Keeping housing affordable and taxes lower makes VT sustainable allowing for more families to stay in VT for multiple generations which creates the development of more houses.

Not pushing homes to electric heat and vehicles to electric operation, causing and overload/overburden on the existing electric infrastructure. Upgrading the infrastructure to handle this can only be accomplished by tax funding or raising user rates, both of which are a burden to sustainable living in VT.

more regionalization, more professional mgmt

More people involved from the community besides those that serve on the boards.

Not sure. As an unpaid volunteer position holder in my town, it is very difficult to find adequate time to devote to the town and my education as a select board member.

Communications tools to help with public information (and misinformation), education, and build trust.



Grant funding can be complicated, difficult to access, and difficult to manage. A dedicated grant writer/manager.

1. Decrease tax loopholes for the wealthy.
2. Increase funding for housing & building community.

Fewer barriers at the state agency level, more coordination between agencies with jurisdiction. Most importantly, more recognition of latent value of historic centers to provide frameworks for affordable, healthful and green living, as medians for economic development and local job creation.

Having the state government making sure leadership in various departments (ie Vtrans) knows and executes priorities for communities

Follow-up communications from state officials and legislative leaders when questions and opportunities arise but the individual(s) fail to respond in their official capacity as to not offend constituents or the public. Ignoring a question(s) seems to be a M.O.

Changing public attitudes about need for affordable housing. It just doesn't seem to be reconized by those who DO have the finances.

\$

funding, infrastructure, administrative support, creating business partnerships

The town may need to hire a town assistant/manager as the work is too much for volunteers

We're beginning the process of writing our Municipal Plan. The plan will open the doors for many state grant programs. Visits from top state leaders...a visit from Gov. Scott or Sen Welch would mean so much to our community. We're in Essex County, the often forgotten County. Money! We need all assistance we can get

Technical assistance

The people who promoted S.100, or the State, should do a public awareness campaign so people can understand what happened and why their zoning has to change.

Funding and additional reforms to state development law

See above. And maybe Leg Council could retake AP English Language and Composition before trying to rewrite law.

More agency support for public engagement -- a statewide tool for absorbing and reviewing public comment, etc would be very useful. Public comments should be



encouraged and accepted in a variety of formats, just so long as they can be processed. This would help people get more involved in planning decisions in their communities even if they can't attend meetings or don't have time to read long packets

modify the Village Center Designation program to encompass a bigger geographic area, align more closely with a towns Village District as depicted in a Future Land Use map and provide incentives for all types of desirable, smart growth activities (package low interest loans, grants, tax credits for energy improvements, lead and asbestos remediation, flood proofing for new and existing residential (regardless of # of units/owner-occupied), commercial, municipal, add extra funding for childcare providers), plus work with VTrans to change rules around streetscaping and pedestrian safety and alternatives to taking over a State Highway.

More grant funding for critical municipal infrastructure

Navigators to help us through the planning/permit phases especially Act 250

Greater awareness on the state and local level

Fewer regulations

Public education; helping to start and supporting YIMBY groups; inclusionary zoning at the state level.

Finding

State funded regional project coordinator/developer/grant writer.

More funding opportunities

Some form of "tapped in" matchmaker who can help bring in partners for community development

Public support of preservation efforts.

tying carrots and sticks to desired behavior
better state enforcement of state regs
much better understanding of the consequences of poor planning

More funding/subsidies for housing and re-use of community facilities.

Increased funding and removal of State permitting requirements for bike/ped infrastructure and housing in downtowns and growth centers.

Changing perception that "Vermont Needs X" ... A solution might be to respect the natural environment, and see existing assets as resources rather than items which



need to be similar to other states. Officials would need to actually listen to Residents rather than pushing their agenda.

Communication, outreach, funding

Example: I am a working senior, 65 y.o., who must work for another 4 years to save for retirement. I will be not too cash poor, but as a renter, housing poor. I am not poor enough to qualify for shared ownership plans, but if I have to pay hideous rent for oversized housing (I can live in 600 sq. ft.,) then I will eventually be impoverished enough to qualify when all my savings are gone. Why can't there be, as an example, a two acre plot of land in a VT town that can be split up into a min-coop with two other people who could also live in tiny homes w/ shared septic and water (especially when these days, workers need to be mobile, and local workers have no place to live, where they are needed by employers.) I can afford the tiny or mobile home, but not the rent, or the well/septic work - one or two of the three, but not all three. This would gently increase density in small towns, with minimal expense to the state and we can still pay some taxes to the locality (a "mobile resident" tax?)

The permitting process in Vermont is burden. One of the ideas of ACT 250 was to protect VT land and resources. It has resulted housing sprawl with 10 acres speghetti lots. Lack of development due to time delays of permits and investment dollars leaving the State to go where development is welcomed and embraced. With the cost the State pushes along, it drives up development costs, therefore driving up the housing costs. When developers spend more to build, the cost simply moves to the end user. There are no advocates within the state or local governments to support and guide would-be developers. Most government staffing will find 99 reasons to say no and only one reason to say yes. By the time a developer hears no some many times, they go onto easier options.

More funding for municipal planner that does not provide additional burden on taxpayers, More guidance from the state in terms of policy (i.e. short term rentals)

templates for towns and organized co-ordinations

Competitive bidding and unbiased oversight of projects is needed.

More public participation beyond those who want to discourage any development.

Some way to subsidize building costs when it's individual houses on individual lots, rather than some sort of development, because that is probably most reasonable in a small, rural community. Also, direct support, probably through regional planning.

More attention paid to senior housing who are often living alone in 4-5 bedroom homes, and are not low income enough to meet affordable housing limits yet want to move into a one bedroom ADA compliant home and stay in their community where they are active and often volunteer. If we had incentives for developers to build more



active senior communities, with one BR ADA-compliant apartments, we should be able to open up dozens of homes for sale to large families, or to be split into duplexes or multiunit homes.

A Conservation Commission that considered the impact on housing and taxes when proposals have a significant impact on growth

Structure our housing solutions to maximize safe and healthy communities rather than profit of investment. Perhaps create a structure of transparency and cooperation around housing that illuminates positive solutions and actions (a kind of "B Corp" for housing where owners can self-identify as renter-friendly) and creates accountability for owners do not provide safe housing as well as support for them to be able to improve their property.

Understanding developers' interests and needs so we can attract housing developers to rural village centers, public education on how primary housing and economic vitality go hand in hand. Funding the gap between costs to build and affordability for middle-income (80-120% of median income) residents.

More training for medium size towns that employ part-time ZA and volunteer Planning Commissions. More help identifying what grants are available and how to apply for one. - Remembering most Commissioners are volunteers and ZAs may be part-timers

communication and outreach

Better support from the state for small towns.

Funding opportunities (grants or low cost loans) and policy changes to clear the way for affordable housing and solar net metering rule changes.

reduce septic tank size requirement's, reduce exclusion zones

Money, professional support in the planning process

see answer to #7

Suspend Act 250 and let us develop

Strong education and then supporting leadership.

State level cooperation and assistance.

Leadership and consensus at the highest level of the state government. Governor and legislators need to get on the same page,



If we had a highly functional swarm of a focused project team to help address capacity issues in our small municipal workforce it would be a game changer.

getting the younger generation involved

More paid staff and more funding; shared zoning administrator with other towns

State mandates pushed down at regional levels.

Additional funding and technical support

Any ideas you have for overcoming inertia and fear of the unknown.

Contractor trainings and promotion of hiring in the field, More flexible funding for design and construction, Community engagement sessions regarding development and conservation.... and money

MONEY

We need funding to increase salaries for workers so they stay in the region, we need funding that includes labor/fringe/indirect rates on planning projects. We need funding that is not severely restricted by the state and federal government.

Ways to engage the community to enhance communication within the town and more participation from town officials.

Lower property taxes by increasing rooms and meals taxes. The 11 to 13 million visitors that come to VT will not be deterred by another 3 to 4% and for a VT couple to go out to dinner and have a few drinks \$4 ON A \$100 EVENING WILL NOT BREAK THEIR BUDGET. We as selectboard members are always asked how we can lower their property taxes, well 80% or better are due to education tax.

getting more people to volunteer for planning. cannot get people to serve.

Funding

Increased funding for planning. Unfortunately, geography is our #1 obstacle.

cross sector planning to find creative solutions and build collaboration

Free professional support for Town planners (RPCs are amazing, but need more of that)

Adjust open meeting law to specifically allow for public body working groups to

Grant funding to establish zoning



State government officials coming together with developers who will actually build this housing, as well as local government reps, and creating a plan together. Changing the rhetoric on "developers". Grants to cover downpayment for people who want to buy housing for themselves.

Professional municipal planning expertise via grants

Statewide planning office that has the authority to demand coordination amongst state agencies.

Encourage communities to authorize administrative approval of minor permits

Clear direction from the state and an easier path to access funding and expertise. It is too complicated, you think you have a path, and oh by the way you need to XYZ to access those funds, which adds more cost.

I don't know

Reduce taxes and regulatory burdens on business development and housing construction - if government spending and the federal printed money supply (inflation) will not decrease, then the only option left is to increase productivity-- otherwise it is lose-lose for the private sector, the real engine of a healthy economy.

See policies and incentives

People being respectful of other ideas when they differ. There are way to many demonstrations by specific interest groups because that did not get their own way.

funding and capacity. There is a serious need for professional staff at the town level.

Funding for various community activities lacking in our town. Success stories from other communities undergoing similar changes.

more grants

more funding and less nimbyism

Hearing about "best practices" from other successful towns

Land prices, material and labor costs are all significant. Availability of land and labor are probably the highest priority items. Financial incentives to build up the construction labor force.

Increased state funding and technical support through the RRPC



* Funding: access to capital (state & federal grants, revolving loan funds) for affordable housing & community infrastructure

* Public resistance to change & lack of community participation: (current state BMG & regional planning funding for extensive community outreach & engagement campaign will help)

Diversion of heavy industrial freight out of rural towns

Coordinated efforts amongst entities, ie VTrans, Dept of Health, Law Enforcement Leadership focused on strengthening human resiliency

Greater \$/technical support for planning staff @ local and/or regional level; regular (2x+/yr) trainings for staff and volunteers (on-boarding/planning basics, hands-on review of Zoning Guide, how to write a town plan, how to effectively communicate with your community, how to use new online tools, etc.)

It really helps to have a champion at the state level for important initiatives.

Leadership and Funding.

Beyond funding, the top solution is recognition that it will take ALL communities, the largest to the smallest, to address our common priorities. Working with 2 neighboring towns on housing (and other efforts), we've discovered "scattered sites" to be a myth. There must be recognition of other models beyond the 25-unit development that, in aggregate, accomplish close to the same result -- again, duplexes, ADU's and net zero options like Vermods.

What emerging trends do you think Vermont's planning community ought to focus on?

1. Climate change, adaptation, resilience & coming natural disasters
2. Environmental justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, governance
3. Migration and demographic imbalances that out-competes working Vermonters from housing and makes Vermont less affordable
4. Increasing rates of non-farm, non-forest rural sprawl
5. Placed-based factors and determinants of healthy people

Climate adaption

regionalization of services (fire, police, zoning, planning, code enforcement) needs state leadership to accelerate that with depleted ranks of skilled professional (some tasks are State directly / indirectly like MRGP, vital records, reappraisal/assessing). Local govt can be consolidated and economics will force that on less than 5,000 pop towns



Shared services

Social, economic and service implications of a large percentage of the population aging in place

Who is deciding to move into Vermont and who is leaving. The 'Vermont brand' appears to be appealing to a very niche audience further challenging diversity, housing and economic growth efforts.

Finding ways to adopt reforms similar to those passed in Montana this year.

Equity, Public/Private Partnerships, Downtown/Village Center Housing, Walkability

Treating multi-family homes the same as single family in zoning, eliminating parking requirements and setbacks, evolve thinking with regards to the reality that farms aren't the scale and

Balance of growth and conservation. High elevation development. Impacts of subdivision and parcelization of large tracts or within forest blocks. Habitat loss. Influx of a very limited, exclusive, wealthy demographic and the associated economic and cultural impacts of that lack of diversity.

Missing Middle Housing; Stormwater Controls; Economic Development

NIMBYism, enhancing a community's ability to think as a system, highlighting/support for historic settlement patterns/structures/values so that it isn't lost.

Housing, workforce, and demographic crisis

Unmet infrastructure and community development needs in rural communities

Need for planned "safer areas" to address increased flood risk from climate change
an accommodate climate migration

Renewable energy and EVs, on demand transit, modular construction (pre-fab components like kitchens/baths, insulated walls, etc.), Electric BIKES, car free zones - car free pedestrian areas either all the time, or certain days/times, art-centric public spaces, public recreation, aging population = needs to more creative senior housing (NOT just restricted apartments, but more holistic like Wake Robin or co-housing), community gardening, community solar

Sustainability with rapid climate change.

We have all the necessary tools, just not the resources to properly develop and deploy them.



The need for more septic infrastructure in our villages to allow affordable build out in these areas. Local control of new agricultural uses.

Short term rentals. This is becoming more and more popular which takes away available housing for residents and often times is cheating the Gov't out of income tax money.

loss of and aging of population

Community engagement

Short-term rental regulation. Housing assistance. Loosening regulation around gatherings such as festivals and concerts where alcohol is concerned. Current laws and regulations are prohibitive.

1. Green technology education for communities to better understand impacts and costs.
2. Understanding 'affordable housing' and the impact it can have on communities. Example: employee pool for services industry.

Climate change and remote work are imperatives that should be guiding Vermont's future growth decisions. The water quality of Lake Champlain was a factor that informed 50 by 2050 and should drive development patterns too. At the macro level, prioritize regional revitalization and growth based around existing centers over the mega city development of Burlington (growth model of the previous century) and urbanized development in all settings. Reintroduce the block, the street and platting as core elements of placemaking (so the image below can actually happen). Recognize the historic place types of Vermont - reform policy to calibrate infrastructure investment, planning and zoning to the scale of each, so development to the next increment of growth can happen. Stage architectural excellence competitions for missing middle typologies that "fit" in each place type so communities have a kit of parts or starting points for their own iterations of good local design.

safe pedestrian paths and areas- would be tremendous for community cohesion, health, economy, climate, environment, and tourism. Simple rail trail projects in local communities have been hugely successful

Educating the public on the benefit of energy resiliency and climate change policies. Requiring solar and wind energy be treated as utilities and designed for stormwater impacts in their approved plans.

Environmental change will continue to lead more people to move to VT, increasing the need for affordable housing.



Short term rentals
Recreation collaboration

Attracting young families who want to work from home via the internet;
educating/training Vermont's youth to get high-tech, well-paying jobs; lowering
property taxes

Allowing more dwellings per lot if septic can handle it

The transition away from fossil fuels
Climate resilience

Broadband...we've heard so much about it and yet most Town's know little about it.
Community Pride...neglected communities have lost hope in regional and state
government.
Out of control basic need expenses...our residents can no longer afford the
outrageous price increases that have been a result of COVID. Households need
more resources, more assistance and a financial lifeline

Rural lands conservation amidst renewed exurban housing interest, short term
rentals, adapting recreation economies to climate trends

Act 250 needs major revisions or it should be done away with if not

Inclusion and engagement of the citizenry needs to be front and center. Plans need to
be dynamic and web-based, not just paper documents that sit on shelves only read by
planners. Public and independent schools need to include local participation and
governance as part of the curriculum.

How about understanding the facts as they are today: select boards and planning
commissions are poorly trained and informed, public is resistant to change, and tools
from state are insufficient to help planners work through these thickets?

I think Vermont could truly be a model for smart growth and climate-smart
communities, and we should hone our focus on that. To update our land use protocols
to meet current and future needs of Vermonters, we need to do more to encourage
compact development. Right now, local land use regs and A250 are effectively
encouraging rural sprawl as they try to contain development. VT needs to curtail large
lot subdivisions happening in Ag-Res districts and similar areas and increase efforts
to funnel development into village centers. This is the only way to support and enable
car-free lifestyles and TDM/transit in Vermont communities.

shared services, capital budgeting (ensuring new ARPA-related investments are
adequately managed and maintained into the future), wastewater planning small
towns and villages, transportation solutions (lowering emission, evaluation of the long



term viability of making everything electric, increased investment into public transit solutions)

providing deeply affordable housing (e.g., 60% or less AMI) in the face of a state statute definitions that allow for housing priced at 120% AMI to be deemed affordable lots of new housing will be built in the next 10 years, but will it be truly inclusionary and equitable for Vermonters with lower household incomes.

Climate refugees exacerbating the housing situation
Lack of volunteers to undertake projects
Increasing conflict between housing needs, environmental conservation and development

Overuse of public lands including MYB trails, State Lands, rivers.

Not shoving additional regulations in an already burdened regulatory environment

Vermont has a housing crisis. Employers can't hire because housing is so expensive (and they pay so little). Vermont's demographics are changing. Vermont is becoming older and the younger people who are moving to Vermont are browner. 97% of the population growth in Chittenden County in the last census decade was Black, Indigenous or other People of Color (BIPOC). The rest of Vermont is also becoming less white. Vermonters are resistant. We need to build inclusive affordable housing virtually everywhere in Vermont. But NIMBYs oppose any housing on faux environmental grounds. Basically, they want their town to continue looking like New Jersey's suburbs in the 1950s when and where they grew up: single family homes occupied by white families.

Better coordination of housing and services
More contribution by communities and individuals not directly affected

Use of manufactured building components to compensate for lack of construction trade workforce.
Development of local clean heat partnerships, especially with the forest products sector.

Know that most Vermont seniors who own homes and may want to downsize to a smaller home do not want to live in apartment-style senior housing. We want privacy, peace and quiet, and our own backyard.

Keeping our existing villages/communities viable rather than continuous sprawl.

I am not familiar with any.

influx of people, especially with wealth
loss of biodiversity due to habitat destruction (direct, climate change, toxins,



invasives)
lack of housing

"Missing middle" housing; Promoting senior friendly development;
Sustainable/resilient community design

Increased need/demand for bike/ped infrastructure
Increased need/demand for housing
Climate Change impacts

Housing for the homeless; housing for people who have pets.

Existing Infrastructure, Conservation, and Respect. Cleaning things up rather than bulldozing them to make something 'new' ... Helping, by working with Health and Public Safety to remedy mental health, and developing better entry points into public service (maintenance, public works, safety, education, after school programs, business assistance in the form of HELP .. not money)

Single level living, infrastructure

Graduated aid, based on income, to help residents stay and work/retire here. One size does not fit all. Well made mobile housing (see the NOAH standards, or IREC,) does not have to be flimsy garbage like the HUD mobile home. Start a program to have local MH manufacturers build park model homes to NOAH standards - it will fill an urgent need AT LITTLE OR NO COST TO THE STATE. We don't all have kids or need to live in McMansions.

Permit processing and funding

Short term rentals, increase housing stock, increase in emergency shelter

total end cost of housing and business operation

The link between addiction and homelessness

Multi-family housing; accessory dwellings, tiny home developemnts, community septic

Highly energy efficient housing with community solar or other renewable electricity production.

Cottage Court ADA-compliant homes, walkable downtowns with housing on upper levels, but not so much parking restrictions (parking no where available) that two car families can not live there. That is very limiting.



Correction of structural inequities, support for people who are working to create more housing even on a small scale, focus on the common good and safe, healthy communities and accessibility for all modes of transportation.

Focus on how multiple towns might work together to solve housing issues vs town by town or vs the State.

Multi-generational, mixed-size, mixed-income and mixed-use communities that are reflective of the entire community.

The trend to purchase second, third, fourth homes for short-term rentals.

senior affordable housing

Jobs in small communities.

We need to encourage the trend of moving away from private car ownership by, firstly, investing in mass transit that has already shown success in rural Vermont and secondly, encourage car sharing and ride services (Lyft and Uber) to increase the ease of existing in Vermont without having to own a vehicle.

reducing restrictions caused by wastewater requirement's

EV support and electric company practices. We have a municipal electric department which insists that the individual customer bear all the costs of expansion or change. We also have a municipal water and sewer department. The rate payers pay for those expansions. It's not a perfect comparison, but I see the current model slowing down the adoption of electrical vehicles and other non-carbon-based vehicles.

Require ADUs in all SF housing projects and especially high end, multi million dollar projects. The ADU must to provide long term housing to local workers.

Reducing Governments control

The fragmentation of forests and the suburbanization of Vermont. The death of Vermont's act 250 by one thousand cuts.

All Utilities.

More flexibility in zoning laws. Funding for weatherization programs.

Bringing youth to our state at all costs by: fostering entrepreneurs in new technologies (fiber-focused CUDs are critical), swarm people on assisting the development and marketing of the new state university, incentivize green companies and homes,

keeping things up to date and getting people more involved in planning



Recreation economy

Water quality of Lake Champlain and its impact on potable water sources.

Climate change and affordable housing, including rural areas.

Short term rentals and their effect on housing shortages and community life.

Creating more opportunity for growth in the downtown areas through zoning amendments, the creation of a greater number of designated downtowns

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water and sewer for all.

Climate/Political refugees and the need for housing.

Low and middle income workers need for housing.

With the NEK Broadband getting the \$17 M on top of the I think \$35 million will help attract families so the opportunity to work from home will be there, and when/if another Covid type crisis hits us and kids are home and schools are closed they can get online and learn and not be stuck at home playing with grandpas etch a sketch as they have no band width.

Housing is a major problem not only for Chittenden County but also for rural areas like Derby.

Being able to provide sound information to encourage dialogue and a plan. It usually takes some convincing and funding/plan would need to be in place in order for individuals to buy into the process.

Microtransit across the state.

housing shortage tied to commercial centers --- having a designated village center without having a commercial capability in that center is meaningless. what we have is low income people trying to live in an expensive rural community requiring driving to cities where their jobs are which is counter to energy/transportation objectives.

Housing needs

Population loss

Affordable of the city and state to reside here.

Designing, building, programming for 25 - 40 year olds so that they see a future here

Climate change (and related things like increasing use of electricity for transportation and thermal power) will make things like river corridor zoning and electric grid resilience more important; it would be good if that (and other things like it) was easier to implement and more strongly encouraged.



Affordable Housing

The next generation of young people and where they want to live and in what kind of communities. Retaining Vermonters to stay in the state. Preservation of historic properties and character of Vermont, while building conscious development.

Climate change - renewable energy for the average person

Climate migration. State Farm just stopped insuring properties in all of California, and there is more of that coming. California is a state of 45 million people- not very many of them need to decide to move here to make a huge difference in the availability and affordability of the state.

Housing

Need for "Missing Middle" housing

Clarity in the planning path

Lack of housing

Reducing duplicative regulatory burdens on private enterprise, increasing local empowerment and funding opportunities by reducing the higher-level bureaucratic load.

Schools and education. There is so much capacity in the housing, econ development and infrastructure sectors (despite the shortage of engineers), but our schools are really lagging. Schools are a major community asset that need significant capital improvements, and we need much stronger and sustainable partnerships between employment, training, and schools, and independent learning through Act 77 opportunities for personalized/proficiency-based learning policies. While this may not fit in the traditional "community planning" box, education is a critical part of community and economic development and Vermont is at an "all hands on deck" juncture to reimagine education at a systems level. AOE does not have a community development mindset, so does not understand how to move the ball forward in terms of education's link to economic development. We should have a policy that every kid in Vermont has a solid plan for what they are going to do the week after they graduate from high school. Kids for families whose parents have college educations are too often the ones who get most of the attention from guidance counselors. The kids who are not college-bound need life plans that involve employment training and employers.



Housing! This trend may not be considered emerging but there has been a serious lack of any housing development, except by the housing trust and second home development.

Drugs...our small communities are becoming overrun with small time drug offenders. With the increase price of everything, small towns (and the non-profits within those towns) are going be struggling to make ends meeting in 2023 and beyond. Derelict properties: what tools are available to address these outside of zoning?

climate change

funding for affordable housing

Reducing the obstacles related to building additional housing units in the village centers and directly adjacent areas.

Flexible zoning to allow/encourage denser development in targeted areas, particularly near existing infrastructure.

Providing 24/7 communication capability for all of our residents throughout Vermont

* ID best practices from other rural states to boost multi-family housing construction & what policy changes & infrastructure are needed to facilitate that in Vermont.

* Help rural residents decrease their reliance on private cars by promoting access to micro-transit, on-demand transit, and ridesharing resources.

* Incentivize micro-business development by subsidizing shared workspaces & start-up incubators in small towns and rural communities.

* Provide start-up assistance to VT nonprofits helping residents w/o computers and internet access to access those resources (see: www.fcc.gov/acp) example from MA: www.link-health.org

Rural community infrastructure redesign

Preservation of our forests, ie biodiversity

Human health, mental and physical

Prioritization of climate in day to day operations over business as usual

Coordination among local, state, and federal governments, Regional planning as sustainability planning.

Need for dense, walkable housing; parking (how to reduce off-street, incr. on-street, deal with plows, etc.); complete streets transportation planning; village wastewater solutions; flooding; green infrastructure

Maybe how to turn immigration growth into an opportunity.



Controlling short term housing (e.g. Airbnb) and limited supply to provide long term housing.

Smaller communities are trying to move their communities forward and have a lot to offer. While we're always in need of "capacity building" a factor of our sheer tiny populations and pool of doers, we don't need to be constantly protected from ourselves as the "museum" of Vermont's past. We are capable of balancing both a strong sense of history and historic preservation with purposefully changing and evolving with "right-sized" development.

What are the top three resources or training materials needed by planners, zoning administrators, elected/volunteer officials, and the general public?

1. Ethics, ethics, ethics!
2. Basics of development review and permit program administration
3. Basics of land use planning and regulation in Vermont

Updated materials to train new board members and ZAs.

Consultants visiting town offices to offer support - maybe some support paid by regional commission or VLCT or VPA - short term projects ideally, with local PC's still guiding. We end up hiring consultants more and more, so ensuring funding via MPG etc. is maintaining and RPC's have staffing to support towns is important. Very little support for administrators/managers and new town staff in assessing, zoning and planning.

Essentials of Land Use Planning
Development Review Training

Information in the form of consistent, high quality data to understand demographics, economic outlook, development trends, infrastructure capacities, critical natural resources, land conservation trends, etc.

Mandated training requirements for government staff, elected officials and citizen volunteers.

1. One-pager on Planning and ZBA rules and responsibilities (not a full handbook)
2. Model rules of order for planning commissions
3. List of activities Planning Commissions are encouraged to study beyond the zoning bylaw

Open Meeting Law, Planning and Zoning 101, Grant Administration 101



Missing Middle zoning manual, public outreach to educate and normalize multi-unit housing and rentals, YIMBY campaigns

Basic knowledge of why planning is important; knowledge of the laws and how they can affect property owners; knowledge of who their representatives are and what they can do for them.

Is this question asking what is needed in addition to what's already available? VCGI's online mapping tools is a tremendous tool for all parties.

S.100 training
demystifying "missing middle" housing,
How to manage parking in a rural setting training...

There is almost TOO MUCH info and resources available - it's more than a full time job to research/learn, we need experts who can help us accelerate to reach our goals. More templates for zoning, town plans, housing policies, conservation policies.

Community buy in, grant funding, publicity in the face of apathy

Funding, professional staff and/or consultant community to undertake the technical work

On the ground work in communities.

really don't know

Vermont planning information website, statutes, municipal regulations/bylaws

Not sure.

Education on open meeting laws and requirements.
Vermont Land Use policies and programs.

1. I think the resources exist.... it is just getting them all in one place so they are easier to find! Sometimes I feel as though the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing or providing. Do the various State Departments talk to each other?

Resources that provide the ability to envision what does not exist is critical for rural communities. More access to VCRD type community discussion/visioning. Pattern books of building and lot types appropriate for rural village and town infill. Open source sketch up modeling with Google Earth that can help people see how change and development could be beneficial.

comprehensive cooperation between state and community resources identifying and evaluating all areas for developing safe paths, lanes, and areas for communities. Then helping the relevant agencies help the communities develop. There are many



people in state agencies fixed in thinking that does not allow for the future of our state to thrive.

VLCT or a State Division...part of the problem. No training for Town Administrators in VT.

I am not that close enough to town management to know what training materials are even available as resources.

Getting your hands dirty

An annual overview of grant funding available with application deadlines; administrative support for small towns to apply and administer grants; facilitate collaboration among neighboring small towns; knowledge of how small town local government should work

Training on grants/grant administration
One stop shop for climate related incentives
Guidance on policies for short term rentals

Grant writing, Grant writing, Grant writing

STR regulation, innovations in plan writing/making plan updates as volunteers,

The people who promoted S.100, or the State, should do a public awareness campaign so people can understand what happened and why their zoning has to change.

Local officials do need more regular and easily accessible training opportunities such as that provided by the VPIC, VLCT and RPCs. There is high turnover among ZAs in this region, and annual trainings do not adequately address the needs. Other local officials could use more regular access to Chapter 117 training materials as well.

VSA 101 for elected and appointed officials, mandatory.
Planning and zoning 101 for DEC staff, mandatory.
Longer times and budgets on MPGs
4 teach leg counsel to write

1. Rural smart growth toolkit
2. education/toolkit/public discussion on best practices for PUDs and conservation subdivisions
3. Rural transit best practices toolkit/resources

1. streamlining requirements/ expectations of municipal planning and zoning documents across multiple state agencies. municipal plan as visionary or regulatory? municipal plan standing in Section 248 process vs zoning language standing in



Section 248a? Role of the Village Center Designation area (or other Designated area) as a quasi zoning district boundary in the application of River Corridor Bylaws? regulation of the cultivation of cannabis: as an agricultural use but not an Agricultural use?

2. creating simplified easy-to-follow checklists to aid municipalities in understanding state requirements, statutory changes and funding opportunities :

- a. a clear, easy to follow diagram or flow chart would be a great tool for PC members.
- b. The DHCD Planning Manual is great! But if a town wants to do 'enhanced energy planning' then the VAPDA Best Practices to Enhanced Energy Planning is referenced/or provided which a totally different animal. The VPIC Implementation Topic Papers are great and very handy and then there is the VLCT Plan and Bylaw Adoption checklist. Its a hodge-podge and probably completely over whelming to a new PC Chair. Various RPC probably do in different ways but having a State Agency coordinate a unified, simplified, easily digestible packet with RPC assistance seems like a more efficient approach. Same with developing trainings.
- c. increasing cross-agency coordination in rolling out funding. partnership between DHCD and VTrans, and between DHCD and Health Department are great - the more this can happen can help relive the confusion and burden on regions and municipalities to tease apart the differences and explain why one, vs the other.

3. Zoning Administrator trainings/boot camp/certification? there is the need to build the professional expertise, increase training opportunities and raise awareness of the value of this role within municipal government.

Examples of residential development with a mix of household incomes.

Examples of development in non-urban areas that successfully function low to moderate amounts of parking.

Grants calendar or database to easily see deadlines for recurring grants for community development, infrastructure, etc.

Presentation skills - writing and delivering

How to get through the permit process (and then help others)

-
- 1. Broad nation wide sharing of trends
 - 2. P.S.A.'s
 - 3. Better environmental awareness

Private property rights

Civil rights; demystifying/scarifying affordable housing; show people that Vermont's affordable housing is built to scale and fits into the neighborhoods it's built in.

Project development and management



In general, I find that planners, local officials and most of the general public in the communities know what needs to be done and have a desire to make it happen. The difficulty is how do we bring this awareness and desire to fruition.

Ian McHarg's work/books.

Architectural preservation educational sessions sponsored by the Vermont Preservation Trust or VT Div. of Historic Preservation.

Walking tours with school kids to look at historic architecture, working landscape, former working landscape now woodlands.

understanding of how to make decisions

understanding how to budget for short and long term

understanding what the future is likely to be if we keep doing what we have done

1. The meaning/importance of economic/market feasibility for projects;
2. Planning for community resilience:
3. Principles of economically vital & sustainable places.

Best practices for boards and commissions

DEI training and awareness

Tools to encourage more housing development in Town and Village centers with water/sewer infrastructure.

Try spending 6 months without a home, despite working full-time. It's an eye-opening experience.

Historic Preservation, Critical Thinking, Originality

Look at what other municipalities have done to be creative.

Fair Housing Training

Mental Health Training

Onboarding Program for Planning Commissioners/DRB Members

operational outlines and ID. all contacts

There is a need to learn how to reduce spending, and find creative new solutions to old problems

I really don't know enough to even say.

In person training for volunteer boards (planning and DRB/ZBA) in localities where they will attend (they will not drive 2 hours to an all day training); evening local trainings - ie: come to us. They do not see the need to increase density even tho they see a general need that we "need more housing". They do not have the action items



to create new housing nor see their vital role and power to change their town. They are often just "waiting for someone to tell them what to do".

Model language for zoning regs that addresses responsible growth

For officials: Economic and financial modeling for housing development. For the public: How housing and economic development can increase town vitality and reduce the overall tax burden for citizens.

Where do I begin?

How to wade through the Vermont Statutes (most of us are not lawyers). In-person workshops of like-communities e.g., small communities together, medium communities together, cities together. Not one-size suggestion fits all communities. Having workshops that seem to apply to larger communities/cities does nothing to help those of us in communities of 2000 or less.

We need a database that can help municipal employees know what electric alternatives are available in the marketplace to replace the gas/diesel equipment that we currently own and maintain.

State regulations, current best practice, and external funding sources.

Tools that focus on supporting creation of workforce, affordable and missing middle housing. Our state is aging, second homeowners are building and pretty soon we will have no service workers, teachers, EMS providers, etc, etc to care for and provide services to the above because these service workers can not afford housing in the state.

We are all set. We have the expertise.

Education
Examples of poor land use and great land use
Help leading

up to date mapping and utility capacities.

Information and technical assistance on their options. For example, not sure many towns got much help on how best to use their ARPA funds.

We can't be the experts in all things... We are simply too small with many operational needs to be able to hire specialists. We need others to be those specialists

better methods of communication and information



Updated information about current state zoning laws; one-stop listing of all state grants

DEC / EPA enforcement would be the hammer to get parties moving forward.

1. Concise guidelines for the zoning and planning processes; 2. Stronger authority/funding for enforcing zoning ordinances and state laws such as the Shoreline Protection Act

1. Something to share with the public such as an effective PSA or other types of promotional campaign.
 2. Required training for municipal officials (administrators and select boards) on success stories in other towns.
 3. \$ for zoning administrators or ordinance enforcement.
-

An explanation of why the housing market and cost of living is so high currently, compared to past decades. We need older Vermonters to be able to empathize with younger Vermonters and their struggle for housing, food security, and general financial stability.

We need older Vermonters to understand that Vermont is destined to be a climate refuge, and if we do not actively plan for infrastructure and targeted developed (that does not damage forest or ag lands, which is entirely possible), rich people will buy up land and develop large homes, and low and middle income people will continue to have no where to live.

Town Planning -so help from NVDA and others to help smaller Towns plan- I know they have planning grant monies available.

Less of Montpelier's we know best for you attitude-getting people to volunteer to serve on boards is harder and harder as they feel Montpelier wants to steer the ship, you deck hands hoist the sails and scrub the decks but keep your hand off the tiller. Collaboration is key.

Thinking outside the box on property taxes (Education taxes)-so Legislative hearings or zoom (I call them Mazda meetings) zoom zoom !

1. An organized plan to present at initial meeting including possible funding resources.
-

Transportation funding.

better access to professional planners.

What is available to assist municipalities



Case studies of successful towns

Main Street America 4 pillars

Human centered design

1 - Some kind of guide or reference to planning/zoning in Vermont in general; VLCT offers classes (but they cost money) and there are a ton of planning terms (like "non-conforming" and "accessory") that are REALLY important but not obvious to volunteers with no training.

2 - Free map-based tools (VCGI viewer is fantastic - continue providing resources for it and expand it to include zoning where possible)

3 - Clear comprehensive statewide zoning application process - it's REALLY hard to figure out who needs to apply for what when (as a landowner, builder, ZA, planning commission, etc.)

1. Staff Capacity

2. Funding

3. Community Support

Training on obtaining federal grants.

***Create new free resources. education, education, education

Professional planning

1. Deprogram sentimentality. It's never going to be the Vermont it was in the 1950s again, and that's a good thing. Be real about how much growth needs to be accommodated and the "grow up vs. out" mentality. Some of us need to get over the idea that a duplex or 4-plex is incompatible with a rural landscape. 2. Deprogram assumptions about impacts of growth. it isn't 1990 anymore and demographic challenges for public schools are really different. We are in the housing mess we are in because of a whole bunch of bad assumptions about managing growth that need to be unlearned. Schools should plan for and react to population change, not drive attempts to control population. 3. Bring fiscal analysis and a long term view into everything. Don't build infrastructure that is going to become a cost liability due to its supporting low value density. Be aggressive about blighted properties that can be turned into assets on the Grand List (like Maine Land bank!)

Grant writing support

Zoning and Bylaw rewrite support

Simplified Designation requirements

Updated handbooks

Summary of statute changes



Funding to pay municipal staff a competitive wage. Stae tells municipalities what to do or must do yet no easy access to funding such as a LOT, in which the state takes 30% for collecting and distribution the funds. (???)

I'm not professional enough or positioned well enough in the planning community to answer this question.

Case study best practices, cross-community networking of planning commission and selectboard members, freedom from duplicative regulator burdens.

Planners need toolboxes that include form-based code and inclusionary zoning. Zoning administrators need training and model codes that they can copy. Elected/volunteer officials need training in how community & economic development processes work.

Funding! Grant writing training and assistance. Visits by high level Vermont Officials to show our community that Montpelier cares!

not sure

NLIH - outreach@nlihc.org (National Low income housing)
VCEH - mhahn@helpingtohousevt.org - (Vermont coalition to end homelessness)
NAEH - info@naeh.org - (national alliance to end homelessness)

Assistance from Rural Edge, NVDA, VLCT and VT DEC

Not sure.

how to achieve public buy in

Funding
Technical Expertise
Increasing the speed of our Flood Map updating process

- * More free & low-cost trainings for planning commissioners & DRB members (in-person, please!)
- * More training & informal networking opportunities for ZA's and planners
- * More public outreach via mainstream media & public access TV about value of smart growth policy & examples of how VT communities have increased livability

Access to dedicated planner
Full time law enforcement present in all towns



Knowledge of plan-making and project evaluation; Ability to work with the public and articulate planning issues to various audiences; Mastery of techniques for involving a wide range of people in making decisions.

What are other communities doing to face rural community challenges (visualizations). Rental/STR database and other consistent housing/migration/land use data. Help small towns avoid reinventing the wheel while providing insight on where they can be flexible.

not sure

Information, power to make changes and push for changes.

Small and tiny communities need right-sized models and solutions. Public water and sewer are not the penultimate goal; and for many outliers will not bring businesses and fatter Grand Lists (and for many tiny, narrow river-bottom villages centralized sewer is not feasible anyway.)

In a short answer, why are MPG's valuable?

59 Responses

Municipal Planning Grants connect people to their priorities and organize for action and implementation.

It is the primary source of funds to help cities and towns hire the expertise they need to plan and implement projects.

Stimulate local projects that would not be done without financial support

Local folks without funding can't pull off the projects without \$\$

Usually only source of funding for planning at the town level, but the resources have been squandered by investing too heavily in supporting endless town plan revisions.

Bylaw revision with help of RPC is the most valuable way to approach zoning reform

Consistent funding, easy to use/implement, project scoping due diligence and community engagement

They provide access to funding and professional support for planning to towns with very little capacity

MPGs give municipalities the opportunity they may never have to properly research and develop plans to support future developments



They provide the funding/tools necessary for municipalities to uphold the demanding job of PCs to support their communities.

MPG's provide valuable opportunity for small municipalities to undertake planning efforts otherwise beyond their local capacity.

MPGs fund essential planning projects, and help focus towns on areas deemed important with MPG criteria

They enable appropriate prioritization with a viable plan

They provide the only source of funding to municipalities to do this type of work. Especially zoning changes that are not attractive to other funding sources.

the problem is most plans are never put into action

They help jumpstart a community initiative....great for laying the groundwork for further exploration

They leverage local funds to accomplish more.

MPGs provide targeted means to help people in a community envision, plan and implement beneficial change.

Helping small communities plan for the future and creating legally-defensible codes.

Motivates communities to action

MPGs allow towns to "test the waters" and decide if an idea or plan is worthy of further time investment.

Provide funding for unfunding mandates.

Rural towns don't have the capacity to fund necessary planning without grants

Crucial funding for law-required planning

Thye are an invaluable source of funding for planning because there are very few other funding sources for necessary planning work.

It's the only source for updates and plans -and it's still inadequate and the times are TOO SHORT

MPGs allow municipalities to fund projects that are specific to their community and speak to their individual goals. It's important to have funding available at the municipal level so that local projects and initiatives can receive due attention and resources.



for some towns its the only source of funding to undertake statutory functions

MPGs provide communities with critical funding to spark community planning

They fund municipalities to do work required by statute.

They are the catalyst for communities to think about themselves and where they want to go.

Towns would not update plans or bylaws without them

They provide the resources for volunteers and staff with limited time to set a shared direction for progress.

It is the only State resource dedicated to Municipal Planning. Without the MPG program, little to no funds would be expended on municipal planning in Vermont.

We couldn't afford to do a good job without the assistance provided by MPG's.

In creates a reason for local boards to make changes

They spark creativity around specific actions that meaningfully improve communities.

This is a dumb question. These Grants help smaller communities hire expert help in Planning and other necessary municipal paperwork (Reviewing-updating Zoning Regulations, help with Infrastructure problems, Grants, etc.)

the town's would/could not do the work with out the funding, but the funding is too low.

To pay for all of the salaries of your friends we have to hire to do projects.

Incentives. Education

Funds towns to literally "plan" - think ahead about what they need to do

Provide for technical assistance

They are valuable (and would be more so) if they address the spectrum of planning needs of a municipality.

To improve future town plans (and thus, improve Vermont's future).

Helps municipalities plan for the future.

We would not be able as a community to commit to historic value in our communities nor have the power of Town Plans, Zoning By Laws and improvements without the



MPG grants. Also the ongoing expertise provided by Regional Commission members is absolutely necessary for our communities.

They help municipalities plan for the future and future growth

Funding for support for plans and regulations that are full of state requirements and targets is FAR beyond the capabilities of volunteers.

Funding source for local municipalities to support planning efforts

They help address capacity challenges in small and small-but-growing communities.

Allows small town to hire professionals to assist

They provide access to highly trained professionals in desired field.

Increase safe pedestrian connectivity and business options in smaller communities

Without them, our small town will not be able to achieve much of future agenda

They provide a ready source of funding to critical short-term projects, and often make professional planning assistance available to volunteer bodies without the experience to tackle complex projects.

Any planning tool helps

Provides funding for invaluable community planning and visioning, zoning and bylaw regulations, and more.

They incentivize and create time, space and focus for planning efforts -- its important work, but so often we're scrambling just to do the basics.

Are there factors that should be considered, but are not, or other changes you would recommend to the [MPG] scoring categories?

23 Responses

Having an "in place" MPG team - can vary by project but 2 or 3 names tied to the project. VTRans ATR selection process does that now and adds a good level of buy-in/responsibility from the community, vs "the PC" or "staff" wants to do another MGP

Either scrap the regional allotments or award ALL money in the region based on the regional allotments

Equity



Relationship to designated areas.

measurement of plans put into action

Expand upward population of towns that RPCs can be the no bid consultant on for MPGs. Capable consultants are in short supply and RPCs outside of Chittenden function as de facto planning staff in communities. They have relationships with community members and know the challenges they face - these relationships and limited (or nonexistent) local capacity mean the RPCs are the best equipped to assist these communities. Rethink this arbitrary population threshold which just makes good projects more complicated and harder in rural communities.

Earmark greater funding for the Program

I think that application quality is important, but worry that past performance may put small municipalities at an undeserved disadvantage.

PCs should pass a basic knowledge test before starting on the projects

I think application quality and past performance are important, but they are not everything. This might be reflective of personnel changes or other external factors. The process should aim to distribute resources equitably across the state -- under-resourced communities may not be able to produce high-quality applications compared to wealthier, better-resourced communities. The MPGs should be wary of perpetuating cycles of disinvestment in very rural communities.

lack of municipal capacity as a demonstration of need and/or more points for towns which ranked high on the State Underserved Communities listing. Remove extra points for having a State Designation (this could be based upon application type, i.e. if a rural town with no Designation wants to do natural resource planning they shouldn't be penalized for not having a Village Designation.) Clean up or clarify the confirmed planning process requirement, it doesn't align with Statute. For consortium grants allow the RPC to be the fiscal agent.

Demonstrated level of importance of the project to the municipality - e.g., Town Plan recommendations, community problem/need, etc.

Job creation

The existence of a sustained leadership cadre in the community. A VCRD Community Visit often helps create that cadre.

Collaboration with VT Apex, Efficiency VT and other relevant organizations with institutional knowledge.



1) How well funded is the community - overall (tax base) 2) When was the last application

town priorities should be weighed higher than state priorities

How we can manage on our own.

Small communities should get extra points due to their limited resources

Increase the focus on need and lack of capacity at the local level.

Past grant monies received; underserved communities; underserved counties

No opinion.

Innovative approaches

What public outreach method(s) have you found most effective at engaging non-traditional, under-represented, or historically discriminated participants?

49 Responses

Go to existing gatherings where they meet.
Do direct outreach (mailers, knocking on doors, etc.)

Designating one or two active board people to reach out to their own neighborhood - like leaving a flyer on a door or watching for a person to be out in their yard and conversing with them about an upcoming event. The default is a basic USPS EDDM mailing which at least reaches the "Non-Front Porch Forum" homes and the paper notice might get read

No real success to speak of

\$1,000,000 question.... Direct engagement. Meet folks where they are. Places like the public transit center, food distribution centers, etc.

None yet- please share if you learn anything from this question

haven't. we need to do better with this!

1. Municipal Booth at farmers markets festivals etc. to talk with people about projects
2. Creating digital surveys that can be posted on our website and social media pages
3. Going door to door at businesses in commercial districts to speak with workers who may not live in the area



Zoom

Public engagement events outside of the regular "night meeting" format (i.e. community walk on a Saturday, weekend ice cream social, etc)

Meeting people where they are

Engagement at locations/events people are likely to attend.

Offering online surveys which are advertised via Front Porch Forum because they are open and advertised to all residents and there are minimal participation obstacles, only Internet is needed.

None to date

Diversity of approaches is most important in order to reach a wider range of people

-
1. Booth at our local Farmers' Market.
 2. Creating an event to celebrate your Town. Various Town Departments have displays & chat with attending families...food fund-raising, music, art etc. a real celebration!
 3. Using the local Library to help get the word out.

In rural communities, especially those lacking essential infrastructure, enhancement of public and civic spaces is often the most effective way to improve social equity. Effective placemaking means different things depending on the community and begins with an understanding the interplay of factors that influence whose voices are heard. Local partners can be helpful in identifying who is being left out or whose voices need amplifying, how to reach these individuals/communities, and how we can create a welcoming environment to encourage more participation. DEI committees, if a community has one, can be very helpful in defining what that looks like, where and how outreach occurs best in that community. Steering committees and "Friends of.." committees are great ways to formalize participation and encourage regular engagement. The backdrop for everything is considering how the project in question and the community's planning and bylaws combine to support broader goals for more inclusion, access, safer walking and biking, etc. - the interplay that helps all people in the community to live healthier, more affordable and productive lives.

None as of this moment

Direct mail; announcement at Town Meeting; announcement on Town website; public notices; notices in local "newspaper of record"

Nothing works, locals don't care, we only get about 10% of population at town meeting.

Paper mailings, engaging community leaders who reach out to them



Open House

Using a diversity of engagement activities and venues vs. just relying on traditional public notices in newspapers or notice boards.

Posting drafts online and enabling comment/questions; good protocols for online work sessions that enable people to ask questions; field visits/tours to show how bylaws work in effect

Meeting people where they are. Go to the biggest community event of the year and be present.

one-on-one interviews

direct outreach - e.g., knocking on doors, neighborhood meetings, etc.

tabling, use of QR codes, storymaps

Outreach sessions that are not intimidating and have actual personal invitation/ecouragment to those who typically don't participate in public forums. Many folks just don't feel comfortable speaking at a public forum so the outreach method needs to include more personal level opportunities for input.

going out to places

Meeting people on their home turf via existing community organizations, faciilties. etc.

Targeted outreach with a trained facilitator.

Public outreach at farmers' markets and a 'Community Cheers and Cheese' event, held in conjunction with other commissions and organizations here in town.

Non profit collaborators; Community organizations (schools, churches, etc), 1:1 contact with leaders from those communities

this does not exists in most of our rural white state

Not an issue

Translation

Signage on streets. Like signs that were up in Burlington during Covid

Info to people through children, churches, community places

Front Porch Forum

Instagram

Go to where they gather e.g. school functions, fairs, senior centers, WIC clinics



Front Porch Forum

We haven't tried it yet but I'm intrigued by the idea of allowing these participants "set the table" not just be at the table.

Meeting people wherever they are rather than hoping they come to your evening meeting (when they may be with their kids or at work), and incentivizing them to participate with grocery/gas/coffee gift cards, free childcare at meetings, free dinner at meetings, etc.

Concise, transparent communication is the key.

Meetings that provide information and sample of past successes similar to the potential project.

Virtual attendance / meetings via Zoom. Public notices being posted on social media.

Go to people instead of asking them to come to you. Knock on doors and seek out people you know won't show up at a meeting.

N/A

Many work but they don't penetrate the mentioned community. I don't know.

In-person conversations and workshops with hands-on participation (e.g., moving cutouts of streetscape features over a village map). Same method for all people - good outreach is good outreach; we are all individuals at the nexus of myriad subgroups, and almost everyone is, or has ancestry, that is non-traditional, under-represented, historically discriminated against. Bad planning results from making blanket assumptions about people based on their group identity; good planning results from approaching people, with humility and openness, as individuals each with their own unique voices, concerns, and ideas about the place they live.

Not sure that we've found any. Our Select Board meetings and all planning committee meetings are open to the public and available via Zoom. We do plan to reach out to some of these communities during the writing of our Municipal Plan

Direct liaison with local communities

Attending in-person gatherings; social media; direct mail. Provide a long timeline and multiple vehicles for feedback. If asking to attend mtng, provide virtual option, food, childcare.



#1 - Hanging out, handing out info, or just chatting at the Transfer Station on a Saturday morning. #2 - same at community potluck or Fire Department BBQ. #3 Blog-ish, info-dense (but engaging) posts on the listserv/website

If you have opted NOT to apply for an MPG in the past, why not?

10 Responses

Too many projects in motion and not enough bandwidth of volunteers to support the work

N/A

Gears if awful. So incredibly awful that some small communities avoid the program because of it. Not program staff's fault, but please make it less awful.

No perceived need for the past few needs; reminder notifications of grants and application deadlines should be sent to towns sooner - many local boards meet once a month and need more time to process things

Select board lost its mind at last minute

Not yet in a position of need.

No time to write the application

All of the funding gets eaten up by the engineers you make us hire.

Lack of capacity to apply and administer a grant.

Past elected officials had no interest in anything like this so we're just getting up to speed

Communicating changes to complex bylaws is difficult. What public outreach method(s) have you found most effective at engaging non-traditional, under-represented, or historically discriminated participants?

28 Responses

Photo-renditions - not cheap but really no other way to show "before-after"

Hybrid meeting options, mailers, multiple meeting locations or times.

none



Again, we need to work on this. It might be helpful if the answers provided to this question get redistributed to municipalities. Sometimes seeing how others succeeded can be inspiring.

Digital Public Outreach efforts, information at municipal tables at fairs, festivals, and farmers markets, including bylaw explanation and updates in new resident information packets

Taking time to explain housing terms, discuss housing types and forms -- ideally based on local examples -- before discussing in zoning/bylaw terms.

We have tried so many different methods and have had minimal success. Public outreach is very time consuming for volunteers already stretched to do the work.

None really effective

I always begin with an overview purposes and goals, starting with the image of the state planning goal - historic walkable livable centers separated/surrounded by working and natural lands. Planning (and zoning) are the means we achieve this goal and create better places for us to live, using images to communicate what that looks like and means, based on the community scale, setting and what the appropriate next increment of growth could look like in that context. Sadly, I am often showing villagers images of things that they can aspire to but can't have due to lack of infrastructure or VTRANS rules - infilled lots and new neighborhoods with missing middle housing types, revitalized walkable and shaded Village Main Streets, a community in which many needs are accessible by bike or ebike, and village or downtown with defined edges/thresholds.

Providing information in as many formats as possible- ie in person meetings, online information

Visual images in teaching the public about potential change on the horizon.

Neighborhood meetings

Mailings, direct outreach to community leaders who then engage others

Open House

We should hold various types of informational and input seeking events at different times of the day and week. Serve food, provide childcare, or stipend for participants.

These tend to be the participants LEAST RESISTANT to change- it's the older m, homeowners, politically connected and savvy ones who freeze the process.



Not all methods will work for everyone, so it's important to provide several education options. Precedent imagery is essential -- showing people examples of missing middle housing types, village style development, mixed-use development from their own community or region helps people understand terminology and get a real sense of the intent of bylaw modernization (no, it's not a bunch of high-rises)

direct outreach - knocking on doors, neighborhood meetings

neighborhood walks, targeted interviews

None, because you do not care about the issues you create for us

Translation. Pamphlets. Door to door. Community meetings

Not sure.

traditionally residents do attend such public meetings

N/A

Public meetings, social media, and word of mouth. However, typically you mostly get those against changes.

I have found that my ability to communicate about bylaw changes is independent of a person's social status and background; innate intelligence is a factor in an individual's ability to comprehend complex things, but that's an entirely separate consideration. The best approach is just to treat people with respect, not as a demographic representative. Otherwise, complex does not have to mean complicated - case study examples are useful in conveying the potential or hoped-for impact of regulatory changes.

Village Walkaround

Community conversations with free food in non-municipal settings like church halls, ski area lodges, barns and school cafeterias.

Please share any other program feedback, including opportunities for program improvement or lessons learned throughout the process.

44 Responses

Communities will need state guidance and funding and - professional technical assistance to update local bylaws and implement provisions in S.100.

Consider allowing significant volunteer contributions -- in excess of simple participation in meetings -- to be counted as match for MPG program.



Consider allowing communities with populations between 2,500-5,000 to work directly with RPC if identified in application.

There should be more zoning standards/templates developed by CCRPC instead of each Town writing their own, since we often look at other towns zoning and use/modify. It's crazy for each town to be doing all this work from scratch on our own. The Building Better Neighborhoods Guide is awesome, but it's still too passive. Why not have CCRPC issue recommendations to change zoning to be xyz? The state is now mandating some housing changes, seems like there's a big gap between every town doing their own thing and the state coming along and mandating individual items.

The budgets for these very important projects are simply not enough to attract the professional expertise necessary to do this important work. That's why there are so very few VT consultants

I live in a town/region where as lot of time/effort is put into planning, with very little work done on plan execution.

nothing further to add

S. 100 and 30 by 2030 provide an historic opportunity to change the planning paradigm in Vermont. Across the agencies we need more nuanced recognition and codification of the attributes of the range of Vermont's historic urban place types - from crossroads/hamlet to small city. The support and enhancement of these attributes should be systematically and intentionally the new (old?) default development and growth model.

I have not been involved with any grant programs.

Thanks to staff for all their efforts

Basically small towns need longer windows of opportunity to process applications and also often need help in the application process. Again as stated earlier in this survey, an annual "calendar" issued at the beginning of each year listing all available grants and their respective application deadlines would be helpful for small town boards to determine what to apply for.

The website is awkward, especially for a non-techy.

So many of the grant applications I've submitted are beyond confusing, difficult and not at all user friendly to submit. Rural communities are at a disadvantage because we don't have the staff to write grants. We rely on volunteers and less than a handful of Town leaders who submit grant applications. Rural communities need grant support staff to help with the process



I have no use or need for planning grants or bylaw modernization. I wish these funds could instead be used to lower taxes to keep all of Vermont more affordable.

We are working on bylaws revisions with 10 municipalities, and some are pursuing or have attained recent village center designations. None are currently planning to pursue NDA designation, but perhaps could after new bylaws are adopted.

Y'all do an amazing job with the MPG/ BMGs. DEC staff are trying. But you are still pushing a noodle uphill into poorly informed, untrained, change resistant local officials and citizens who can now point to the giant Miasma of S.100 and use it as a scare tactic to do nothing. Much larger grants for the types of multi-year process used to build trust and write great plans (and yes, that's consultants) are badly needed. Good plans need a minimum of 30 months and \$100,000. Same for codes. And you'll now owe an S.100 penalty for convincing any town to try to apply all that language glop to its own situation.

consider increasing competitiveness to those underserved communities and lowering competitiveness of larger town/cities which have municipal staff and/or are more frequent recipients. adding a technical assistance program (similar to the Parks Service or EPA where communities get aid in the form of a professional team to do the work instead of giving the town cash to find there own assistance)

Human beings are incapable of the behavioral change required to reverse or even mitigate climate impacts from fossil fuel consumption.

DCHD should promote statewide, inclusionary zoning legislation requiring each town to make an affordable housing development plan that includes a specific number of homes affordable to very low-income people where the number of home is based on current municipal size. Perhaps towns with fewer than n residents could be exempt or possibly only required to promote ADUs.

I am continually surprised at the deer eyes in headlights looks at talks about our historic fabric and the delight from people learning about it.

Humility.

N/A

Use some of the Revolving Loan Funds to fix infrastructure/roads, and increase single level housing opportunities.

The GEARS system is not user friendly at all, and attempting to get help from VCDP is also not helpful.



Please publish the good news you have going on so the general public can be more aware of all the work you are doing.

Happy to be a voice in the choir, if helpful.

Nothing to say

Please considers way to fund private affordable, workforce and missing middle housing projects without adding excessive strings and associated tools (zoning regs, lower permit fees, multi unit dwellings, ADUs, smaller lots).

Too much government control

Award grants based on the numbers served. And on BIPOC served.

I don't feel that there is enough priority given to utilities and their improvements or upgrades.

We revised our town plan from scratch. The state planning guidelines were useful but should provide more specific guidance including options for wording key aspects.

We need to modernize the GEARS system.

Always found the necessary help and provided support with questions. Sometime the way information is presented in the application is difficult to know what information is "really" being asked - clarity here would be helpful to the applicant.

We have worked with the CCRPC on 3 MPGs in the past 10 years. Their staff has been excellent and gone above and beyond. Planning has become increasingly complicated and many aspects do not apply to all towns. Volunteers are not capable of doing planning without professional support.

Would like to see the bylaw modernization grant available to municipalities to establish zoning regulations and not just update them.

I'd look at upping the maximum grant amount and taking a statewide/regional approach to what the critical problems are and where the "bang for the buck is" If project A costs 90k but will unlock the potential for 1000s of new homes, do that instead of funding three 20k projects that might only result in the creation of 25 homes each...

Helping municipalities leverage state and federal funds with grant writing will help with infrastructure improvements, Inventorying development opportunities will help municipalities focus their efforts



BMG program should require a completed visioning process before awarding funds to update bylaws. OR more importantly, there should be a clear visioning chapter in the town plan.

Working with the Better Places Program was a good experience.

There are way too many different targeted grants. Consider consolidating and streamlining, in order to offer greater clarity to communities about available sources of funding, greater flexibility in using the funding, and to use RPC and state personnel more efficiently, so that more money is available to go to (or stay in) the community, with less administrative overhead.

too soon to comment on newer grant programs...

I have no complaints or suggestions for improving the program. I live and work in different communities, and honestly, most communities I'm aware of have made use of the MPG program in recent years. The program supports lots of good municipal planning efforts. Keep up the good work!

Please be effective. Vermonters need more housing.