

VCDA Fall Conference | November 2nd, 2023

Group 1 Discussion Notes:

Preservation missing from the conversation today

Building things back better Example Waterbury State Office Building discuss really building them back especially in villages.

Property owners panicking that they cannot change historic buildings. If we do not allow for change for flood proofing, they will become blighted we need to use buildings. There are possibilities even for energy efficiency. Changes can be made to buildings.

State historic Sites were also flooded and need to be altered for flood resilience.

Preservation Trust of Vermont provide assessments free of charge as well as the VT Division of Historic Preservation.

Take the time to reassess Example: Town of Waterbury expanded their historic district asking questions like What do we preserve? What do we need to change? How do we renovate for reuse?

Business's immediate reaction after a disaster is to reopen as soon as possible and not think about reassessing.

Are there grant opportunities for historic monuments to be moved? Yes, reach out to VT Division of Historic Preservation.

How about moving Cemeteries away from compromised rivers? Yes, reinterring them elsewhere. There is an Unmarked Burial Fund again, contact VT Division of Historic Preservation.

Comment of Agencies working in silos. It is difficult to connect with the right agencies. Create a database to help through projects.

Town of Bethel created a written manual on operations...this is a great example for other towns to create.

Reach out to Regional Planning Commissions, USDA, VT League of Cities and Towns, Agency of Commerce and Community Development and they will connect you to other available resources for your projects.

Laura from VT Division of Historic Preservation spoke about the National Register of Historic Buildings. Honorific for buildings or places that are related to a historic event, architecture, archeological, etc. and regulated through Section 106. Alterations can happen as long as you keep the historic character of the building. There are many advantages of streamlining the renovation process, like expedited FEMA review and state ACT 250 process. Montpelier has the largest historic district in the state. Again, use of Preservation Trust of VT and VT Division of Historic Preservation can come to you to provide an assessment for your public and private projects.

When applying for National Historic Tax Credits, they are the final stamp on preservation projects.

Key to reach out early in your process of the project to reach out to the organizations to assist you in providing all the resources that are available to you.

Group 2 Discussion Notes:

Working together regionally is so important and especially for the smaller towns that do not have the paid staff to put forward projects.

A discussion about towns paying for a project in another town; like a stream alteration project and no, however they could do a consortium Municipal Planning Grant. Funding usually flows through individual towns. Need to support cross town collaboration for flood resiliency.

We need to incentivize river corridor plans for towns. Regional Planning Commissions are the key resource for these types of plans.

VTrans was the lead for a biking connection on Route 15 that connected different towns.

In Lamoille County the Regional Planning Commission was the lead for a project that reduced the flood level by a foot with the towns of Jeffersonville, Cambridge, and Johnson. The regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for the towns.

Focus on action- When we take the time to listen, we come up with better solutions and it could be just one person that we need to listen to.

Villages within a town or city sometimes get overlooked even though they are part of the history and they need to find that one commonality for their voice be heard.

We are always a generation behind for change to happen. We need to share our successes, even if it is a Hazard Mitigation Buy-out.

Mobile/ manufactured home communities are very vulnerable due to being placed in flood plains, but also have strong volunteerism.

Help communities share their goals and start with small steps.

The spirit where we come together in a disaster, but how do we have this same spirit without the disaster. Equity and community building and make it sustainable. Love is not a political word, but needs to be a part of our vocabulary in our municipalities. Internal pressures to move forward. We are all down river from something.

What could we do to shift to proactive resource navigation and building capacity? The Agency of Commerce and Community Development has a list of consultants that provide capacity for towns.

We need to make access to resources easier for small towns. We need to get more creative on how to assist these small towns and build internal capacity. Need to create wraparound services.

Small towns also have a hard time coming up with match money for grant funding.