

Recreation / Parks / Environment

[TRAILS](#) | [RIVERS](#) | [PARK ACTIVITIES](#) | [INDOOR REC CENTERS](#)

Includes goals from these Creative Communities Reports:

- Expand Recreation in the Hardwick Lake Area
- Bring Arts and Community Projects to Taylor Park (St. Albans)
- Develop an Eastern Avenue Park (St. Johnsbury)
- Make Better Use of the River (Middlebury)
- Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System
- Rutland as a Recreation Center
- Make Downtown Plainfield More Welcoming to Pedestrians

Trails

- **Public/ private partnerships** often produce the largest pot of money for recreation. Building small scale institutional capacity can help – for example in Stowe a local Mountain Bike Club formed to maintain bike trails.
- **Kiosks** can be a useful starting project. The information provided by a kiosk can begin with something as simple as boxes similar to trail head sign-in boxes, attached to willing business entryways and containing pamphlets or a few notices of local events.
- Some outdoor trails focus on the activity (biking, jogging, hiking, etc.) others can focus on a series of particular sites to visit. For example, you could feature migratory bird concentration sites that are accessible to the public or a tour of top photography sites.
- There are many options for designating village/town walks along existing paths. The most important step is to have something on paper – even if it's only photocopies of a simple guide. Local residents can organize theme walks of all sorts, some of which might get published or written up in a local newspaper, others just for those who attend on a weekend afternoon.
- **Springfield** has a frequently used riverside trail. Visit Springfield and talk with the group that put it together.
- Rutland took on a trails system as a key part of its creative economy work. **EJay Bishop** at the Rutland Recreation Department: 773-1822x14.
- **Chittenden County's Regional Planning Commission** created a master plan for paths that could serve as a model. For questions about trail planning in Chittenden County, **Chapin Spencer** at Local Motion, (802) 652-2453, will either know the answer or know who to ask.
<http://www.localmotion.org/>
- Funding for outdoor recreation and trails is available through the State of Vermont **Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation**. For details, explore their site at vtfpr.org/recgrant/trgrant.cfm and vtfpr.org/reclwcf/index.cfm.

- A statewide source of information is the **Vermont Trails & Greenways Council** at the **Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation**, 229-0005x13 or <http://www.vermonttrailsandgreenways.org/>
- If part of a trail system includes conservation projects near rivers, then you can also check with the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** which works with farmers and landowners to do stream bank erosion work. Contact Bill Forbes at NRCS (802) 775-8034 for information. You could also check with your **local Watershed Association**.
- The **National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program** helps plan and implement local trail, greenway and river protection projects. Contact Jennifer Waite, VT Projects Director, NPS Rivers and Trails, PO Box 178, Woodstock, VT 05091, 802-457-3368, Jennifer_waite@nps.gov.
- **VT Conservation Youth Corp** may be able to help build, clear, and clean up trails and access points. Call (802) 434-3969.
- College students often can assist with trail building – either the physical building or mapping out the trail systems. Check with **area schools**.
- Working with landowners and gaining rights to use their land can be the most difficult part of a trail project. The **Vermont Center for Geographic Information** (vcgi.org) might be able to assist with mapping parcels.
- The **Vermont Recreation Trails Grants Program** of the **Agency of Natural Resources** may have funding. Matching grants are offered for maintenance of existing trails and the construction of new trails on state, municipal and private lands. These grants can also help prepare and print trail maps and more. Contact Sherry Smecker, grants administrator at (802) 241-3690.
- The **VT Agency of Transportation** (VTrans) administers a Bicycle/Pedestrian program that provides advice and connections to grant resources. Amy Bell is the coordinator: 828-2678.
- The **Bikes Belong Coalition** (BBC) assists local organizations in developing bicycle facility projects with grants of up to \$10,000. <http://www.bikesbelong.org/grants>, tim@bikesbelong.org
- The **Vermont Bike and Pedestrian Coalition** could be a resource (vtbikeped.org). Also Becka Roolf, **Going Green**, 802-279-4037, info@goinggreenvt.com
- The **National Recreation and Park Association** has recreation funding ideas. Betsy Orselet of the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association can provide information: betsy@vrpa.org or visit the website: <http://www.vrpa.org/>
- Many towns are interested in improving their pedestrian-ways in the downtown, and so many guidelines exist to help plan. A first stop for references is:

aot.state.vt.us/progdev/Sections/LTF/LTF.htm. This brings you to the Program Development division of the Agency of Transportation, and the Local Transportation Facilities section.

- Information on Vermont State Standards for highway design is available at: aot.state.vt.us/progdev/standards/statabta.htm. These guidelines will include answers to questions about designing bike lanes, shoulders, and minimum distances for tree plantings.
- Information on Traffic Calming is available at aot.state.vt.us/planning/TCSandAP.htm. More detailed drawings of items that can help with calming are available from **Kevin Marshia**: (802) 828-2664
- The **Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program** publish *Recommended Trees for Vermont Communities*. Also **Kate Forrer** (katherine.forrer@uvm.edu), with UVM extension, is a wealth of knowledge with regard to street tree planting and programs.
- **VTrans** gives priority in **Enhancement Grants**, and funding generally, to towns that have a clear plan for where sidewalks and other amenities need to go.
- A Town Plan should address the characteristics that make downtown an attractive place to work, shop, live and recreate, and to consider how changes proposed in the future might affect its character. Some useful references are:
 - *Above and Beyond: Visualizing Change in Small Towns and Rural Areas* by Julie Campoli, Elizabeth Humstone and Alex MacLean (American Planning Association)
 - *Saving Place: A Guide and Report Card for Protecting Community Character* (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
 - *The Roadscape Guide: Tools to Preserve Scenic Road Corridors* (Champlain Valley Greenbelt Alliance for the Vermont Forum on Sprawl)
 - Publications by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl vtsprawl.org.

Rivers

- The **Vermont Center for Geographic Information** will have options both for mapping the river area and for integrating that knowledge into community planning (vcgi.org).
- The Connecticut River is a key resource to towns on Vermont's eastern edge. Studying the **Connecticut River Byways** program (byways.org) or the **Connecticut River Joint Commissions** (crjc.org) could offer ideas of what other places have done with a river asset. Three towns participating in the Creative Communities Program also participate in the Connecticut River Byways program – **Bellows Falls, Windsor and St. Johnsbury**.

- The **Vermont River Conservancy** can provide statewide information on river preservation (vermontriverconservancy.org/). Contact Steve Libby.
- An important part of any conservation work will be the land surrounding the river. Some organizations that deal with these types of land issues are: **Vermont Land Trust** and **Middlebury Area Land Trust**, **Natural Resources Conservation Service** (vt.nrcs.usda.gov), **The Nature Conservancy**, which has a Vermont office (nature.org) and **Clean & Clear Watershed Coordinators** (Ethan Swift, 802-786-2503).
- Many communities are planning recreational trails around their natural assets. A resource for water-specific recreation would be the **Vermont Paddlers' Club** vtpaddlers.net.
- Developing an overall map and creating specific implementation plans may require outside assistance. It will be important to find someone to work with who doesn't simply complete the project, but also builds a team within the community. Talk to **Lou Bresse** at **Lake Champlain Bikeways** (802) 652-BIKE, to navigate this question.

Park Activities

- Build the local knowledge bank for park upkeep through the **Master Gardener** program.
- **Outdoor movies** could be a simple addition to a park – but should be discussed with local theaters to avoid unforeseen impact.
- **Knight Point State Park** is an example of a large scale arts / park partnership in the Lake Champlain Islands.
- **Charlie Hunter** is an excellent resource for both visual art and music performances Write flyradar@sover.net or (802) 463-3669.

Indoor Rec Centers

- **Indoor Recreation of Orleans County (IROC)** in Derby – (802) 334-8511 x104. Or **David Kimell** (802) 527-1202 at the **Collins-Perley Sports Complex** in St. Albans.