



## 2021 NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND PLANNING CONFERENCE

Wednesday October 13 - Friday October 15, 2021  
Hilton Burlington Vermont

### Conference Agenda

#### Wednesday October 13, 2021

- 2:00 p.m. **Registration Open**
- 2:00 p.m. **Exhibitor Set Up**
- 6:00 p.m. **Social Hour & Hor d'oeuvres** with conference exhibitors and sponsors
- 8:00 p.m. **Dinner on Your Own**

#### Thursday October 14, 2021

- 7:00 a.m. **Registration Open**
- 7:30 a.m. **Breakfast with Exhibitors**
- 9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
  - Sarah Marchant, NNECAPA President
  - Meagan Tuttle and David White, Conference Co-Chairs
  - Miro Weinberger, Mayor of Burlington (invited)

#### **Keynote: The Future of Planning...Planning with Foresight,**

Petra (Stieninger) Hurtado is the Research Director at the American Planning Association, heading APA's research programs and foresight practice. In this role, she is responsible for expanding a future-focused research agenda and advancing planning practices that assist communities in navigating change. Her areas of expertise and research include urban sustainability, smart cities, emerging technologies, nature-based solutions, and environmental psychology. Prior to joining APA, she worked as an advisor, planner, researcher, and educator in the global urban sustainability arena. She has a Ph.D. in urban planning from the Vienna University of Technology, where she teaches on urban sustainability and environmental psychology. Additionally, she has been a guest lecturer at Loyola University Chicago and the Universidad Tecnologica de Bolivar, Colombia. Petra has authored and co-authored multiple books, research papers, publicly funded reports, and articles and has presented as a subject matter expert at numerous conferences around the globe.

*Petra Hurtado, APA Research Director*

- 10:15 – 10:45 a.m. **Coffee Break with the Exhibitors**

### 1. How to be strategic in the implementation chapter of your municipal plan. Setting your community up for success in achieving their vision.

Having been a regional planner and local planning director for more than 20 years I have always been disappointed with the quality of implementation plans as they rarely led to any real change in communities. Montpelier's new plan update provided an opportunity to try a new format and approach to develop a better Implementation Chapter. The results of this process have been positive, and the ideas and methods used are easily transferable to other communities to consider and build from. Most comprehensive plans are broken into various topic chapters such as housing, energy, transportation, and land use. Larger municipalities such as Montpelier have committees dedicated to these topics and we used this new approach with them in order to help develop very targeted and deliberate action plans for inclusion with the City Plan. We used this new model to help committees and boards organize their thoughts and forced them into making plans that avoid things like "encouraging accessory apartments" or "supporting open space". Those statements do not actually do anything. We need actionable steps like making specific recommendations to change zoning regulations or creating programs to purchase development rights. This new methodology helped guide boards from aspiration (vision) to goals to strategies. Our experience, having done this for six committees, was overwhelmingly positive. The format ties in best practices from Vermont's Planning Manual with other lessons to make a more comprehensive set of goals and strategies. One of the key organizational pieces of the new format is that strategies are broken into 5 boxes including new plans that are needed, permits (using regulations to implement goals), programs (initiatives that are ongoing like CIP and first-time homebuyer program), projects (one-time items like building a bike path), and policies (how we spend money or use municipal resources). This presentation will teach planners two primary items: 1) how to structure and format any plan to be more strategic and actionable, and 2) the process of guiding boards and commissions in the development of plans using this format.

*Mike Miller AICP, CFM, City of Montpelier VT*

#### 1a. How Fair is Your Housing? Telling a Story Through Data and Best Practices

This session will explore how to use data analysis to diagnose potential bias in local housing policy. Using a study commissioned by the Greater Portland Council of Governments as an example, we will outline a process for determining how local zoning limits housing inclusive housing development. This study looked beyond simply whether a zoning code permitted multifamily housing, but also at various requirements that, taken as a whole, have the effect of limiting its development. This effort shows how codes, intentionally or otherwise, can result in unfair housing policies that limit choices for many Americans. The presenters will then outline ways to ensure that local goals and inclusive housing policy can both be met, via use of tools such as form-based codes; affordable housing overlays; and inclusionary zoning policies.

*Jeff Levine, AICP, Levine Planning Strategies; Vanessa Farr, Greater Portland Council of Governments.*

### 2. Harnessing the Power of Community Feedback with a Qualitative Methodology

Lived experiences and local knowledge, and other forms of qualitative data, are crucial elements to holistic planning practice and can transform projects and processes for the benefit of many communities. Integrating qualitative practices into planning work can help support more inclusive plan making and account for important and persistent inequities present in quantitative data by surfacing the rich, unique, and varied lived experiences of marginalized communities, who in addition to being undercounted in quantitative data, are often excluded from formal decision-making structures and institutions. Without a methodology to follow, however, working with qualitative data can be confusing, time-consuming, and expensive. Ineffective collection and analysis of community feedback can also lead to biased conclusions and alienate community members. Adopting a qualitative methodology in your project can help you address these risks, improve your work, and nurture stronger relationships with stakeholders. In this session, the speakers will present an overview of a qualitative methodology for planning and share tools for developing a coherent, ethical, and practical methodology to collect, analyze, and incorporate qualitative data into your projects. Special emphasis will be placed on the ethics of working with personal stories and lived experiences and how to respectfully and meaningfully integrate qualitative practice throughout your work. This session's speakers will also share examples from their own

work of how they approach working. Attendees will leave this session understanding how to incorporate a qualitative methodology into their work and projects.

*Christian Brandt, AICP, Planner and Community Engagement Specialist, MAPC; Carolina Prieto, Community Engagement Manager, MAPC; Alyssa Kogan, Data Services, MAPC; Sharon Ron, Public Health Planner, MAPC*

### **3. A Planner's Guide to Writing Competitive Grant Proposals**

In this interactive session, participants will learn the nuts and bolts of funding research, project development, and proposal writing. This overview will help you to frame your thoughts and collect materials to approach grant seeking in an organized (and successful!) way.

Participants will learn:

- The four factors of grant writing success,
- The ten most common reasons proposals are declined,
- The five steps in the proposal writing process, and
- Tips and tricks to write compelling grant proposals.

Participants are welcome to bring actual proposal ideas to discuss with the group.

*Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates, Burlington VT*

### **4. Understanding and Developing Form-Based Standards - Taking it from "reality" to "virtual" (and back again).**

The session will examine some of the real-world applications and considerations of developing form-based zoning standards based on existing and proposed ideals. We will see how we can draft (virtual) for what we want to see (reality). Session leaders will familiarize participants with a rapidly changing commercial-industrial area in Burlington and discuss its evolution and future vision. They will then describe some of the key considerations necessary for creating new form-based development standards based on what is currently on the ground - both desirable and not-so-much. Attendees will then be split into 1-3 small groups to take a closer look at building and lot patterns and scale in their respective areas. They will work as a team to determine how to code these areas as part of a future rezoning effort. The session will wrap-up with each group describing what they found and how they approached coding their study area.

Attendees will be encouraged to:

1. review pre-session handouts to familiarize themselves with the study area in advance
2. actually, visit the corridor preferably on foot or bike the evening before the session (There are several fun places for food and beverages along the way!)
3. bring a laptop or tablet to the session itself so they can access various online resource information (i.e., Google Maps and Street view)

*Christopher Parker, AICP, City of Dover NH; David White, FAICP, City of Burlington VT*

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.      **Lunch on Your Own in Burlington**

2:30 – 3:45 p.m.      **(3) Concurrent Workshops & (1) Mobile Workshop**

#### **1. Adapting FBC to Vermont towns: Form-based Regulation Approaches in Smaller Communities**

In recent years, New England towns large and small have learned about the rising popularity of form-based codes (FBCs) and wondered: could an FBC usher in all their development hopes and dreams? In strictest interpretation, FBCs replace use regulations in favor of form regulations, but most communities are not prepared to relinquish use standards or alter their established regulatory approach in a dramatic way. Rather, a number of Vermont communities have found that revising and complementing existing regulations with form-based standards is an effective strategy to access benefits of the FBC approach without potential downsides of a wholesale code rewrite. Come hear about a selection of smaller towns in Vermont that have integrated form-based standards into their existing codes to lower barriers to diverse development and illustrate the building forms they wish to attract.

*Cat Bryars, AICP; Bennington County Regional Commission; Regina Mahony, AICP, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission*

## 2. Census Data for Communities

This session serves as a primer on community indicators for planning. It covers basic data terminology and analysis techniques, considerations for indicator development processes and a review of U.S. Census Bureau and other data sources as community indicators. The 2020 Census and American Community Survey resources will be highlighted and contrasted along with a basic tutorial of the Census data access portal.

*Michael Moser, UVM Center for Rural Studies*

## 3. Tourism Disrupted, Part 2: Tourism and Planning for Climate Change

Tourism is evolving in response to climate change. Natural resources that support tourism are threatened. Climate change threatens winter sports with less snow and shorter seasons. Coastal areas face sea level rise, flooding, and more frequent storms. Agricultural and natural lands are changing, threatening traditional agricultural products and recreation. What does the future hold for tourism in Northern New England? How are planners responding to climate change and supporting the tourism industry adapt to the future climate reality? An introductory presentation of emerging issues and trends in tourism and climate change will be followed by small group discussions. Planners will break out into groups to share their experience with how climate change is impacting tourism in their communities, generate ideas about what communities can do to support a resilient tourism industry over the long term.

*James Stevens, AICP, ConsultEcon, Inc.*

## 4. From Urban Renewal to Great Streets: Walking Tour of Downtown Burlington (2.75 hours)

In the 1960s, Burlington voters approved a plan and a municipal bond to support the Champlain Street Urban Renewal Project, which leveled 27 acres of the downtown and displaced the “Little Italy” neighborhood. Approximately 50 years later, the City Council and voters approved plans and municipal bonds to reinvest in the city’s downtown core – this time guided by “Jane Jacobs-approved” planning principles. Walk downtown Burlington with City Officials that have been deeply involved in the implementation of the City’s award-winning planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan. Beginning at the Hilton, visit sites to explore what actually came of the city’s urban renewal program, and where those projects are today, and discover both recent successes and ongoing challenges associated with implementing planBTV’s “grand vision” for downtown. City planners will be joined by current and past members of the city team from the Public Works, Community & Economic Development, Parks & Recreation, and City Arts departments.

*Meagan Tuttle, AICP, City of Burlington VT; David White, FAICP, City of Burlington VT*

3:45 – 5:15 p.m.           **(3) Concurrent Workshops**

### 1. Keys to the Valley - A Bi-State Housing Initiative

At its core, Keys to the Valley is a campaign to address housing needs. The main final physical product is the website – [keystothevalley.com](http://keystothevalley.com) – not a report. We decided to turn the usual tome that begins with lots of information and then ends eons later with recommendations on its head and just start where we ended. We still have all that information hiding in there, but you do not need to explain things to convince people. This trio of planners will discuss their unique approach to housing. Keys is a plan, an outreach program, survey, visualization, data portal, training program, and website all rolled into one. We will share the site, visual examples meant to show that housing can fit in areas and not be very noticeable, and our key concepts and understandings. This should be useful to anyone grappling with the housing crisis (which all of you are).

*Kevin Geiger, AICP, CFM; Senior Planner, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission*

*Olivia Uyizeye, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission*

*Jason Rasmussen, AICP; Director of Planning, Mount Ascutney Regional Commission*

## 2. COVID Migration to Northern New England: Long Term Changes to Demographic/housing Trends

Northern New England has been facing natural population declines and is reliant on in-migration from other states and countries for population growth. Between 2010 and 2019, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont were 3 of only 4 states to have less births than deaths. This session will explore changes seen in population and housing brought about by accelerated in-migration due to the pandemic. This panel will explore positive impacts as well as negative and have interactive time with session attendees including Q&A relative to issues in their communities.

*Ben Smith, AICP; North Star Planning; Benjamin Frost, Esq., AICP, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority; John E. Adams, AICP, Vermont Center for Geographic Information*

## 3. The Fantasy of Compact Settlement in the Absence of Infrastructure: A Discussion About Translating Policy Goals Into Public Investment in New England

Compact settlement is a nearly ubiquitous policy goal for state, local, county, and regional government. But what of investment in the wastewater, drinking water, and storm water infrastructure necessary to retain, expand, and create new compact settlements upon which most smart growth, climate change and adaptation, conservation, energy, economic development, and other planning initiatives depend? Budgets are the ultimate policy statement. How might the planners of New England move forward together to demand state and federal funding necessary to plan, design, engineer and implement the compact settlements necessary to preclude the large lot exurban development path of least resistance. The purpose of this forum is to have planners and related professions engage in a discussion with one another about what is working, what is not, and what we as professionals can do to prompt action. Panelists will introduce the issues to prime the conversation.

*Juli Beth Hinds, AICP, Birchline Planning LLC; Jim Sullivan, Executive Director; Bennington County Regional Commission; Amy Macrellis, Senior Water Quality Specialist, Stone Environmental; Chris Campany, Executive Director; Windham Regional Commission*

5:30 -7:00 p.m. **Evening Reception: Burlington City Arts Center Gallery and City Hall Park**  
*Hor d'oeuvres from Sugarsnap Catering*

7:00 p.m. **Dinner on Your Own**

## Friday October 15, 2021

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:15 a.m. Breakfast Continued with **NECAPA Annual Business Meeting**

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. (2) Concurrent Workshops and (2) Mobile Workshop

### 1. The Mad River Valley Community Dashboard Project: How are we really doing?

How do we measure community wellbeing? We have long relied on a series of standard metrics and ideas for what makes for a "successful" community, but these often do not tell the whole story - and the missing chapters belong to the most vulnerable among us. The Mad River Valley Planning District launched an initiative in the summer of 2020 to enhance the accessibility and relevance of its annual data report, called the "MRV Community Dashboard." As part of this effort, an Advisory Committee was formed to research community visioning events, conduct stakeholder outreach, and review similar community indicator projects; this research was then used to develop new focus areas and indicators. To fill in some of the recognized gaps in available data, the MRV Wellbeing Survey was distributed to residents in April 2021; as a subjective wellbeing survey, it will provide community members and local leaders new data related to quality of life, feelings of equity, and basic needs. Both the survey and Community Dashboard (an online platform highlighting data points with accompanying narratives) are intended to evolve based on community input, to be owned and made by the community, rather than by "the planners." As the project will be wrapping up this summer, we hope to be able to share lessons learned, challenges, and successes so that others may consider implementing new ways of collecting and sharing local data.

Presentation highlights:

- What do we mean by “wellbeing” and “subjective wellbeing,” and why is it important for small towns?
- From analog to digital: how to improve accessibility of local data through an interactive, online dashboard
- Community-driven data: how to improve the relevance and usability of local data through community engagement and ownership

*Kati Gallagher, Mad River Valley Planning District Community Planner*

## **2. Visibility: Understanding the Use and Limitations of Viewsheds and Photosimulations**

Understanding how to interpret the output of viewshed analysis and photosimulations is important as more and more projects use these tools to help visualize future development. We will talk about the data that goes into these types of visualizations, what are some of the problems that come about, and how to spot issues or problems. We will go over how to use the visualizations appropriately. Understanding some of what goes into producing these visualizations and how they are best used helps us all be better consumers of information.

*Judy Colby-George, TJD&A Landscape Architects and Planners; Danielle Matkoskey, Spatial Alternatives*

## **3. Visions of an Urban Village at Taft Corners: Planning and Participation Techniques to Build a Community Concept for Suburban Evolution- in a Virtual Setting (Mobile – 3.25 hours)**

How do you get citizens to give up a Saturday to talk about bike lanes and brick facades? How can you build community over a computer screen? How will you know if you are on the right track? Should communities consider taking on large planning projects in times when in-person participation will be limited? What can be learned from this experience that we will continue to use, even when the table we sit at becomes real again, not virtual? Since at least 1990, the Town of Williston’s Master Plan has contained a steady drumbeat: make Taft Corners a “vibrant, mixed use downtown area with a strong pedestrian orientation.” After Interstate 89 connected the rest of Vermont to Taft Corners; shopping centers, apartment living, and offices anchored themselves at this formerly rural intersection. Since then, Williston has struggled with what it means to have a “big-box” suburban center in their midst. Over the years and many decades of planning, visioning, and dreaming, what has been built in Taft Corners has fallen short of community expectations. The area remains more strongly vehicle rather than pedestrian oriented, is less of a “downtown” than envisioned, and most buildings and sites are single use. Beginning in 2020, the Town of Williston, through an entirely online planning process, began to visualize and reimagine development in Vermont’s first State Designated Growth Center. The goal of this effort is to create a single form-based code for Taft Corners that will encompass broad-based visioning all the way to bricks-and-mortar development. Learn about this effort to develop, publicize, and operate an entirely-online public engagement process, including the tools and techniques that Williston has found most useful in encouraging a community to imagine a transformation of nearly 1,000 acres.

*Matt Boulanger, MST, AICP, Town of Williston VT*

## **4. Nature-Based Climate Solutions (Mobile – 3.25 hours)**

Burlington, Vermont has been aggressively addressing climate change, but the City’s approach has centered mostly on renewable energy production and emissions reductions efforts to date. So, the city engaged the community members of Burlington to identify ways to combat climate change in collaboration with nature. After all, the United Nations has determined that at least one-third of humanity’s efforts to keep our planet from dangerously overheating must come from nature-based solutions. These include climate change solutions that work with soils, plants, trees, and water while also emphasizing partnerships, education, and participation to strengthen the community and the ecological integrity of our natural areas. See this work in action and learn more about this innovative approach during this mobile workshop. Participants will be able to travel between sites using their choice of transportation mode.

*Zoe Richards, Burlington Wildways Coalition; Dan Cahill, Land Steward, Burlington Parks Recreation and Waterfront; Elizabeth Kelly, Resilience Planning & Design; Steven Whitman, EdD, AICP, Resilience Planning & Design; Rebecca Roman, Burlington Conservation Board*

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. – **Refreshment Break and Hotel Check-out**

10:45– 12:15 p.m.      **(2) Concurrent Workshops**

### **Urban and Rural hybrid Opportunities for a More Equitable and Inclusive Community Engagement**

The growing reliance on remote life has led to identifiable gaps in access to public processes. Hybrid meetings continue to evolve and aim to be more inclusive, accessible, and equitable in engaging community members in the planning processes. We are testing different opportunities and prototyping hybrid engagement in urban and rural communities to increase civic participation and community connection. We will share some of the ways that different places in Maine and Massachusetts have centered the digital and in-person needs of community members to best integrate people in planning.

*Carolina Prieto, Metropolitan Area Planning Council; Catherine Ingraham, CEI Consultants, LLC.*

**LAW SESSION - TBD (CM Law Credits Pending)**

12:30 p.m.      **NNECAPA Annual Awards Luncheon**

Conference Ends @ 2:00 p.m.

Thank You and Have a Safe Trip Home

Please Remember to Complete the Online Survey

See you Next Year!