

East Hardwick Better Connections Resource List

Access and Linkages (Bike/ Pedestrian/ Transportation)

- [VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#) - The intent of the VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is to improve access and safety for people walking and bicycling through the planning, design and construction of infrastructure projects.
- [Carbon Reduction Program Federal Grant Awards](#) - provides funding to states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- [Local Motion Technical Assistance Services](#) - Local Motion provides a range of free or low-cost technical assistance services to communities working to build complete streets and encourage active transportation like walking and biking.
- [Downtown Transportation Fund](#) - a financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown and eligible Designated Village Centers.
- [Vtrans Transportation Alternatives Program](#) - provides funding for projects defined as transportation alternatives ([click here for additional FHWA guidance](#)), including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhancing mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation, trails that serve a transportation purpose, and safe routes to school projects.
- [AARP Walk Audit](#) - Learn how to assess and report on the safety and walkability of a street, intersection or neighborhood — and inspire needed change.

Comfort & Image (Water/ Drainage/ Stormwater Management)

- [Clean Water Grants](#) - the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) coordinates with committed state and federal agencies and local partners to fund, develop, implement, and track clean water projects that protect and restore water quality. (Ethan Swift at DEC - would be a good resource to connect with.)
- [Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative](#): Villages form the heart of Vermont's rural communities, but more than 200 villages lack community sewer systems, hampering revitalization. To overcome this challenge, Vermont has formed an interagency Village Wastewater Initiative Committee (VWIC) lead by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The committee meets biweekly to discuss the progress of the villages, development of tools and resources, and coordination between funders and service providers.

March 6, 2025

- [Better Roads Program](#) - A grant program for municipalities that provides funds for planning and erosion control projects that improve water quality and reduce maintenance costs.
- [Vermont's CWSRF Program](#) provides funding for Vermont's Clean Water projects in the form of low interest loans to municipalities and private entities for eligible projects. Several types of loans are available.

Planning Loans: Term of 5 to 15 years with 0% interest.

Final Design Loans: Terms of 5 to 15 years with 0% interest.

Municipal Construction Loans: Terms of 20 to 30 years with 2% administrative fee, annually. Terms need to be less than or equal to asset life.

Natural Infrastructure project loans, including through Interim Financing and Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program (WISPr).

Note: Most Planning and Final Design Loans are rolled into the construction loan at closing, and administrative fees would apply then.

Note: Loans involve delayed repayment.

Uses & Activities (Improve Housing, LVRT, River Access)

- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#): (see above) Connect the trail to town
- [Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program](#) stimulates economic growth and inspires partnerships that improve rural economic vitality across the four-state NBRC region. The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that modernize and expand water and wastewater systems; revitalize transportation infrastructure; establish workforce development programs and facilities; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies; and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities.
- [Municipal Planning Grants](#) – grant program to support planning in your village. Good for town plans and specific planning projects (i.e. economic development, zoning, transportation, etc.). Also, the Municipal Planning Grants would be a good fit for village revitalization planning and could focus on improving the historic buildings, streetscape and engage the community to define a vision for the village.
- [Recreational Trails Program \(RTP\)](#) :RTP provides annual funding to Vermont communities for the development, restoration, and maintenance of public recreational trails with a focus on project planning and development.

March 6, 2025

- [Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\)](#): LWCF supports the development of public outdoor recreation opportunities across Vermont, with a focus on creating parks and open spaces, enhancing recreation areas and facilities, and protecting wilderness areas and forests.
- [Homes for All](#): The Vermont Homes for All Toolkit and community engagement process will re-introduce Missing Middle Housing to Vermont by focusing statewide attention on small-scale gentle infill and incremental development as a strategy to address Vermont's housing and affordability crisis.
- [Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0](#): VHIP 2.0 offers grants or forgivable loans to:
 - Rehabilitate existing vacant units
 - Rehabilitate structural elements affecting multiple units, such as the roof of a multi-family property
 - Develop a new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on an owner-occupied property
 - Create new units within an existing structure
 - Create a new structure with five or fewer residential units
 - Complete repairs necessary for code compliance in occupied units (only eligible for 10 year forgivable loan)
 - Rehabilitation projects can include updates to meet housing codes, weatherization, and accessibility improvements, of eligible rental housing units.
- [Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative \(VOREC\) Community Grant Program](#): This grant program is intended to fund community projects that leverage outdoor recreation, which VOREC defines as leisure, sport and therapeutic recreation activities pursued outdoors, mainly in a natural setting.
 - Eligible applicants: Municipalities and non-profit organizations
 - Grant amounts: Grant amounts: Depends on grant track – No match required
 - Current status: 2023 Recipients Announced
 - Funding source: one-time State General funds
- [Recreational Trails Program](#): This grant program provides annual funding to Vermont communities for the development and restoration of public recreational trails. Eligible applicants: Municipalities, non-profit organizations, and other governmental entities.
 - Grant amounts: \$50,000 maximum with no minimum – 20% match required
 - Current status: The 2025 grant round is now closed. Pre-applications were due December 6, 2024.
 - Funding source: Federal Highway Administration funds
- [Enhancement of Recreation Stewardship and Access \(ERSA\) Trail Grants](#): ERSA Trail Grants were one-time awards intended to fund projects that enhanced the stewardship and accessibility of trails across Vermont.

March 6, 2025

Resources/ Similar Initiatives/ Case Studies:

- Sample Vacant Property Ordinance: [City of St. Albans](#)
- Look at our [success stories on DHCD website](#) and the [Downtown Transportation Fund blog](#) for inspiration. The Danville Case study might be a good one to review.
- [VTRANS LVRT Management Plan](#)
- [The Civic Standard](#) – Hardwick, Vermont
- [Main Street Master Plan](#) – Springfield, Vermont (a Better Connections Plan)
- [Bethel Better Block](#) - Bethel, Vermont

- VT Green Streets Guide - <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/projects/vermont-green-streets-guide>
- [Vermont Planning Atlas](#) – An easy-to-use tool that provides access to commonly requested data - the status of local planning and regulations, designation boundaries, and more.
- [Vermont Planning Manual](#) – The Planning Manual offers up-to-date guidance on preparing municipal plans, as well as an overview of the state designation programs, and their benefits.
- [Vermont Downtown and Village Center Design Tool Kit](#)
- VCRD community visits: <https://www.vtrural.org/community-visits/>
- <https://www.railstotrains.org/resource-library/>
- https://www.localmotion.org/complete_streets_technical_assistance

Sociability (Buildings/ Facilities/ Community Spaces)

- [Village Center Designation Application Guidelines](#) – lays out the requirements and process to apply for designation.
- [Village Center Benefits](#) – East Hardwick has Village Designation. Eligible properties in the Village Center Designation could be eligible for tax credits.
- [Village Center Funding Directory](#) – a list of grant opportunities to improve your village.
- [Downtown and Village Success Stories](#) - Learn how other communities sparked revitalization, build community leadership, and made positive changes happen in their community.
- [Municipal Planning Grants](#) – grant program to support planning in your village. Good for town plans and specific planning projects (i.e. economic development, zoning, transportation, etc.). Also, the Municipal Planning Grants would be a good fit for village revitalization planning and could focus on improving the historic buildings, streetscape and engage the community to define a vision for the village.
- [Historic Preservation Grants](#) - the most likely grant program to help public/nonprofit buildings in the community.
- [Northern Border Regional Commission](#) grants – The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that modernize and expand water and wastewater systems; revitalize transportation infrastructure; establish workforce development programs and facilities;

March 6, 2025

grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies; and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities.

- [Cultural Facilities Grants](#) - grants to help enhance, create, or expand the capacity of an existing building to provide cultural activities for the public.
- [Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits](#) – tax credits to help improvements to commercial properties (and income-producing residential and nonprofit properties) in the designated village center. See the [FAQs](#) for more information and review last year’s [guidelines and application here](#).
- [Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant](#) – for projects that improve the sustainability and resilience of libraires – including weatherization, energy efficiency, technology and outreach initiatives. (We are aware E. Hardwick doesn’t have a library of it’s own, but perhaps there is possibility to work together on outreach initiatives).
- The [Better Places program](#) may be able to help many of your initiatives that you shared that’s focused on creating or enhancing community gathering spaces and public places. Learn more about Better Places at our [website](#), [program guide](#), [placemaking toolkit](#), and [program webinar](#) which shares more details about the program and provides tools to help develop your project forward, including budget and schedule templates, action plans, and sample press release. ** As of 11/7/2024, no funding is available.
- [Municipal Energy Resilience Program](#): Municipalities may conduct community education and outreach regarding Vermont's climate policies and incentives to cut energy costs, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and improve energy resilience in municipally owned buildings.
- [Small Grants for Smart Growth](#) - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing community-based initiatives related to smart growth.
- [Village Trust Initiative](#) - The Village Trust Initiative will help towns set up or galvanize a local trust to take on projects that address a community need such as the revitalization of a general store, the creation of a community center, improvement of accessibility and use of underutilized town halls, the transition of large historic single-household dwellings into village-scale affordable housing, and more. Reach out to VCRD or Preservation Trust of Vermont to learn more.
- [Paul Bruhn Revitalization Grants](#) - The Preservation Trust of Vermont offers grants to preserve and restore buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities. Examples of work we support are roof repair or replacement, structural repairs, facade, window and door restoration or repair, code compliance work, and climate resiliency improvements. Grants will be made in increments of \$50,000-\$100,000.
- [Vermont Community Development Program](#) – offers federal Community Development Block Grants to support housing, infrastructure, economic/community development, including making public buildings accessible.
- [AARP Community Challenge Grants](#) - The AARP Community Challenge’s focus on tangible projects, community engagement and its quick-action timeline helps selected grantees fast-track ideas and replicate promising practices. Previous projects have demonstrated an ability to garner

March 6, 2025

additional funds or support from public and private funders, encourage innovation, overcome local policy barriers and receive greater overall awareness and engagement.

- [AARP Winter Placemaking Grants](#) - The grants fund quick-action projects that initiate winter placemaking demonstrations focused on creating or reinventing public spaces to improve safety, accessibility, and overall appeal.
- [Small Grants for Smart Growth](#) - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing, community-based initiatives that are grounded in or help to support smart growth. (In 2024, VNRC's Small Grants for Smart Growth program, in collaboration with Preservation Trust of Vermont, is seeking competitive applications for a special grant round of up to \$5,000 for communities seeking to build momentum toward flood-resilient community development.)
- [Mini Grants](#) – Some communities have set up programs such as St. Albans to offer “mini grants. For instance, St. Albans has opportunities for rendering services.
- [Spark Connecting Community grant program](#) - The Spark program will accept applications from hyperlocal, place-based projects (applications from a single community or a few towns working in partnership in the same region) or statewide/regional projects that support a community of individuals with a shared identity or interest. VCF aims to support emerging grassroots projects with the potential to build social capital—the connective tissue of our communities.
- [Enact:](#)
 - Vacant property ordinances
 - Zoning changes