

Lamoille County Planning Commission

Northwest Project Final Report

April 14, 2006

As of April 14, 2006 Lamoille County Planning Commission has completed the three deliverables described in work plan for the Northwest Project. LCPC was provided \$36,034 to complete the three deliverables and, at this time, all funding has been spent. Where some aspects are pending, LCPC will continue work on the project using other funding sources. Below are status reports for each of the deliverables.

Deliverable 1. Highway Ordinances.

Original Proposal: Deliverable 1 proposed to work with each town to revise road standards ordinances based on the Cambridge Highway Standards Ordinance. At each of Lamoille County's 10 towns, LCPC would present the model and offer to tailor the regulations to meet local concerns. Prior to each highway ordinance presentation, LCPC staff would review current highway standards as they are found throughout town ordinances (zoning, subdivision regulations, access permits, and highway standards). LCPC then prepared a report for each community describing what they had, how the model standards differed from their regulations and how they could be improved.

Current Status: LCPC has completed most aspects described for deliverable 1.

- ∞ The Town of Belvidere Highway Standards Ordinance was adopted January 5, 2006. **(Complete)**
- ∞ The Town of Cambridge Highway Standards Ordinance was adopted October 17, 2005. **(Complete)**
- ∞ The model was presented to the Eden Selectboard on March 8, 2006. The Selectboard was interested in the project but did not have time on their board calendar at this time. They plan to revisit the topic in July. LCPC will use other funding sources to provide assistance at that time. **(Complete)**
- ∞ The model was presented to the Elmore Selectboard on August 10, 2005. The Selectboard was not interested in amending their standards at this time. They were left with the model and information on adopting the standards if they are interested in the future. **(Complete)**
- ∞ The model was presented to the Hyde Park Selectboard on August 3, 2005. The Selectboard voted to have their staff review and revise the proposed ordinance. LCPC staff is available for assistance. The Town has a draft amendment to their road standards under review at this time and should adopt them early in the summer of 2006. **(Complete)**
- ∞ A meeting with the Town of Johnson Selectboard is expected in June 2006 to discuss the model highway standards ordinance. They have expressed an interest in the model. LCPC will use other funding sources to provide assistance at that time. **(Not Complete)**

- ∞ Due to significant staff changes over the past two years (three town administrators and two road foremen since this project started), the Town of Morristown has not been in a position to receive the education described above. A meeting with the Town of Morristown Selectboard is expected in July 2006 to discuss the model highway standards ordinance. They have expressed an interest in the model. LCPC will use other funding sources to provide assistance at that time. **(Not Complete)**
- ∞ The model was presented to the Stowe Selectboard on August 29, 2005. The Selectboard voted to have their staff review and revise the proposed ordinance. LCPC staff is available for assistance. **(Complete)**
- ∞ The model was presented to the Waterville Selectboard on January 23, 2006. Follow up meetings were conducted in February and March. A final meeting is expected April 17th with a public hearing in May on the topic. The ordinance is expected to be adopted before the end of June 2006. **(Pending)**
- ∞ The Town of Wolcott Highway Standards Ordinance was adopted April 5, 2006. **(Complete)**

Final Outcomes: At the start of this Northwest Project, only three of the ten Lamoille County towns had any road standards beyond the “orange book” adoption of the state standards. Seven towns had driveway access permits. None of the zoning bylaws or subdivision regulations reviewed referenced the town driveway access standards and road standards. All had different standards for private streets than for town roads.

As a direct result of the funds provided via the Northwest project:

- ∞ Two towns have adopted road standards for the first time (Belvidere and Wolcott) and Cambridge made a significant revision to their existing standards.
- ∞ All three communities customized the model to fit local conditions and goals. All three adopted stricter regulations than the minimum recommended in the model including constructing bridges to withstand 100 year storms and, in the case of Cambridge, for culverts to be designed to pass 100 year flows.
- ∞ Two more towns are poised to adopt regulations within the next few months- Waterville for the first time and Hyde Park for revision of current standards.
- ∞ Three towns (Cambridge, Hyde Park, and Wolcott) now reference the town road standards in their zoning and subdivision regulations. Private streets must be constructed to town road standards. Highway access permits and access standards in zoning have been coordinated so that there is a single permit and review process.
- ∞ All towns except Johnson and Morristown received education on the benefits of road standards and received a review of current standards as they exist in individual ordinances or in zoning and subdivision.
- ∞ The towns of Eden, Johnson and Morristown may revisit the model during the summer or fall of 2006.
- ∞ The model that has been developed is transferable to other regions in Vermont. The model is designed to be flexible and is annotated to help guide discussions. Another feature of the model is that the road standards vary based on functional class and amount of traffic. The model also contains administrative and process sections.

Deliverable 2. Cost of Community Services Study for Cambridge, Vermont

Original Proposal: The second deliverable was to conduct a Cost of Community Services (CoCS) Study for the Town of Cambridge. The CoCS would be based upon the methodology used by LCPC when working with the Town of Stowe in 2003. The results of the study would provide the Selectboard and Trustees with an ‘order of magnitude’ cost of municipal services for four land use classes in town- residential, commercial/industrial, working land /open space, and publicly owned (state and local).

Current Status: The CoCS report is complete. The final report has been produced and a public hearing was presented to the planning commission, conservation commission, and selectboard.

Final Outcomes: The following are findings of the study:

- ∞ For every dollar Cambridge’s residential land uses pay in revenues, these same land uses require \$1.25 worth of municipal services.
- ∞ Seasonal /vacation land uses require \$0.33 in services for every dollar they contribute to the tax rolls.
- ∞ For every dollar Cambridge’s commercial and industrial land uses pay in revenues, these same land uses require \$0.33 worth of municipal services.
- ∞ The publicly owned land uses require \$0.92 in services for every dollar in taxes paid.

As with the road ordinance piece, much of the process and findings of this CoCS study are transferable around the state. LCPC has now completed a CoCS for Cambridge and Stowe and much has been learned about the types of questions that arise in these efforts. The final report will prove useful to other communities interested in similar projects.

Deliverable 3. Assisting the Town of Cambridge with the development of appropriate land use regulations

Original Proposal: Cambridge currently lacks both zoning and subdivision regulations. Deliverable 3 was to work with the town to develop a set of zoning and subdivision regulations for their consideration.

Current Status: The Cambridge Planning Commission had completed a draft set of subdivision regulations and held a public hearing on May 26, 2005. The regulations were amended based on public input. A second planning commission public hearing was held October 24, 2005. The draft has been forwarded to the Selectboard for their consideration and a hearing was held on February 6, 2006. Although the regulations had strong support throughout the process, the Selectboard is now hesitating at approving the regulations. As a result of local pressure, the board may move to adopt the rules in the very near future.

Based on preliminary discussions with the Cambridge Planning Commission, LCPC has drafted a framework set of zoning bylaws for review. As with the subdivision regulations, this is being very carefully considered. Although a full draft is complete, it may take a year or more to fully

review and amend prior to adoption. The planning commission would like to have this completed prior to Town Meeting Day 2007.

As a part of the development of zoning regulations, LCPC also conducted a build out based on some likely densities and environmental constraints. LCPC will make other build-outs as needed using other funding.

Final Outcomes: As mentioned above, the subdivision regulations are complete and will be either adopted or denied soon.

With respect to the zoning bylaws, LCPC will meet monthly with the Cambridge Planning Commission to review the draft regulations. As this project proposes to provide Cambridge with a set of draft zoning regulations, the deliverable is technically complete although a full review of the regulations will take time. LCPC will continue to provide Cambridge with the technical assistance as needed to follow through and adopt the regulations.