



NVDA
*Northeastern Vermont
Development Association*



75th ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Executive Director's Message



David Snedeker
Executive Director - NVDA

It is with great pleasure that I can proudly say that the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) has now served as the Northeast Kingdom's regional planning and economic development organization for 75 years!

Our talented team of planning and economic development professionals proactively work with the communities and businesses in the region to bring about positive and lasting impacts. For fiscal year 2025, our work with local and regional partners in our community and economic development efforts included all of our normal planning work, but also new initiatives that afforded us the opportunity to work directly with every community in our three-county region – certainly not a small undertaking!

Throughout the 2024-25 work period, the NVDA planning staff actively worked with all of our communities on energy audits and implementation through the Municipal Energy Resilience Program and on Future Land Use mapping following the passage of Act 181. We continued drafting our new Regional Plan for the Northeast Kingdom for an expected adoption in 2026, while assisting many rural communities with their own local plans and regulatory documents. The year also saw the completion of the transformative Yellow Barn Business Accelerator project in Hardwick, as well as the renovation of the former Bogner building in Newport. Our successful regional brownfields program continued to grow with an award of \$1.2 million in new assessment funds, and we successfully wrapped up our small business technical assistance program.

Our team also continued our traditional work programs for municipalities, such as transportation planning, emergency planning, grant writing and administration support, water quality and basin planning, land use planning and regulatory assistance, and business support through loans, grants, and resource connections. As always, our business office kept the NVDA organization running smoothly throughout the year with financial and property management and ensuring our compliance with our state and federal reporting and funding requirements.

Communities and businesses continued to rely on our professional services and technical support, especially in an ever more complex and challenging environment. The map on the following page demonstrates much of the diversity and breadth of our services, all of which support our underlying mission to serve the communities and businesses of the Northeast Kingdom. We truly appreciate the continued support from our board members, communities, businesses, and regional partners.

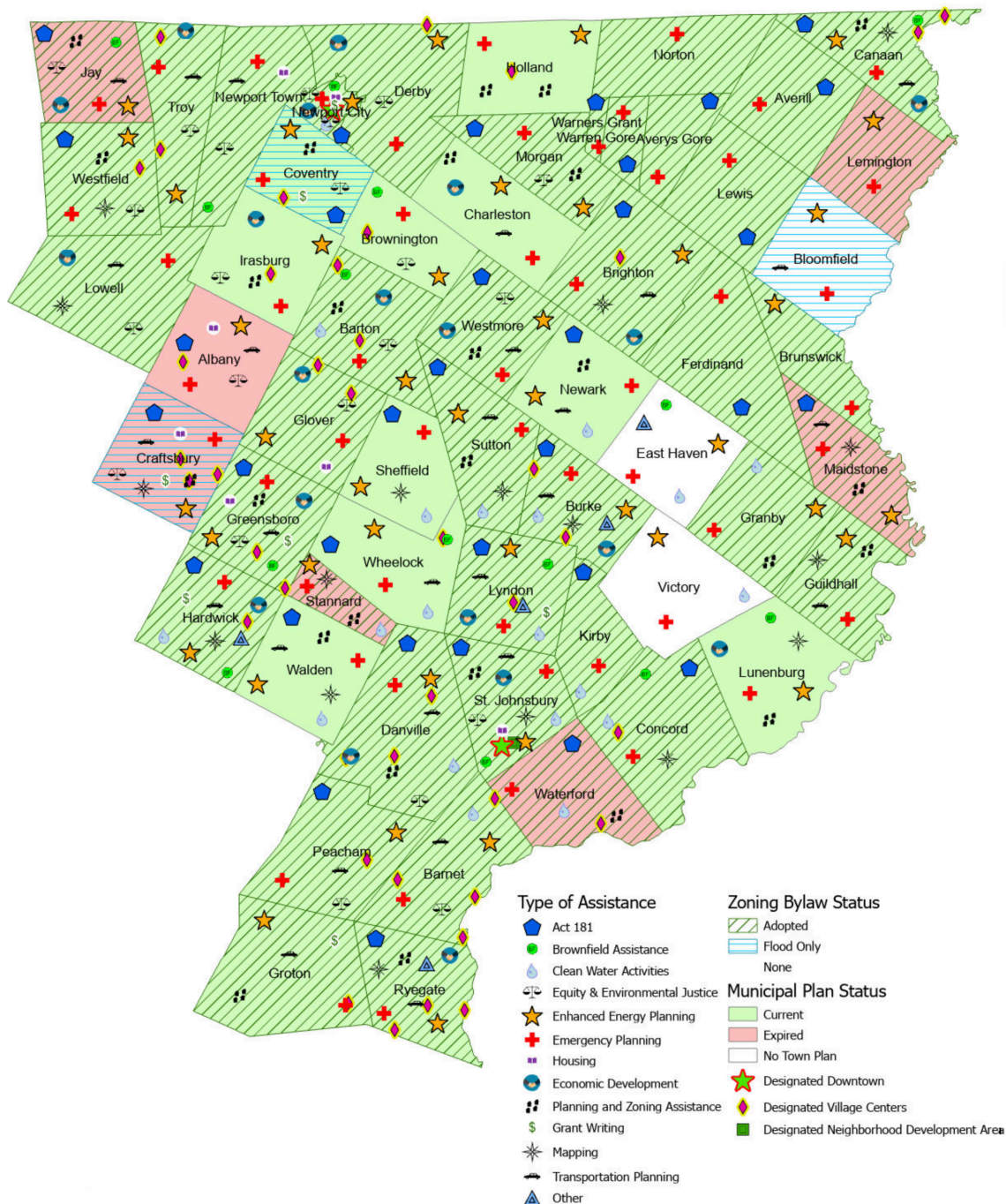
In FY25, we were pleased that Jennifer Burchell (Office Manager) and Cathlin Lord (Regional Planner) joined our NVDA team. The year also saw the retirement of long-time Business/Finance Manager, Judy Butson at the end of the year, and the announced retirement of Bruce Melendy, our Emergency Management Specialist. We deeply appreciate their many years of valued service to the NVDA organization. I would also like to extend special thanks to the rest of the NVDA team for the professional services they regularly provide to our communities and businesses. Thanks as always to our Board of Directors and all of our local, state, and federal partners! We look forward to a successful FY2026.

Sincerely,
David Snedeker
Executive Director

NVDA at Work

Our broad array of services supports our mission to the 55 municipalities and scores of businesses in Caledonia, Essex and Orleans Counties:

“Improving the quality of life in the Northeast Kingdom through planning, promoting economic development and preserving the region’s natural environment.”



Strong Communities

NVDA's region encompasses 55 municipalities covering more than one-fifth of the state's land mass. We currently have 42 communities with current plans, 3 Designated Downtowns, 41 Designated Village Centers and 1 Designated Neighborhood Development Area. Our municipalities have complex planning needs and they rely on NVDA staff when it comes to putting their plans in action.



Vision

The purpose of the Association shall be to develop and promote through study, planning and publicity, the recreational, agricultural, industrial, natural and human resources of the region and to work for the economic and social betterment of the region.

Mission



Planning

As the Regional Planning Commission, NVDA assists municipalities, organizations, committees and individuals with a wide variety of planning and technical services. From assisting municipalities with regulatory options, to administering grants, creating maps, and implementing transportation and natural resource plans, NVDA is actively working with land use issues in the region.



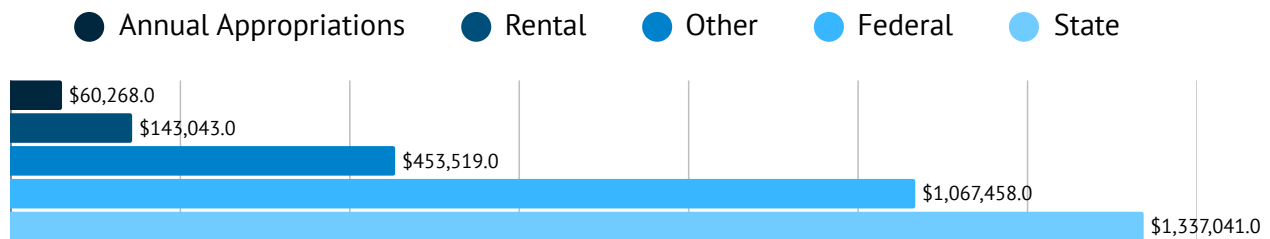
Development

As the Regional Development Corporation, NVDA works on infrastructure improvements, assists companies relocating to the area, helps existing businesses to grow, and administers revolving loan funds. NVDA also fosters key partnerships with the Small Business Development Center and the various Chambers of Commerce in the region.

Unaudited Financials FY 2025*

NVDA's revenues came from numerous sources including a share of the state's property transfer funds, private, state, and federal grants, and annual appropriations from each of our member communities. We also received rental income from the Charles E. Carter Business Resource Center and other income from contracted services such as grant administration and municipal plan and bylaw development.

Revenue Sources



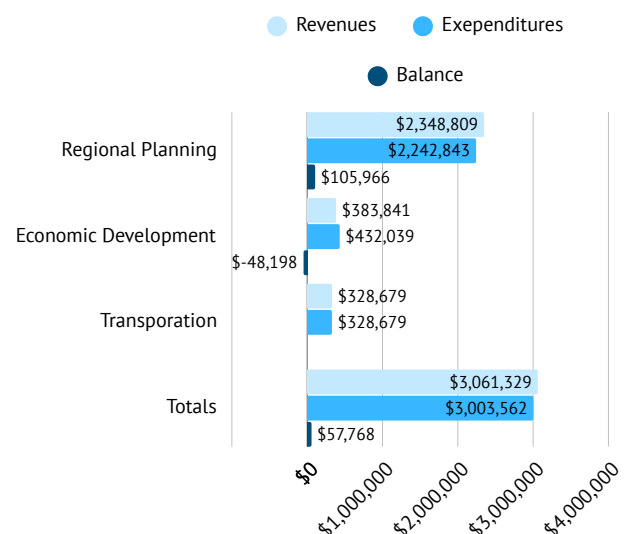
State & Federal Funding Sources FY25

- Economic Development Administration - US Department of Commerce
- US Department of Energy
- Northern Border Regional Commission
- US Department of Homeland Security
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- US Department of Transportation
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Small Business Administration
- USDA Rural Development - US Department of Agriculture
- Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
- Vermont Agency of Transportation
- Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services
- Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
- Vermont Department of Public Safety
- Vermont Department of Public Service

Revolving Loan Fund

NVDA has two Nonprofit Community Development Organization (NCDO) relending funds capitalized by loan repayments from Community Development Block Grants. No loans were made in FY25 from these funds. NVDA started a Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) from grants funds provided by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). No loans were made in FY25 from these funds.

Programs



* Audited financials will be available in December 2025.



2025 Year in Review

Workforce Development

Twenty NEK residents received free introductory training in Solar Installation & Design, thanks to a partnership between NVDA and the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). This opportunity aimed to boost renewable energy education and workforce development in the region, and it was made possible by the VCRD Climate Catalyst Innovation Fund. The online trainings were self-paced and designed for beginners, providing an entry-level introduction to solar installation and design.

Land Use Planning

NVDA staff has prioritized public outreach on this key element of Act 181, and we have committed to conducting at least one in-person meeting with every one of our 50 municipalities to review Future Land Use maps. This has been a tall order for our regional planning staff, who meet weekly to review map data and strategize outreach. We anticipate that we will have completed about 65 in-person meetings with our communities by the time we wrap up our FLU mapping this fall.

Emergency Response

In response to the two major flooding events that struck the Northeast Kingdom in July 2024, NVDA provided critical support to businesses across the region to aid in their recovery. Efforts included developing property acquisition projects in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), and offering one-on-one advising to assist businesses in applying for the State's Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program (BEGAP) and the Main Street Recovery Fund. Additionally, NVDA collaborated with the Lyndon Selectboard to pivot a portion of the Lyndon Small Business Fund toward emergency relief. This initiative resulted in the creation of the Lyndon Business Flood Recovery Fund (LBFRF) — a targeted grant program that provided grants totaling \$73,100 for 22 Lyndon businesses.

Transportation Planning

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Coordination: NVDA staff continue to participate in a broader planning effort with regional planning partners in Lamoille and Franklin Counties to coordinate planning and development resources to our LVRT host communities. NVDA staff continue to facilitate the NEK+ Regional LVRT Council which includes representatives from each of our LVRT towns as well as at-large members from trail user groups.

Brownfields Redevelopment

In 2025 NVDA was awarded another EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant of \$1,200,000, augmenting an active \$1,000,000 Revolving Loan Fund capitalized in 2023. The previous 2023 assessment grant and newly awarded 2025 grant have funded assessment activities at over 40 sites across the Northeast Kingdom, prioritizing projects that involve housing and the redevelopment of key sites in our region's downtowns.

Flood Resiliency

NVDA worked with the Town of Lyndon to complete project scoping for floodplain restoration of the former Town Garage site, just north of the village, and the replacement of a dry culvert on Route 5 with a dry bridge. The project is under consideration for FEMA Hazard Mitigation funds. If awarded, the site will likely need remediation. NVDA staff and its brownfield consultants have provided technical assistance on this project to ensure a smooth mobilization if it receives the green light.

Economic Development

Yellow Barn Business Accelerator: After years of planning and project management, the project celebrated with a well-attended ribbon cutting in September 2024. Even though the store opened in mid-September, Cabot had already reported 16,000 visitors by the end of the calendar year. The new accelerator building is occupied by Jasper Hill and the Center for an Agricultural Economy. The latter occupies slightly more than half the space in the new facility to support its farm-to-supply chain services, Farm Connex, which serves 80 agricultural producers and moves about \$12.7M worth of product annually.

Energy Planning & Implementation

In FY25, NEK communities were awarded over \$11.4 million for MERP energy efficiency and resiliency measures across 85 municipally-owned buildings. The NVDA team provided post-energy assessment analysis and MERP Implementation Grant application support. Additionally, NVDA and Vermont Electric Co-op (VEC) partnered to provide free community solar memberships in Orleans County, thanks to a \$75,940 grant from the Department of Energy. The grant covered the cost for 20 income-qualified households to sponsor panels in VEC's Community Solar Program, leading to nearly \$45 in monthly savings on their electricity bills. Over the 10-year program term, each household will save over \$5,200, making a difference in their annual energy burden.



Through the years...

1950

U.S. Senator George Aiken coined the phrase "Northeast Kingdom" at a speech in Lyndonville about the rugged rural beauty of the largest, most sparsely settled region in the state. The VT Development Commission moved to designate a development organization for Caledonia, Essex & Orleans Counties and on January 12, 1950, bylaws were adopted and a \$10,000 budget was approved. Early offices were in Lyndonville where NVDA operated as a nonprofit and regional Chamber of Commerce engaged in tourist promotion.

1960's

In the beginning, employees were unpaid volunteers except for Miss Flora Coutts, who served as the first Executive Secretary for several years. The Board of Directors included municipal officials and area legislators. In **1962**, the U.S. Department of Commerce officially declared the three counties a Redevelopment Area, eligible for loans and grants for public facilities, technical assistance and occupational training. A comprehensive Overall Economic Development Plan was prepared for the region. Early federal funding benefited Newport Plastics, Atlas Foundry in Concord, Fairbanks-Morse, Burke Mountain and Jay Peak. In **1968**, NVDA spearheaded support for a regional airport, the Victory Dam project, and completion of the Newport-Derby section of I-91.

1970's

NVDA led efforts to save the historic St. Johnsbury House from demolition by acquiring EDA funds to purchase and renovate the building for senior housing. NVDA offices were in the basement for 20 years. North Country Hospital and Northeastern VT Regional Hospital also benefited from NVDA's effort to secure federal funding during this period. In 1979 preliminary plans were drawn up for the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park. The 200-acre industrial complex received support from the legislature, federal and state officials, and both municipal selectboards.

1980's

NVDA expanded job opportunities through the development of four more Industrial Parks (Hardwick, North Troy, Orleans, and Newport.) A Revolving Loan Fund was established for local industrial and commercial businesses. NVDA expanded municipal services with grant writing, project management, and public engagement. The office got its first computer to coordinate state and federal funding for housing projects in Barton, Hardwick, Island Pond, St. Johnsbury and Newport. In **1987** new legislation (Act 78) required a Regional Solid Waste Management Plan and NVDA undertook extensive outreach for plan development. The Sears Block on Eastern Avenue was purchased by NVDA and associates in **1989** and this location remains NVDA's home base today!

1990's

Town officials relied heavily on NVDA's staff for resources and professional assistance in this decade as 40 of the 55 municipalities contained 1,000 or fewer residents. GIS equipment was installed in **1991** and the "NEK Geographic Data Center" was formed to help with mapping, planning documents, zoning bylaws, regulations, and land conservation data. Work involving the E-911 mapping process included extensive contact with every municipality in the region. In **1994**, NVDA was assigned to coordinate the region's transportation planning, and a planner was added to the staff to refine the multimodal Regional Transportation Plan. Entrepreneurs and small business owners received assistance and free counseling when VtSBDC and NVDA partnered to share facilities.

1990's

Continued

In **1995**, staff highlighted tourism promotion and direct marketing through the NEK Travel & Tourism Association. In 1998, The Connecticut River Scenic Byway project was completed after three years of study, and the current NVDA logo was designed as part of a this marketing initiative.

2000's

The USDA Rural Economic Action Partnership (REAP) zone was established in **2001** to allow the NEK to receive USDA set-aside funding for a range of projects in business, housing, and infrastructure. NVDA became the lead agency for REAP administration. **2004** marked major infrastructure improvements to the Industrial Parks. The Charles Carter Resource Center in the St. J-Lyndonville Park was constructed and dedicated to the man who served as NVDA's Executive Director for 35 years. When VT Soy moved into the Hardwick Park, other food production businesses followed. NVDA administered grants for the construction of the VT Food Venture Center which became a hub for small producers when it opened in **2010**. NVDA started a Brownfields Assessment program to address hazard waste contamination in **2006** and the first remediated property was an abandoned gas station in North Troy. NVDA took on the role of emergency management in **2009** by helping NEK towns coordinate emergency management activities and write their own Emergency Management and Rapid Response Plans.

2010's

Widespread planning work continued and NVDA provided technical assistance to municipalities for village center designation and downtown revitalization to make tax credits available for reinvestment projects. With federal funding In **2011**, 108 energy efficiency audits were conducted on municipal and in each county. Weatherization installers received training and certification under the same program. The first regional Energy Plan was adopted in **2013**. After Tropical Storm Irene, transportation planning and GIS mapping played a role in recovery and response efforts. Staff worked with every town on emergency preparedness issues to secure eligibility for National Flood Insurance. The NEK Foreign Trade Zone #286 was established in **2013** to increase business activity and NVDA's participation in the VQEI, a Canadian business recruitment campaign, strengthened our strategic partnership statewide. The promising EB-5 Initiative was introduced at the beginning of this decade with plans for major investments and unprecedented opportunity across the region. Five years later, amid allegations regarding the misuse of funds, all the development projects underway were closed down.

2020's

Beginning in March **2020**, NVDA staff focused their work on helping businesses and communities respond to the COVID crisis. Recovery assistance was provided to local boards with virtual meetings to connect towns with available resources. The Vermont ReStart technical assistance program was initiated to help the region's small businesses. NVDA received three grants in **2020** to establish a regional Communications Union District to plan for future broadband buildout. Brownfields assessments in **2022** helped prominent rehabilitation projects in St. Johnsbury: Depot Square Apartments, St. Jay Hardware building, and 560 Railroad Apartments. Other transformative projects in the region moved forward in **2023**: NVDA secured financing for construction of the Yellow Barn Business Accelerator in Hardwick, the acquisition and renovation of the former Bogner plant in Newport, and a new LVRT trailhead pavilion in St. Johnsbury. In **2023** and **2024**, staff had to meet the challenge of unprecedented damage from flooding across the region. Assistance with recovery efforts, damage reports, and all available resources for homes and businesses was again a priority. As the decade continues, NVDA hopes to continue assisting community projects such as the revitalization of general stores in Albany and Concord, as well as major expansion projects like Weidmann, and the creation of new housing across the region.

The NVDA Team



David Snedeker

Executive Director | dsnedeker@nvda.net

18 years as Planning Manager and Executive Director
Oversight of Planning and Economic Development programs
The best part of the job is working with a great team of professionals to serve the NEK!



Judy Butson

Finance Manager

33 years in financial, accounting and administrative management.
The best part of the job is doing work I enjoyed, working with great staff, board members, town officials and feeling that the work helped NVDA fulfill its mission for the NEK of Vermont.



Tina Gonyaw

Business Manager | tgonyaw@nvda.net

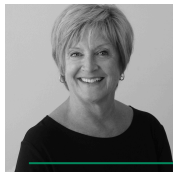
8 years in administrative, accounting and financial management
The best part of the job is the variety in my work keeps things engaging and ensures continuous learning and new challenges. This dynamic contributes to a stimulating work environment.



Jennifer Burchell

Admin. Assistant & Bookkeeper | jburchell@nvda.net

7 months administrative and financial assistance.
The best part of the job is working for a non-profit with a group of people making a difference in the NEK.



Lorna Higgs

Project Manager | lhiggs@nvda.net

17 years supporting staff initiatives and assisting with planning and economic development projects. Since 2012, published NVDA's popular and widely read monthly newsletter.
The best part of the job is sharing news about NVDA's good work.



Alison Low, AICP

Senior Planner | alow@nvda.net

18 years project development, grant writing and administration, writing town plans and zoning bylaws.
The best part of the job is serving with our extraordinarily dedicated team of planners.



Doug Morton

Senior Transportation Planner | dmorton@nvda.net

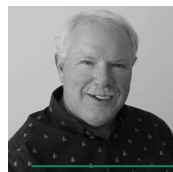
22 years in transportation planning
The best part of the job is working with the many people of the NEK over the years.



Anne McLean

Community & Economic Recovery Specialist | amclean@nvda.net

4.5 years supporting economic development initiatives and assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs.
The best part of the job is seeing ideas grow into successful ventures and initiatives that strengthen the community.



Bruce Melendy

Emergency Management Specialist | bmelendy@nvda.net

14 years of service as the Emergency Management Specialist.
The best part of the job is helping communities with Emergency Planning and getting resources/funding when emergency related disasters occur.



Tracy McIntyre

GIS Specialist | tmcintyre@nvda.net

36 years as a GIS Specialist. Providing maps and geographic data analysis to municipalities, staff, and other agencies.
The best part of the job is the opportunity to continue public service, a tradition that has been in the family since the Hinman family settled in the Northeast Kingdom.



Kyle Dwyer

Regional Planner | kdwyer@nvda.net

1.5 years in Regional Planning and Brownfields
The best part of the job is working (and living) in downtown St. Johnsbury.



Cathlin Lord

Regional Planner | clord@nvda.net

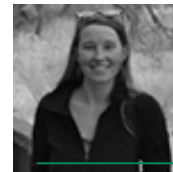
8 months in Regional Planning
The best part of the job is meeting with community members and learning why they are passionate about the region.



Liam Abbate

Transportation Planner | labbate@nvda.net

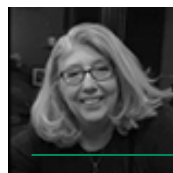
3 years as Transportation/GIS Planner. Bicycle/pedestrian & Stormwater planning; future land use mapping
The best part of the job is helping communities envision their future.



Carter Finegan

Municipal Energy Resilience Program Coordinator | cfinegan@nvda.net

2 years of service in Municipal Energy Resilience Program
The best part of the job is working with so many municipalities to improve their buildings while lowering operational costs & increasing comfort in their community gathering spaces!



Beth Torpey

Water Quality Planner | btorpey@nvda.net

3 years working in Area-wide water quality issues
The best of the job is working with the accomplished and professional partners, particularly on new state initiatives, such as the Clean Water Service Provider.



Molly Dockter

Regional Planner | mdockter@nvda.net

1 month working in Regional Planning and Emergency Management
The best part of the job is working with unique, dynamic communities!

Board of Directors

Town Appointed Members of Caledonia County

Burke: Joe Allard

Danville: Kenneth Linsley

Groton: Mark Gleicher, Brent Smith

Hardwick: Danny Hale, Kristen Leahy

Kirby: Mary Etter, Marla Waring

Lyndon: Martha Feltus, Ken Mason

Newark: Kim Fried, Mark Whitworth

Peacham: Anna Rubin

Ryegate: Regina Hazel

Sheffield: Keith Ballek, Al Robertson

Saint Johnsbury: Jim Brown, Chad Whitehead

Sutton: Paul Brouha

Waterford: Kevin Gillander

Wheelock: Steve Amos, Eileen Boland

Town Appointed Members of Essex County

Brighton: Mike Strait

Brunswick: Sharon Graham

Canaan: Zachary Brown, Michael Daley

Concord: Cynthia Stuart

East Haven: Kirwin Flanders

Granby: Bruce Berryman

Guildhall: Gary Brown

Lunenburg: James Peyton, Kate Baxter

Maidstone: Amy Pear

Norton: Jessica Towsely, Gina Vigneault

Victory: Otis McKinstry

Town Appointed Members of Orleans County

Albany: S. Christopher Jacobs

Barton: William Davies

Brownington: Bill Davis, Laurence Thompson

Charleston: Michael Gonyaw, Teri Gray

Coventry: Matt Maxwell

Craftsbury: Farley Brown, Rudy Chase

Derby: Brad Shattuck, Grant Spates

Glover: Hope Colburn

Greensboro: Michael Metcalf

Holland: Jim Davis, Kenric Gonyaw

Irasburg: Judith Jackson

Newport City: Rick Ufford-Chase

Troy: Robert Langlands

Westfield: Scott Dunn

Westmore: Robert Westmore

At Large Members

Tom Robinson

Fred Saar

Legislators

Senators by District

Caledonia: Scott Beck **Essex:** Russ Ingalls **Orleans:** Samuel Douglass

Representative by Districts

Caledonia-1: Debra Powers **Caledonia-2:** Michael Southworth **Caledonia-3:** Martha Feltus, Beth

Quimby **Caledonia-Essex:** Scott Campbell, Deborah Dolgin **Caledonia-Washington:** Gregory Burr

Essex-Caledonia: John Kascenska **Essex-Orleans:** Larry Labor **Orange-Caledonia:** Joseph Parsons

Orleans-1: Richard Nelson **Orleans-2:** Woodman Page **Orleans-3:** Kenneth Wells **Orleans-4:** Leanne

Harple **Orleans-Lamoille:** Mark Higley, Michael Marcotte





Contact Us



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Thank You

