

# CENTRAL VERMONT REGION

## 2016 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Draft March 7, 2014

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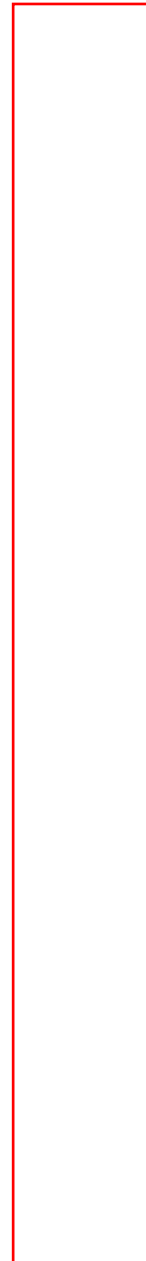
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# INTRODUCTION

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*Chapter One*

## VISION AND MISSION FOR TRANSPORTATION IN THE REGION

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission takes a regional multi-modal balanced view of transportation issues. The focus of this transportation plan is therefore on transportation issues which are regional in scope or which have regional implications. This emphasis on regional issues should not be taken to downplay the importance of local transportation issues on the region's transportation system. The region's major highway system, rail freight facilities, transit system, airport system, etc. will not function efficiently without coordinated feeder systems which likewise operate efficiently. To emphasize the scope and scale of the regional transportation issues facing Central Vermont and its communities, CVRPC established a vision and mission statement to guide the development of transportation goals, policies, and action items.

*Vision - "To have a, balanced, well developed and maintained transportation system that facilitates travel for all modes of transportation while preserving the region's character."*

*Mission - "To preserve, enhance, and develop an, intermodal regional transportation system that accommodates the need for movement of people and commerce in a healthy, safe, cost-effective, environmentally responsible, and equitable manner, that conforms with other elements of the regional plan."*

## OVERALL PURPOSE OF PLAN

The Regional Transportation Plan is the culmination of a thorough study of the multi-modal and inter-modal transportation needs within the Central Vermont Region. **Figure 1** presents an overall map of the region. The Central Vermont Region consists of the 20 municipalities that comprise Washington County, plus three communities from Orange County -- Washington, Williamstown, and Orange. The region encompasses several major population and employment centers Barre, Montpelier, Northfield, and Waterbury.

CVRPC will use the Plan recommendations as a basis from which to develop a yearly Regional Transportation Projects List (RTPL). Likewise, CVRPC will use the Transportation Plan information and recommendations to assist in the development of projects for inclusion in the VTRANS Project Scoping and Development process. The Plan vision and recommendations will also play a role in ongoing Act 250 review processes. CVRPC expects that VTRANS will make full use of the technical and qualitative analyses presented in the Regional Transportation Plan and will consider the recommendations contained herein. Finally, the plan will serve as a tool for local and regional planners, land use officials, and elected officials in guiding their decisions regarding transportation issues.

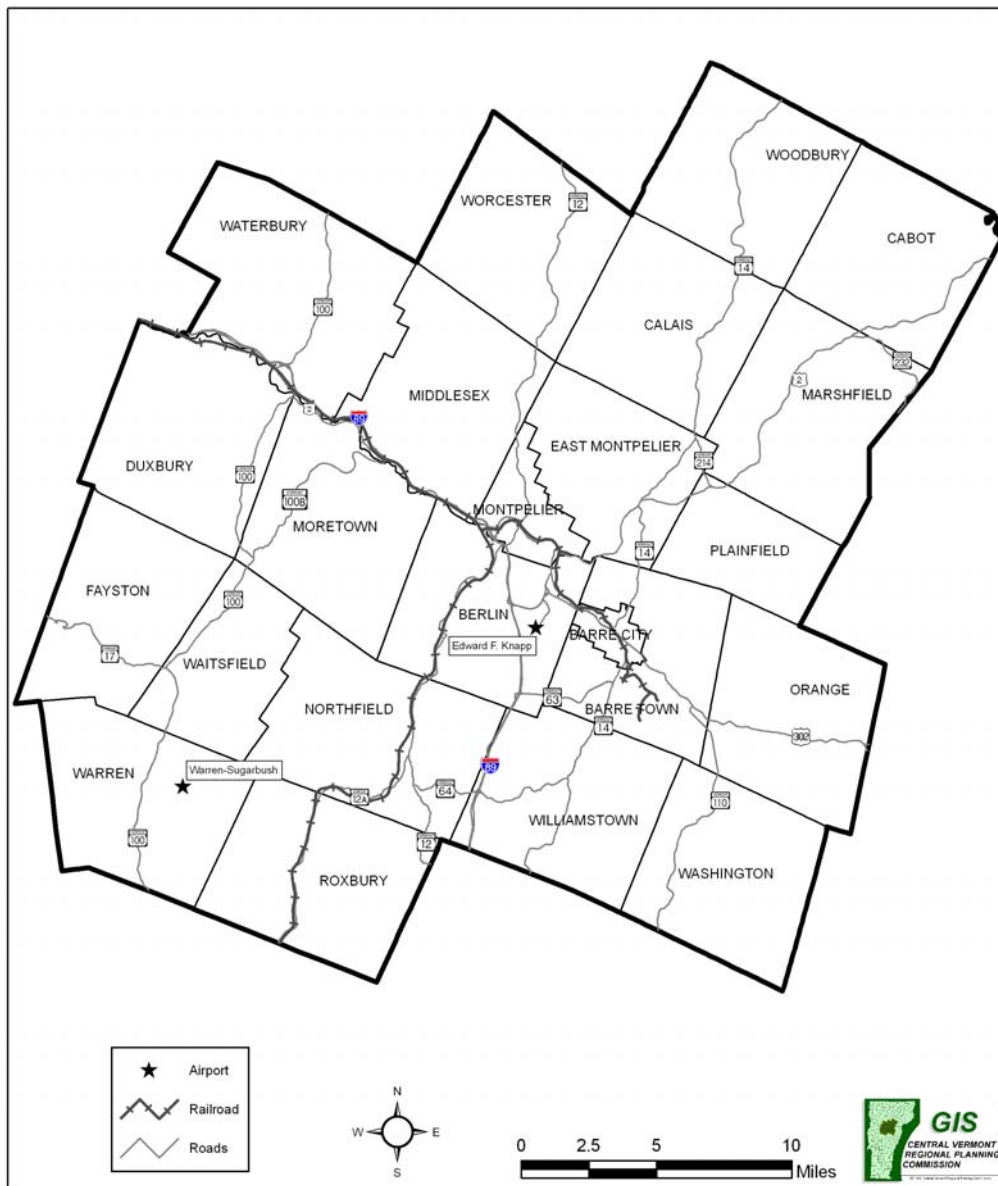
## State and Federal Requirements

Development of the Regional Transportation Plan for the Central Vermont Region is a direct response on the part of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) to the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) Transportation Planning Initiative. One goal of the Initiative is to establish transportation planning as an ongoing process. The Regional Transportation Plan meets the transportation goals of Title 24, VSA Chapter 117 Section 4302, Municipal And Regional Planning And Development, specific goals "(4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers. (A) Highways, air, rail and other means of

transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced and integrated." The Regional Transportation Plan is consistent with the objectives of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP – 21)

Figure 1

### Central Vermont Region



## Relationship to Regional Plan

This Regional Transportation Plan is consistent with the 2016 Central Vermont Regional Plan. It satisfies the requirements of the Regional Plan's Transportation Element, and contributes to the Regional Plan's purpose "of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, efficient and economic development of the region which will, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity and welfare of the inhabitants as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development." (Title 24 VSA Chapter 117 Section 4347).

## COORDINATION WITH LOCAL PLANS

This Regional Transportation Plan is consistent and compatible with plans of the member communities and adjoining regions. The information contained in this plan is intended to supplement and provide a basis for updating Local Transportation Plans. The plan also addresses transportation issues that go beyond individual town boundaries, and provides a forum for municipal cooperation to meet these regional needs.

The CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is comprised of town appointed representatives from the communities of the Central Vermont Region. The role of the TAC is to oversee the development of the Regional Transportation Plans, formulate the region's position on transportation issues, and participate in the review and development of VTRANS functions, programs, and policies. A TAC member's responsibility is to educate the entire TAC on their local transportation concerns. The TAC member is also responsible for communicating regional transportation issues back to their local Select Board and Planning Commission.

## ORGANIZATION OF PLAN

The Regional Transportation Plan is organized into six chapters. **Chapter One** presents an overview of the plan purpose and process. **Chapter Two** presents the transportation goals developed specifically for the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Chapter Three** presents the transportation forecast. **Chapter Four** describes the existing transportation system, its performance, and projected future performance of the highway system. **Chapter Five** presents regional, and corridor level recommendations.

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION GOALS



## *Chapter Two*



The vision and mission statements presented in Chapter One provides an overall direction which the CVRPC believes should be followed. To guide these steps, CVRPC established a series of nine goals that further define this direction. These goals are described below, as well as the policies written to provide guidance of how the goals can be achieved.

**GOAL 1.** To achieve a regional transportation planning process that is comprehensive, intermodal, and public, and is integrated with regional and local land use planning as outlined in the Central Vermont Regional Plan.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage municipalities' analysis of transportation needs at the local level, including the relationships between development patterns and transportation needs, and which considers various modes of travel.
2. Encourage coordination and cooperation in comprehensive transportation planning among the various municipalities in the Region and at the regional, State, and private levels.
3. Undertake a comprehensive regional analysis of existing and anticipated travel behavior and intermodal, approaches to accommodating anticipated travel demand.
4. Balance regional and local decision-making, and flexibility in transportation planning, when conflicts develop between local and State plans.
5. Promote a project prioritization process that takes the goals of the Regional Transportation Plan into consideration.
6. Promote open and inclusive public participation in the multimodal planning and development of transportation projects, using new technology, such as social media.
7. Plan and design of the region's transportation system to encourage development and re-development in desired centers of growth and development, identified in the Future Land Use Map. Encourage transportation planning that recognizes existing development patterns to maintain the desired level of service, also encourage development patterns that reflect the planned capacity of the transportation system, and a transportation system that has capacity for planned development.
8. Encourage the full integration of transportation and land use planning at the regional and local level.
9. Provide guidance to towns, so they can be responsible for how their development affects the regional transportation system.
10. Provide comments/recommendations with regard to the impacts of specific land use projects on the regional transportation system during the permitting process.

**GOAL 2.** To preserve, maintain, and improve the region's transportation system.

**Policies:**

1. Provide technical assistance for evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing preventive maintenance programs for all elements of the transportation system.
2. Promote a funding strategy that realizes maximum use of all available resources to ensure adequate maintenance of the existing transportation system.
3. Level of Service C will be taken as the preferred condition. Level of Service D should be accepted within the more urban, built-up sectors of the region (for example: Montpelier, Barre City, Northeast Berlin, South Barre, Waterbury Village, Northfield Village, Waitsfield Village, and Irasville).
4. Support the development and maintenance of convenient connections to the rest of Vermont, the US and the World. Examples include: I-89 and other highways, rail, E. F. Knapp and nearby commercial air service, such as Burlington International Airport
5. Plan for disaster resiliency to provide essential transportation system during floods, ice & snow storms, power outages, wind storms, medical epidemics, etc.
6. In coordination with local plans, the region recognizes regionally significant local roads.
7. There should be no road openings for three years after a road is repaved/reconstructed.

**GOAL 3.** Allow the transportation system to operate at its highest efficiency by managing travel demand and encouraging shifts to under-utilized and more efficient and effective travel modes.

**Policies:**

1. Develop a strategy that encourages maximum use of all available transportation resources and allocates those resources to the optimum functioning of the transportation system.
2. Provide technical assistance to the Region's employers in the development of Travel Demand Management Programs (e.g. telecommuting, flextime, compressed work weeks, rideshare matching, preferential parking, commuter fringe benefit, etc.). Facilitate the establishment of Transportation Management Associations to organize and administer TDM programs.
3. Educate the public on modal choices available.
4. Advocate for the preservation of existing rights-of-way for future transportation purposes, such as Class 4 Roads and Legal Trails. In particular, work to retain abandoned railroad rights-of-way for transportation uses such as trails and bike paths.
5. Consider new or expanded public transit services that serve intra-regional and intercity travel needs.

6. Encourage full accessibility to the Region's transportation services for the Region's disabled and elderly.
7. Plan for the updating and optimization and or coordination of traffic signal timings when needed

**GOAL 4.** To integrate and coordinate modes of travel in order to allow for their most effective use and ultimately reduce dependence on single occupant vehicles.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage the development of park and ride lots for ridesharing and public transit use, and encourage employers to provide incentives to car and van pool users.
2. Promote physical and operational connections between various modes of transportation, and prioritize projects that integrate the various modes of transportation..
3. Ensure adequate mobility for all segments of the population, including pedestrians, bikers and residents who cannot or do not use private automobiles.
4. Foster a sense of mutual respect among users of the various modes of transportation.
5. Encourage the availability of multiple options for the movement of people and goods.
6. Provide technical assistance to communities on the complete streets law, and use the Complete Streets guidelines in the development of all new projects, maintenance and repair of roads and zoning decisions.
7. Encourage participation in the Safe Routes to School Program and provide technical assistance for associated plans.

**GOAL 5.** To promote and establish a transportation system that is cost effective, energy efficient, and environmentally sound.

**Policies:**

1. Support efforts to minimize negative environmental impacts associated with the transportation system (including air quality, noise levels, surface water quality, stormwater runoff, vegetation, agricultural land, fragile areas, and historical/archaeological sites).
2. Support efforts to minimize energy consumption, especially nonrenewable energy resources, and explore expanded use of alternative fuels.
3. Factor direct and indirect costs and benefits into decision-making. Impacts that are not easily expressed in dollar values should also be considered.

4. Promote solutions that address adverse environmental impacts of the region's transportation network (such as green stormwater infrastructure).
5. Develop a transportation system that encourages concentrated development, allows greater access to residences, employment, and services, and facilitates carpooling, bus and rail service, and non-motorized travel.

**GOAL 6.** To make necessary improvements to achieve a transportation system appropriately structured and designed to safely, effectively, and economically move goods and people.

**Policies:**

1. Encourage the appropriate scale and design of streets, highways, and other transportation infrastructure to serve local traffic, destination traffic, and through traffic.
2. Foster a neighborhood street system characterized by a network of interconnected streets that minimizes through traffic in residential neighborhoods.
3. Prioritize safety-targeted measures at High or Potential Crash Locations, and develop strategies for traffic safety region-wide.
4. Promote safety improvement projects that limit conflicts with the rail system and other modal users of transportation.
5. Encourage access management policies that improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, and maintain capital investment.
6. Consider new facilities when demand warrants (e.g. when alternatives to reduce congestion and improve safety have been attempted) and/or when other strategic state, regional, or local goals apply.
7. Foster a sense of safety and comfort for riders of public transit.
8. Coordinate with the Vermont Highway Safety Program and other stakeholders on developing projects and strategies for a safer transportation system.
9. Work on removing unsafe conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians that present a barrier to active transportation and recreation
10. Encourage traffic calming efforts to minimize conflicts between traffic and surrounding neighborhoods.

**GOAL 7.** Promote a transportation system design that strives for aesthetic and functional

characteristics that improve the quality of life.

**Policies:**

1. Plan the design of visually attractive and durable infrastructure such as roadways, pathways, and bridges.
2. Plan high architectural standards for terminal buildings, stations, shelters, garages, and other facilities.
3. Respect and enhance the built environment by restoration of period transportation structures where possible and maintain the natural environment through architectural, landscaped, and engineered features.
4. When feasible, encourage restoration or preservation of historic bridges.
5. Foster improvements that are contextually appropriate.
6. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of scenic views and corridors.

**GOAL 8.** To promote a regional transportation system that supports economic growth and employment opportunities in desired centers of growth and development, identified in the Future Land Use Map.

**Policies :**

1. Provide transportation system improvements at locations where they will or can serve land use centers.
2. Foster transportation and commerce links that contribute to the economic health of the region.
3. Encourage transportation system improvements that renew and improve downtowns, land use centers, and neighborhoods.

**GOAL 9.** To promote a regional and interregional public transit system that is connected to the rest of Vermont and the world, serves residents of Central Vermont in their daily lives, and will reduce the need of private single occupancy vehicles.

**Policies :**

1. Provide for basic mobility for transit-dependent persons.
2. Plan public transit that provides access to employment.
3. Encourage congestion mitigation to preserve air quality and the sustainability of the highway network.

4. Plan public transit that advances economic development, including employment, medical services, shopping, and tourist areas.