

## **Draft Transportation Executive Summary – Trends, Challenges, Recommendations**

More details can be found at <http://plancentralvermont.org/the-plan/transportation/>

### **Ridesharing/Travel Demand Management/Alternative Vehicles**

**Trend** - Park & Ride Use has grown since the 1990's, and has closely reflected the cost of gasoline. Alternative Vehicle use has grown with the increase in gasoline prices. It is a key component of the State's Comprehensive Energy Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are several successful Transportation Management Associations in Vermont. In Central Vermont, the Capital Commuters Program has reduced demand for parking and travel to the National Life Campus, and Downtown Montpelier. This Program is funded through the State of Vermont and National Life, which is believed to be more cost effective than building new infrastructure.

**Challenges** - There are several State Lots that, at times are near and over capacity.

**Recommendation** -The Region recommends expanding and or creating new lots in Waterbury, Berlin, Williamstown, Barre Town, and East Montpelier. The Region recommends expanding travel demand management programs in Waterbury, Barre City, and other employment centers. Electric Vehicle Charging Station should be available at all new State Park & Ride Lots.

### **Public Transit**

**Trend** - Public Transit Use is growing, some of the routes are standing room only.

**Challenges** - Choices need to be made between expanding existing services, and creating new services. Costs for additional buses, gasoline, and insurance are rising.

**Recommendation** - New commuter services have been identified for Routes 12 N, 14 N&S, 100 S, 100B, US 302 E. Other new services under consideration are Circulators for Barre City and Town. Extending service periods and service hour, have also been suggested. To meet these demands funding need to be increase at Federal, State, and Local levels. Public Transit also needs to be considered in the project review process at all levels.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle System**

**Trend** - The desire to have more opportunities/facilities to be more active, the need for traffic calming in villages, the Safe Routes to School Program, and Vermont's Complete Streets Law, have all contributed to the need to build more sidewalks and bicycle facilities. There are health and economic benefits of separate pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

**Challenges** - Many of the State and Local highways do not have adequate shoulders. The hilly terrain of Vermont makes it hard to site off road facilities. There are questions as to whether the demand warrants the expense to build facilities. To meet these demands funding need to be increase at Federal, State, and Local levels.

**Recommendation** - CVRPC recommends a minimum 15 ft. combined single lane and shoulder width be provided on state highways where possible (11 ft. lane & 4 ft shoulder). As part of the State's Complete Streets Law,

inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and accommodations should be considered in all VTrans, Town, and new private development projects in villages, cities, and other growth areas.

## **Aviation**

**Trend** - The Edward F. Knapp State Airport in Berlin provides public access to the National Airspace System, air freight/cargo facilities, emergency medical facilities, a search and rescue base, corporate and business opportunities, recreational flying, flight training, avgas and jet refueling, and other aviation activities. The Warren-Sugarbush Airport is a private facility, and provides sailplane rides, instruction, tie-down space, and avgas sales.

**Recommendation** - The E.F. Knapp Airport has been recently reconstructed, and has meet all the Federal safety and navigational requirements. Future needs are Airport Master Planning, and hangar development. Both airports need to maintain and or upgrade their facilities as needed.

## **Freight**

**Trend** -The important products transported from the Region are specialty and dairy food products, granite, and wood. Most of these commodities are shipped by truck, with rail transporting a much smaller but significant share (11% statewide). Rail plays an important role in the Region's trade with Canada.

**Challenges** -Truck travel in the Region is constrained by highway geometry deficiencies and the hilly terrain. Arterials that carry truck traffic also pass through village centers creating safety and quality of life issues for residents.

**Recommendation** - Improvements to the Highway System will also improve freight movement. Preventive maintenance is needed to preserve the existing New England Central rail line that serves international trade connection.

## **Highway System**

**Trend** -There has been stagnant growth in the vehicle miles traveled in both Washington County and Vermont in recent years. The intersections and road segments with the highest crash rates are located in the Barre City, Barre Town, Montpelier and Northfield areas.

**Challenges** -Maintaining the condition of roads and bridges in the future will require sustained levels of funding for system preservation projects. Intersections are the most dangerous components of the Region's highway system.

**Recommendation** - Out of the ten intersection high crash locations, six have been studied, and four are included in projects. The Region will continue to conduct planning studies, and participate in State programs to address high crash locations.