



MEETING TAKEAWAYS

Public Transit Policy Plan

Deb Sachs, Go! Vermont

Background:

The new Vermont **Public Transit Policy Plan (PTPP)** will update the 2012 PTPP. It will serve as a guide for VTrans and its partners on implementing and funding transit projects that facilitate mobility for Vermonters, minimize duplication of services, leverage limited funds, maximize ridership, and improve coordination of services.

Currently, the PTPP process is in the Existing Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment phases; VTrans seeks input on the PTPP from VTEN. There is opportunity to grow and improve our public transit system in Vermont, especially given an aging population and in the face of the employment and opioid crises.

Existing conditions:

- Vermont spends \$32 million on public transit. \$4 million of that is spent on E & D trips, 40% of which are done by volunteer drivers.
- 12% of Vermonters are served by/use transit.
- In 2030, 25% of the population of Vermont will be 65+, as compared with 20% nationally.
- Drivers, of all kinds, including delivery drivers, are a critical need around the state.
- Businesses are feeling their growth constrained by lack of reliable, convenient employee transportation. E.g. restaurant servers can take transit to work, but can't get home at the end of a night shift.
- Most canceled medical appointments are due to lack of transportation.

Input from VTEN (Deb to pass on to VTrans):

- Technology is a huge benefit to transit systems; real-time is the primary amenity requested by the public.
- Can there be an analysis of the local match needed for transit?
- Transit must accommodate not just 9 - 5 commuting, but night and weekend shifts plus ALL other trips people make, including social ones. Frequency and connectedness are KEY.
- Convenient, affordable, reliable.
- Must serve major arteries, e.g. Rutland to Montpelier.
- Expand definition of transit to mean micro-transit, dynamic rideshare, deviated routes, trains, as well as buses.
- Fill in last mile gaps equitably; can't just focus on easy areas or downtown areas.
- Work toward unified public transit system: transit passes work on all systems and marketing is seamless.
- Better signage, benches, and shelters to serve our elders.
- Integrate AVs into transportation system, including paratransit.
- Land use patterns and policies that make transit possible. Inject transportation into local planning conversations.

- Many towns are curious about using school buses as transit.
- Need social marketing, e.g. de-stigmatizing transit PLUS an understanding how commuters act.
- More engagement with private sector, e.g. workplaces and health care.
- Greenhouse gas emissions and climate change need to be identified front and center as WHY this is a state priority.
- Provide volunteer drivers with technology to optimize trips.
- More to be done to prioritize corridors.
- Secure covered bike parking near transit.

Database of Statewide Bike & Pedestrian Data

Jim Sullivan, UVM Transportation Research Center

University of Vermont's Transportation Research Center's [Bike and Pedestrian Count Data Portal](#) is now live. This GIS-enabled tool provides access to all of Vermont's non-motorized activity count data (from various sources, including RPC and local counts) since 2006 through July 2016. Does not include traffic on bike lanes—just paths. The data is downloadable and can be organized year by year. Includes portal for uploading new data.

One third of the counters are eco-counters. Some data is collected over several hours; at other locations, counts are done continually. Likely up to a 20% undercount in some areas. Note that this is a low-budget project and that bike and pedestrian counts for each location are combined into one data point. The state funding for this database has ended, but continued funding is sought.

Recent Multi-Modal Success Stories in Burlington Area

*Chris Loyer, Green Mountain Transit &
Bryan Davis, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission*

Keys for transit center success:

- Lots of outreach
- Expect project to take TIME
- Many stakeholders and partners

Attributes of a successful transit center:

- Walkability
- GOOD bike parking and bike accessibility
- Land use planning that limits parking to encourage transit use.
- Dedicated para-transit system so that other buses stay on prescribed routes.

Burlington Downtown Transit Center:

- Green Mountain Transit-led initiative.
- No bike parking initially; Local Motion operates four bike lockers nearby and more bike parking will be completed soon.

Montpelier Multi-modal Center:

- City-led effort.
- Ground broken May 2018, expected opening summer 2019.
- Housing will be built above it; limited parking!

- Covered bike parking.

Regional Planning:

- Plan for PEOPLE NOT CARS.
- Burlington is seeing more mixed use areas and multi-unit housing that encourages multi-modal transportation.
- Seed culture change, e.g. prohibiting first year students from having cars on campus = overall few students have cars because they are used to getting around without.
- Good, convenient bike storage is key!
- Make it easy for developers to do the right thing by providing clear guidance that's easier to follow than not, i.e. for installing a functional style of bike racks.
- Jericho is a state-designated village center. The strategy has been to think about what the street flow would ideally look like and then fill it all in!

Break-Out Groups and Discussion: What technical resources, financing tools, outreach and public engagement methods, etc. from Burlington's case studies can partners replicate?

Process:

- When there is a long planning time (decades), new project built with old plan may not incorporate latest thinking.
- But avoid "holes in the ground," i.e. when jumping on funding or other opportunities, avoid the impulse to move too quickly and end up with poorly planned or unfinished project.
- We need MORE written and shared case studies that are honest about whole aspect of process.
- Information on multi-modal transportation is missing for policymakers and local residents—they aren't engaged on these topics and therefore needs aren't being met and resources not leveraged.
- Integrated school busing: issues include equity around which kids ride bus versus get dropped off as well as what is happening with school transportation in light of district consolidation.
COULD THIS BE THE NEXT MEETING TOPIC?
- Health access—partnership with health sector to invest in reliable transportation and healthy drivers
- Corridors are key! So is identifying benefits for sectors/groups of people.
- Emphasize multi-modal and pitch that as the solution.

Features:

- Designated bike infrastructure
- Opportunities for shared-use paths for rural-suburban
- Employer-based incentives e.g. UVM, VEIC and public-private partnerships
- Expand shoulder on rural highways
- Pop-ups—quick, small, temporary
- Open Streets (e.g. could BVT Open Streets be replicated in White River Junction?)
- Pop-up/pilot transit shuttles
- Promote Open Trip Planner and real-time systems and populate with local data
- Make it more difficult to use/own a car while making it easier to be multi-modal, e.g. charge for parking