



Better Connections Grant Program

House Committee on Transportation – February 22, 2024

Matthew Arancio VTrans | Richard Amore ACCD

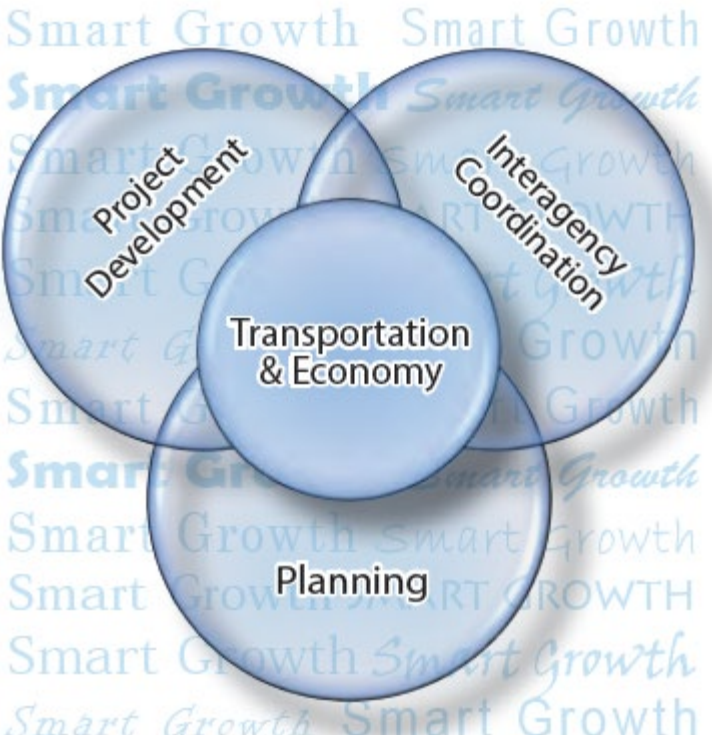


Recommendation:
Develop an
interagency
competitive
planning grant
program

Strengthening Vermont's Economy by Integrating Transportation and Smart Growth Policy

Final Report

September 2013



GRESHAM
SMITH AND
PARTNERS



Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

Program Objectives

- **Help communities identify and prioritize their goals and projects**
- **Develop a roadmap to achieve their goals and move projects forward**
- **Link communities with public and philanthropic partners to implement their priority projects**



Program Goals

- Support downtown and village center economic development and revitalization efforts
 - Provide a safe, multi-modal and resilient transportation system that supports the Vermont economy
 - Lead directly to project implementation
-

Priority Considerations

- Located within (or adjacent to) a state designated downtown, village center, neighborhood development area, new town center or growth center
- Inter-municipal efforts
- Support public health/physical activity
- Support water quality improvements

Program Organization

- **Bi-Annual Awards**
 - Study typically runs 18 months
- **Three (3) municipalities per cycle**
- **Municipality Lead**
 - RPC PM option
- **Lots of work!**
 - Big visions
 - Consultant Management
 - Community Engagement
 - Lots of Agency support



Program Funding

Funding Source / (%)	Amount
AOT / FHWA SPR Funds (80%)	\$180,000
ACCD / MPG Funds (10%)	\$20,000
Local Cash Match (10%)	\$20,000
ANR* / Clean Water Fund	\$90,000
*Optional – up to \$30,000 / grantee	

- **Truly an interagency partnership with funding available from three (3) sources** (and VDH in the past)
 - Max of \$97,500 per grantee
- **10% local match removes a barrier to entry**
 - Federal funds typically require 20%
- **Administered by VTrans**

ANR's Clean Water Fund



NOTE: This is an illustration of one possible scenario created to help the community visualize possibilities and create a platform for dialogue.

Project Types

Activity Center Plans

Detailed implementation-driven master plan for downtowns, village centers and neighborhoods [downtown and village master plans, neighborhood plans, etc.]

Corridor Transportation and Land Use Plans

Detailed implementation plan to improve transportation and land use for corridors and regions [complete street plans, multi-modal linkage plans, active transportation plans, etc.]

Innovative Transportation and Land Use Bylaws

Integrated transportation and land use bylaws and guidelines for a specific area [form-based codes, streetscape design guidelines, complete street bylaws, etc.]

By The Numbers

- **FY2023 Cycle Communities**
 - **Brattleboro**
 - **East Hardwick**
 - **West Windsor**

By the Numbers [2015-2023]

 **\$3.7 m**
in grant funds
requested

 **\$1.6 m**
in grant funds
awarded

 **\$199,500**
in local match
funds

 **21**
Better
Connections
grants awarded

Local Projects - History

2015 - Warren/Waitsfield, Vergennes and West Rutland/Town of Rutland

2016 - Chester, Montpelier, and Springfield

2017 - Brighton, St. Albans, and Windsor

2018 - Danville, Enosburgh, and Hyde Park

2019 - Fairlee, Middlebury, and Northfield

2021 - Bethel, Lyndonville, and Poultney

2023 - Brattleboro, East Hardwick, and West Windsor



Local Impact of Better Connections



MRV Active Transportation Plan



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FOR THE MAD RIVER VALLEY

Future Opportunities | Connection Typologies

Major On Road Connections

Minor On Road Connections

Minor Off Road Connections



Bike Lane

- Best for areas with high traffic or areas with high pedestrian activity
- Can be used for both one-way and two-way traffic with a dedicated lane
- May be used for both one-way and two-way traffic
- May include signage, pavement markings, and other safety features
- May include ADA-compliant signage, pavement markings, and other safety features

Terrain Suitability



Paved Shoulder

- Best for areas with low traffic and low pedestrian activity
- May be used for both one-way and two-way traffic
- May include signage and other safety features
- May include ADA-compliant signage and other safety features



Shared Lane

- Best for areas with low traffic and low pedestrian activity
- May be used for both one-way and two-way traffic
- May include signage and other safety features
- May include ADA-compliant signage and other safety features



Sidewalk

- Best for areas with low traffic and low pedestrian activity
- May be used for both one-way and two-way traffic
- May include signage and other safety features
- May include ADA-compliant signage and other safety features



Signed Route

- Best for areas with low traffic and low pedestrian activity
- May be used for both one-way and two-way traffic
- May include signage and other safety features
- May include ADA-compliant signage and other safety features



Natural Surface Trail

- Best for areas with low traffic and low pedestrian activity
- May be used for both one-way and two-way traffic
- May include signage and other safety features
- May include ADA-compliant signage and other safety features

Blueberry Lake Trail User Spending



MRV Active Transportation Plan

*“Working together is hard work,” said Josh Schwartz of the Mad River Valley Planning District, “but we did it for a larger purpose. We know that the foundation of planning work is **relationship building**. And this grant allowed us to **start building those relationships and learn how to work together.**”*

Springfield Main Street Master Plan

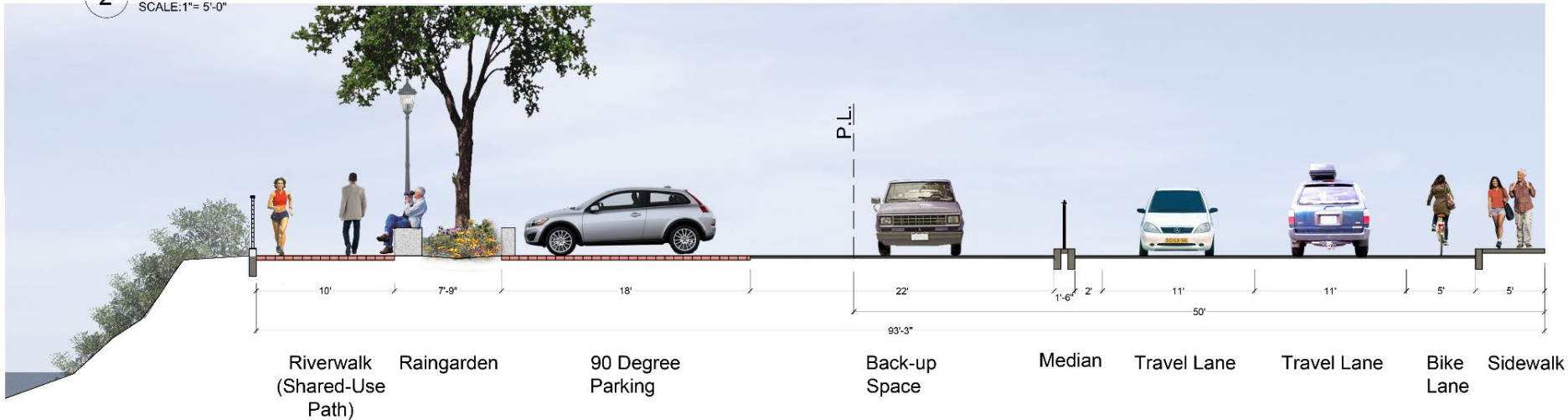
BC 2.0 project



Views of Clinton Street before and after a road diet and the addition of a shared use path.

2 Section at Riverwalk - Alt.1

SCALE: 1" = 5'-0"



3 Section at Riverwalk

SCALE: 1" = 5'-0"

Springfield Main Street Master Plan

“This is the type of work we have wanted to see our communities do for decades but, frankly, there has never been enough money,” Rasmussen said. “The Better Connections program is critical because it is one of the few funding sources that gives people the resources to really engage the community and build consensus. People have always wanted to do it but there haven’t been the resources.”

Springfield Main Street Master Plan

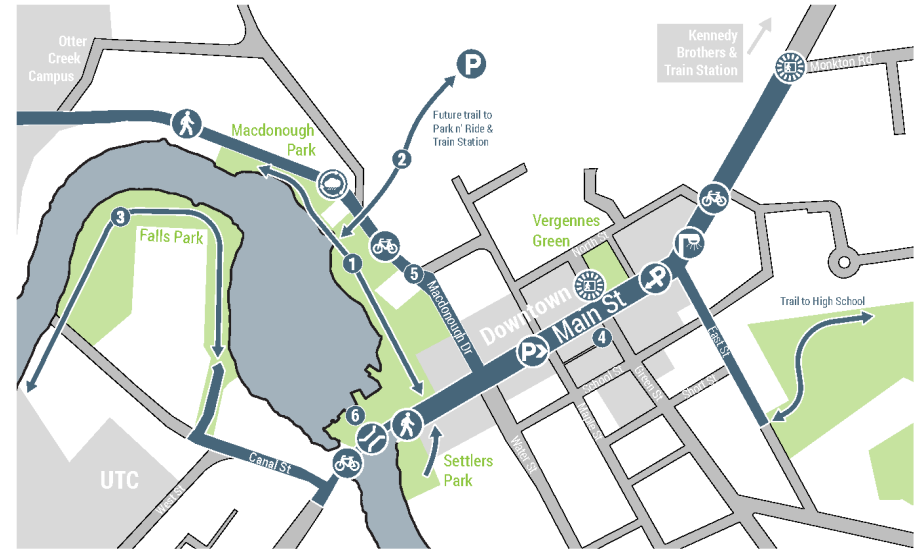


Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan

BC 1.0 project



3. CONNECT ASSETS



TRAILS

- 1 Construct a boardwalk trail to connect the docks to the stairway.
- 2 Construct a trail from MacDonough Park to the Park-and-Ride and Train Station.
- 3 Improve and maintain the trail through Falls Park and to UTC.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- Main Street 4**
- Install pedestrian signals on Main Street at Monkton St and Green St.
 - Improve parking management by directing drivers to under-utilized lots.
 - Stripe bike lanes.
 - Replace highway-style lights with pedestrian-scale lighting.
 - Test back-in angle parking for a year in conjunction with an education campaign, or widen sidewalks and convert to parallel parking to accommodate the high demand for outdoor seating.

MacDonough Drive 5

- Extend and repair sidewalks to the Otter Creek Campus.
- Stripe bike lanes.
- Improve stormwater management.

Otter Creek Bridge 6

- Redesign the bridge to slow traffic and indicate the entrance to Downtown.
- Work with VTrans to develop bike accommodations on the bridge and provide a sidewalk on the north side.
- After implementing speed reduction measures on the bridge, install enhanced crossing treatments at Settlers Park.
- Develop access to City-owned pumphouse park/overlook.

Montpelier Complete Streets Design Guidelines

BC 2.0 project

Road Typologies

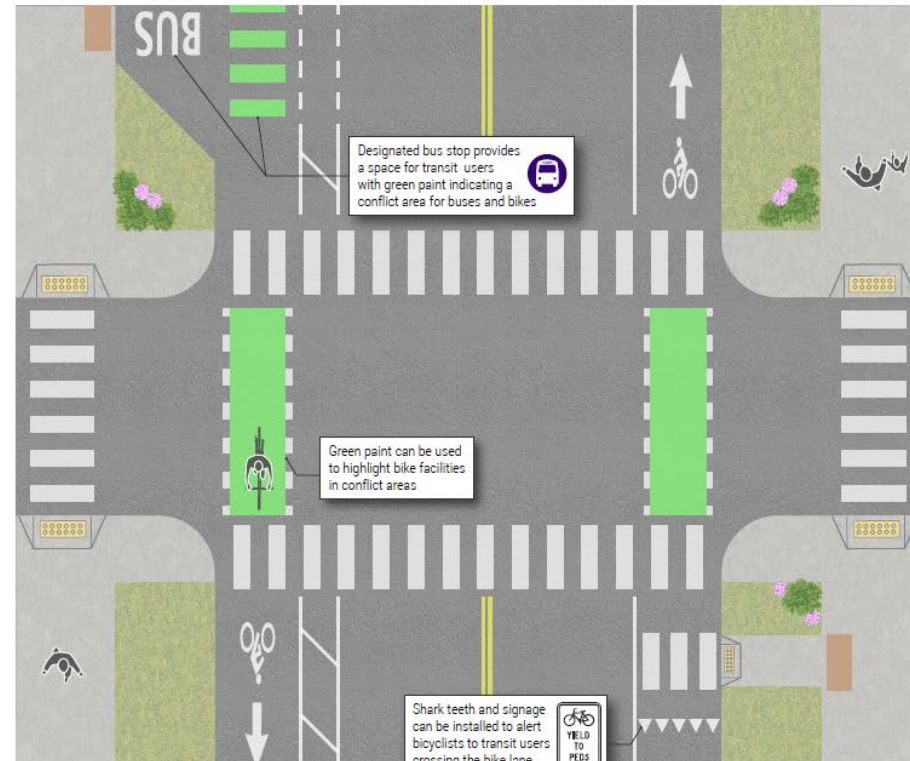
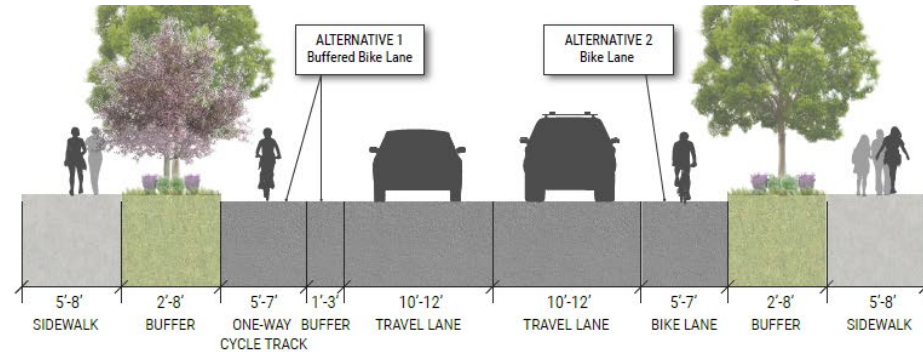
COMPLETE STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES AND ROAD TYPOLOGIES

MAIN RESIDENTIAL ROADS

- Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector and Minor Collector Functional Classes
- High, medium, and low residential land uses
- Transit facilities such as designated bus stops, crossings through bike lanes, and benches
- Buffered bike lanes where possible, otherwise a bike lane, paved shoulder or shared lane is recommended
- Sidewalks on both sides
- Bike and pedestrian amenities and street furniture such as lighting, benches and bike racks scattered throughout corridor

Table 0X: Main Residential Road Features

FEATURE	RANGE	PREFERRED
Vehicle Travel Lane Width	10'-13'	11'
Shoulder	1'-3'	3'
Target Speed	25-40 MPH	25 MPH
On-Street Parking	7'-10'	8'
Public Transit	TBD	TBD
Bicycle Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Roadway Paved Shoulder Bike Lane (5' Minimum) Buffered Bike Lane 	Buffered Bike Lane
Bicycle Amenities	Wayfinding signage, pavement markings	Pavement Markings
Pedestrian Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared-Use Path (8' Minimum) Sidewalk (5' Minimum) 	Shared-Use Path (10' preferred) where space is available; otherwise a sidewalk (5' Minimum)
Pedestrian Amenities	Street Trees, benches, wayfinding signage	Select most appropriate intervention based on context
Green Infrastructure	Biofiltration swale, infiltration basins, bump outs with localized rain garden, green gutters, permeable pavement in parking bays	Select most appropriate intervention based on context

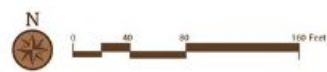


Chester Village Revitalization Plan

Exploring a Vision | Streetscape Improvements



Chester Village Revitalization Plan



Island Pond Revitalization Master Plan

Join Us For a

What's working,
what's not?

walk
& talk

What do you see
for the future?

We want to
hear from you!

Tell us what
you think!

in Island Pond

VILLAGE REVITALIZATION MASTER PLAN

DATE **Monday, October 30** TIME **4:00 - 5:00 PM** LOCATION **Meet at Town Hall**

As part of the Island Pond Village Revitalization Master Plan please join the Town & Consultant Team for a Walk & Talk. We will be leading three groups around the Village to look at specific issues that include Infrastructure and Transportation, Village Revitalization, and the Lakefront.

Come share your experiences, knowledge, and ideas with the Town & Consultant Team!

Walk & Talk Groups

GROUP ONE

**Getting Around
Island Pond**

GROUP TWO

**The Greening of
Island Pond**

GROUP THREE

**The Building Blocks
of the Village**

For more information, contact Lucy Thayer at:
(802) 388-3011 or lucy@landworksvt.com

Presented and organized by LandWorks, Resource Systems Group, Engineering Ventures, Doug Kennedy Advisors, and UK Architects

The Island Pond Village Revitalization Master Plan Project is funded through a grant from Better Connections administered by VTrans in partnership with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.



Island Pond Revitalization Master Plan



Enosburg Falls Vital Village Project



ENOSBURG FALLS VITAL VILLAGE PROJECT

"Nobody was talking to each other about how to maybe make the improvement. And our group put all those people together, got 'em into the room and made a plan." — Jim Cameron, Enosburg Falls volunteer

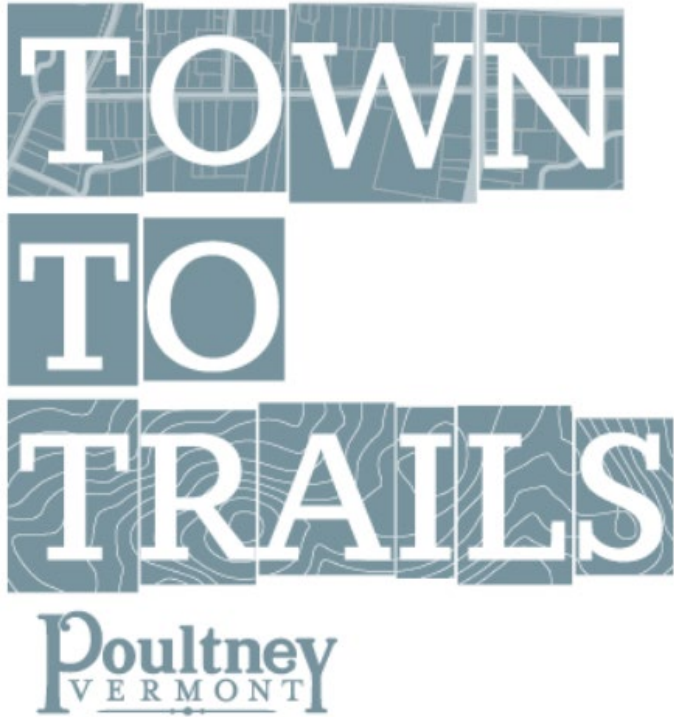


BETHEL FOR ALL

Bethel for All is here to make Bethel a more vibrant, accessible, connected and welcoming place for all.

We're creating a village accessibility action plan, and we need YOUR ideas to help shape Bethel's future.

Poultney Town to Trails Plan



Building Trails and Plans for a Thriving Economy



Lyndon Route 5 Corridor Master Plan

ROUTE 5 CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN 2024



Lyndon Route 5 Corridor Master Plan

ROUTE 5 CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

PERSPECTIVE B: DEPOT STREET @ DARLING INN

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS & CALM VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

- 1 Use curb extensions to reduce pedestrian crossing distances and improve driver awareness of pedestrians. The pedestrian crossing in front of the Darling Inn is a particularly high priority, as it is frequently used by senior residents to access The White Market and other destinations.

ACTIVATE THE VILLAGE CENTER

- 2 Create and activate a public space at the Village Center block.

BEAUTIFY DEPOT STREET

- 3 Use curb extensions to add landscaping, street trees, and green stormwater infiltration areas.



DEPOT ST CROSS SECTION

11'	8' walk	20'-6" angled parking	12' drive lane	12' drive lane	20'-6" plaza + planting	8' walk
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GREENSPACE Areas with vegetation and without buildings or pavement, such as parks, lawns, or greenstrips

LANDSCAPE / STORMWATER Areas with landscape planting and/or stormwater retention that promote infiltration and protect adjacent waterways

PUBLIC SPACE Areas where the public can gather that include seating, lighting, planting, or public art

Lyndon Route 5 Corridor Master Plan

PROJECT PROCESS

DEPOT STREET BLOCK PARTY

The project team organized a block party held in Lyndon in June 2023 which attracted hundreds of attendees. The event featured several “pop-up” businesses, including a coffee shop on Depot Street that was open only for the event. The event also included a food truck, live music, a puppet show, and a clown performance. The event also featured two pop-up streetscape designs, created in collaboration with Local Motion. Attendees at the event were encouraged to play games, walk around, and otherwise have fun in the pop-up areas.

The project team also gathered feedback on the proposed designs for downtown Lyndon on multiple boards that were set up around downtown. Feedback received on the designs was overwhelmingly positive.



A BOARD AT THE DEPOT STREET BLOCK PARTY EXPLAINS THE POP-UP



BLOCK PARTY ATTENDEES PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED DESIGNS

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<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>

And check out our local projects Story Map

<https://secure.accd.vermont.gov/betterconnections/projects/index.html>

Developments happen incrementally, but **great communities** happen **strategically.**



Thank You.

Better Connections
Program