

To: Members of the Vermont Legislature

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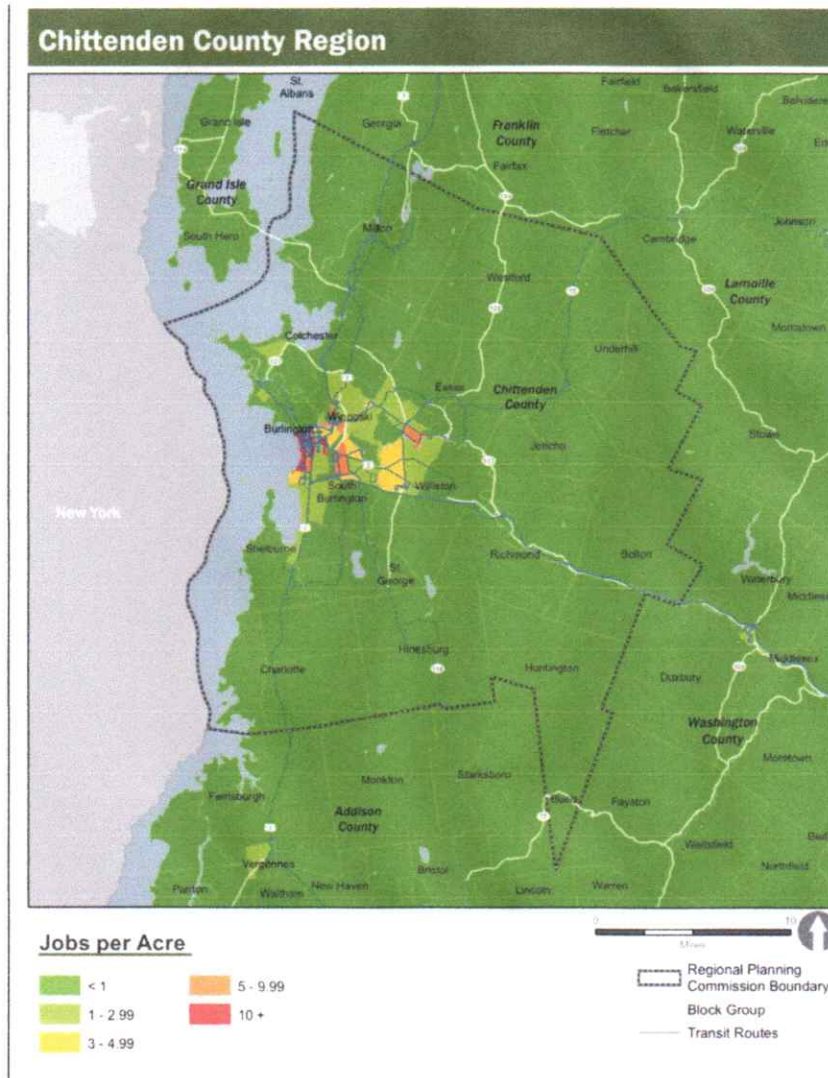
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April 3, 2023

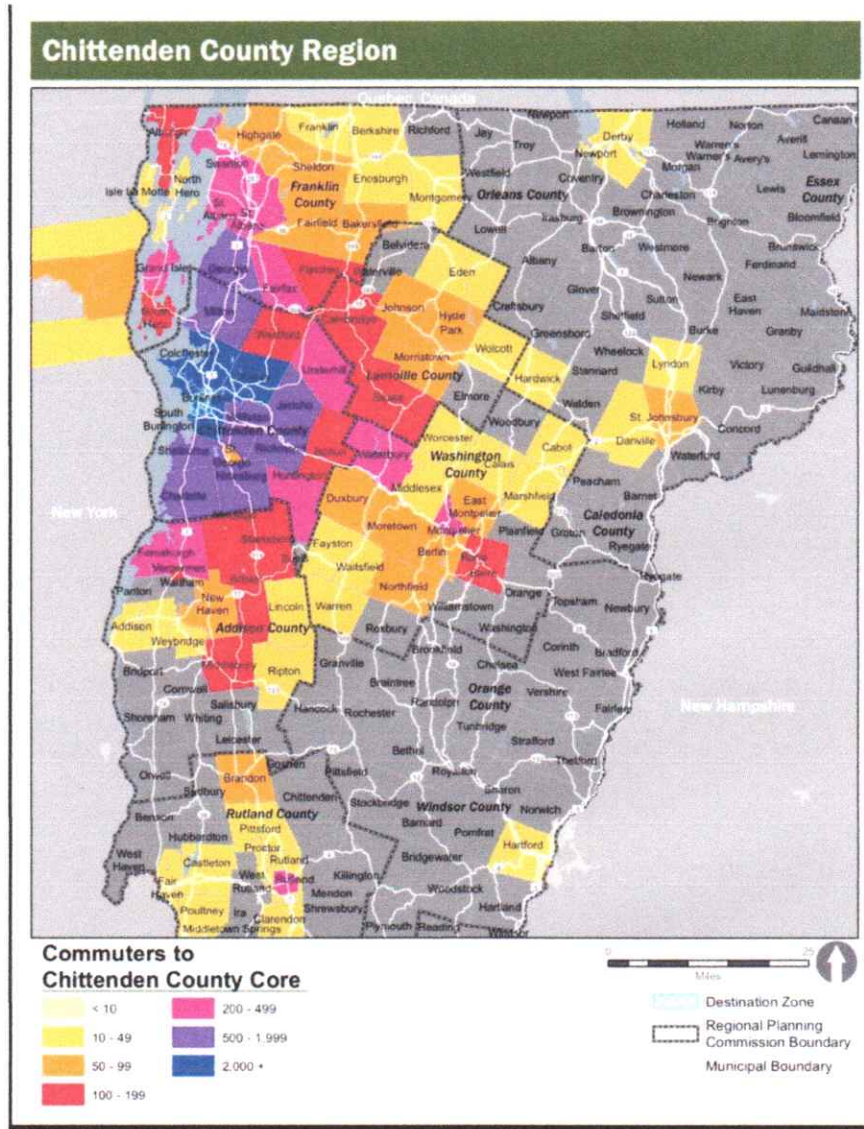
Subject: The Commuting Problem and How S.100 Helps

As has been reported from numerous sources, motor vehicle exhaust is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont, and long commutes are a major source of vehicle exhausts. Below are two VTRANS maps that show the commuting problem quite clearly in northwestern Vermont.

The first shows where the jobs are:



The second shows where the people come from to get to those jobs:



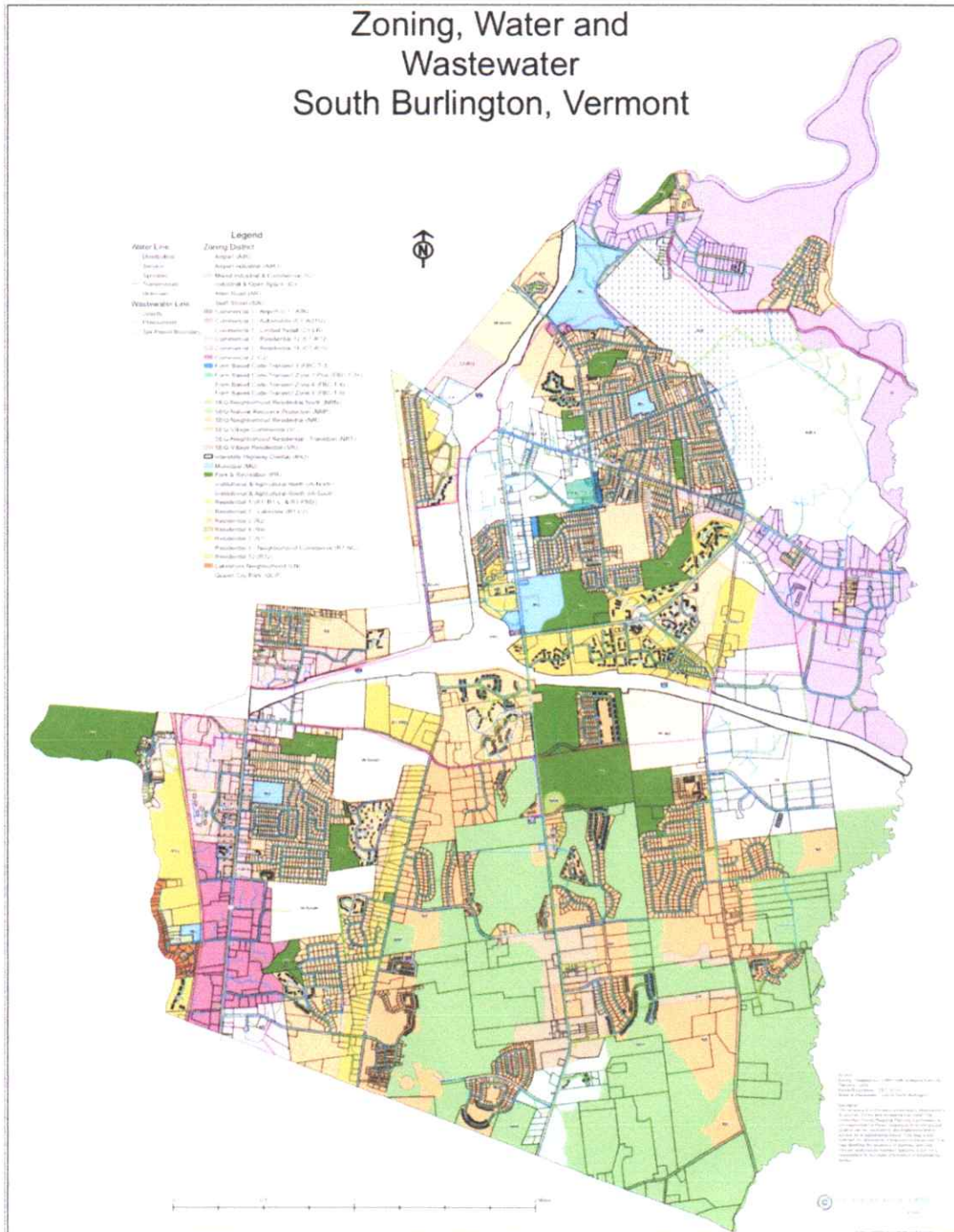
The largest employers in the state are UVM and UVMCMC. This map shows that substantial numbers of people have round trip daily commutes of 60 miles and more. Fletcher is 30 miles each way and Middlebury is 36. That means that during rush hour people from Fletcher spend at least 1½ hours a day in their cars and for people from Middlebury its 2 hours.

An obvious remedy to this problem is more housing, homes that are reasonably affordable, closer to the jobs. Most of the commuters would jump at the opportunity to live closer, if (the big IF) the housing were available. It's not, of course. This problem is not new and it's getting worse.

So, where is the best place for the new housing we need? Where the water and sewer and road infrastructure already exists is the most cost-effective, again, of course. Looking at the municipalities around the core of Chittenden County, municipal zoning allows for new

residential development adjacent to road/water/sewer infrastructure in all of them... except one: South Burlington.

As the map below shows, South Burlington's southeast has extensive water and sewer infrastructure already built but has restrictive zoning that virtually prohibits new housing through almost all of that area in spite of being the Census block that has the highest income in Vermont:



The light green areas are zoned Natural Resource Protection (NRP) even though in most cases they don't actually protect any natural resources. The light tan and light blue areas require that any development there over four acres set aside at least 70% of the land area for permanent conservation no matter what the area contains.

This is terrible planning, of course, since it ignores the flexibility needed for likely future demands for housing which are already going unmet at anywhere near what is needed. In other words, it plans for the present or the past, but not the future. South Burlington's restrictive zoning is not new and is a principle reason for the dearth of property available for housing under current zoning.

It's within this context that S.100 very modestly addresses the problem by requiring along existing infrastructure that greater density be allowed. The changes set forth in S.100 provide a small incremental approach towards addressing the housing crisis, the long commutes and the associated social costs that we live with now are only getting worse.

Therefore, you should support it.