



TRANSPORTATION POLICY PRIORITIES

2023-2024 Legislative Session

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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TRANSPORTATION GOAL

“To seek transformative changes in the way Vermont plans, designs, builds and maintains our transportation system to accommodate all modes, promote transportation equity and flood resilience, and support housing – especially in those areas where we plan for growth.”



Increased funding for municipal bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements is critically important to meet the goals of the Vermont Climate Action Plan, Vermont Climate Action Plan, Health Equity Plan, state planning goals [24 V.S.A. §4302], as well as to further flood resilience and housing strategies. In the most recent Bicycle and Pedestrian Program round, there were about \$20M in requests with only \$4.4M in funding. To better meet these state goals and to provide safe accommodations for a variety of bicycling and walking types, an increase in funding is needed.



PRIORITY #2

The **Statewide Bike Plan MUST consider local roads**. Bicyclists, like other travelers, do not care as much whether they are on a state or local road. They consider travel times, safety and scenery. The State plan failing to take local roads into consideration, at least in the planning process, completely separates it from reality and misses out on a lot of efficiencies, cost savings and good planning.



PRIORITY #3

Engage with VTrans to help **shape the Vermont State Design Standards update process** to address:

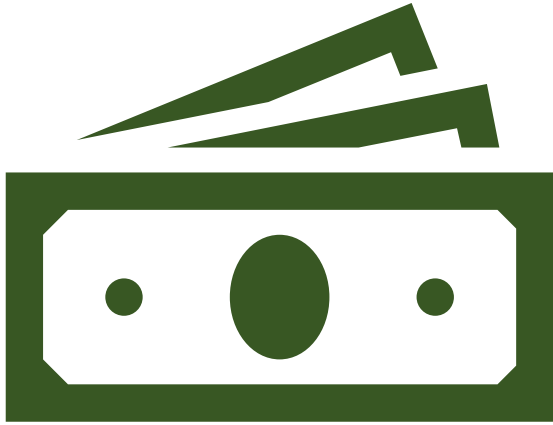
In partnership with RPCs and other stakeholders, VTrans should **develop a pattern book or design guidelines** that identifies best management practices **to provide safer bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and enhance the livability and walkability of Vermont village centers and downtowns**. These treatments should include design techniques for gateway treatments, pedestrian refuge islands, traffic calming, protected bike lanes and similar facilities along both Class 1 Town Highways as well as on State Highway segments that pass through designated downtowns and village centers. A worthy goal is to establish approved treatments and work towards universal implementation by the state and towns on all state highways including class 1 sections.

Establish clear standard treatment guidance for providing safer bicyclist facilities on state highways based on pavement resurface treatment types and existing conditions. For example, for all resurfaced state highways where shoulder widths are eight feet or wider, pavement markings must incorporate buffered bike lanes. Similar to #3a, establishing approved treatments and working towards universal implementation by the state and towns on all state highways including class 1 sections is the goal.



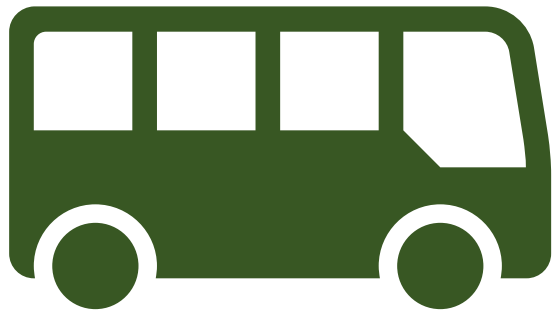
PRIORITY #4

Permit reform is needed to allow for non-motorized transportation and recreation paths an easier path forward in the state's environmental rules. The most practical and available location for multiuse paths that enable Vermonters safer walking and bicycling opportunities are in the river valleys. Environmental permitting currently makes it very difficult to construct new multiuse paths within riparian buffers and/or river corridors. Consider ways to better incorporate trails into greenways that encourage flood resiliency as well as increased physical activity and better non-motorized transportation options.



PRIORITY #5

Reduce local match percentages for funding programs for “rural towns” as defined in 24 V.S.A. §4303. Many of our small communities lack the capacity to raise large amounts of matching funds that are often required for transportation related infrastructure improvements. This will create more equitable distribution of grant funds with a broader impact throughout the State.



PRIORITY #6

Support alternative revenue sources for the local match for public transportation. Local/non-federal match has been funded through the local property tax, through contributions from cities and towns which are directly served by bus routes. The connection between transit routes and local funding breaks down upon closer examination—travelers and economic activity cross municipal and county boundaries. Reliance on local property taxes is an inequitable and unsustainable funding method. Vermont faces a crossroads of decreasing revenue from the T-fund, increased pressure on local budgets, interest in fare-free service, and a potential need for more matching funds to take advantage of increased federal transit dollars. It is necessary to identify a sustainable revenue source for future local transit funding. A transit funding study outlined options and opportunities.

<https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Final-Funding-Report-11-23-21.pdf>



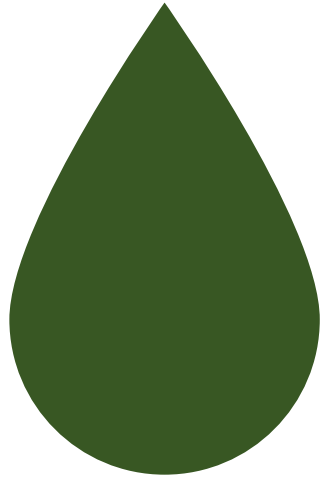
PRIORITY #7

Focus on safety rather than standards and embrace interim steps toward improving roads for biking. Recognizing that full AASHTO standards are often unnecessary and unreasonably expensive – in other words, let’s not let “the perfect,” prohibit “the good” from ever happening (i.e. if a rural road is straight and lightly travelled, but has one bad corner, we should widen the bad corner and leave the rest of the street alone). We can improve it relatively inexpensively without requiring 4-foot shoulders and bike lanes all along the street.



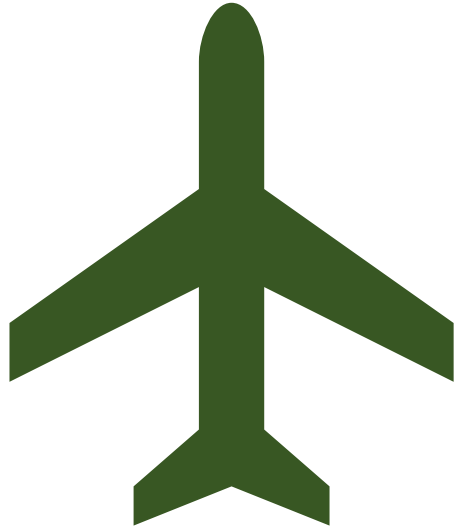
PRIORITY #8

The need for **financial assistance for towns to build new salt sheds** is significant. These structures are very expensive, and it has been difficult to obtain grant funding for town salt shed projects.



PRIORITY #9

Adequately **fund Category A Better Roads grants** to ensure that road erosion data and inventories are updated.



PRIORITY #10/11

Streamline the **Act 250 and ANR stormwater permitting processes for the development of state airport facilities**, such as for the construction of additional hangars, to improve the utilization of airports. (Note S.1 and H.2)

Identify an **RPC project management role on new federal and state transportation initiatives**, such as implementing the Vermont Climate Action Plan.

TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE



Jamaica, VT
[Jamaica Irene Flood Video](#)