

Transportation for Vermonters: A Statewide Coalition

The Need

For nearly two decades, Vermont’s people, state agencies, transit providers, advocates, and others have made great strides to address sustainable mobility issues in Vermont.

There have been many successes: increased transit, more sidewalks and bike facilities, investments in compact land use patterns, alternatively fueled vehicles, and policies that acknowledge the multiple benefits a transportation system can provide, to name a few. Just as importantly, in Vermont there is a willingness to innovate around what a sustainable and accessible transportation system can look like in a rural state.

Despite many accomplishments, Vermont has work to do before our transportation system serves all Vermonters affordably, conveniently, and sustainably.

Too many Vermonters lack affordable, convenient, reliable transportation to schools, jobs, healthcare, and other services. Such access is essential for people’s quality of life (at every stage of life), economic opportunity, and health, as well as the state’s economy as a whole. Transportation is the largest source of air pollution and accounts for nearly half of the greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont, partly because nearly all vehicles registered in the state are powered by fossil fuels. This is reinforced by our transportation infrastructure, which is predominately designed to support vehicular traffic - reducing opportunities for healthy, active transportation choices.

With this convergence of need and opportunity, the time is right for Vermont organizations and leaders to work together to advance policies, plans and programs that expand mobility choices for all Vermonters, improving health, safety and quality of life, reducing environmental impacts, preventing sprawl, and strengthening the state’s economy.

Who We Are

Transportation for Vermonters (T4VT) is a diverse coalition of individuals, organizations, businesses and institutions committed to working together, creatively, and across sectors to achieve a sustainable, accessible transportation system in a rural state.

Key Principles

The following principles summarize what T4VT believes are the “why,” “what,” and “how” of creating a sustainable transportation system. (For further details on these principles, please see the *Transportation for Vermonters Coalition Statement*.)

WHY: A robust and efficient statewide system for sustainable mobility benefits all Vermonters, our communities, our environment, and our economy. We are working toward an efficient state system to sustainably meet multiple goals that a high quality rural transportation system can provide:

- Affordability
- Health and well-being
- Access and economic opportunity
- Community vitality

WHAT: A comprehensive and coordinated approach to transportation demand management, land use planning and development, and advancing cleaner vehicles is needed to achieve a robust and efficient statewide system for sustainable mobility. This approach will:

- Include a range of Vermonters in development of solutions
- Foster connected, compact communities within town centers rather than rural settings
- Promote integrated policy making

HOW: Investments in a robust and efficient statewide system for sustainable mobility should address a range of state goals, account for societal costs and benefits borne by Vermonters, and ensure efficient use of public funds to meet outcomes. Achieving this will require:

- Developing and aligning performance measures
- Evaluating and monitoring investments
- Innovation
- Building upon successes

How We Will Act

T4VT will take a research-based approach to identify and advocate for transportation programs and investments needed to improve air quality, health, economic vitality, and mobility, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. T4VT will establish and implement a plan for outreach, education, and advocacy to inform and engage Vermonters, including Vermont policy makers, about transportation solutions that meet mobility needs and advance state climate, energy, health, and economic development goals.

The effort will be coordinated by the Vermont Natural Resources Council, but will have its own distinct brand, membership, and decision making process. The Coalition will have a staff coordinator. Decisions regarding areas of research, policies to support, and strategies for advocating for those policies will be made through a democratic process involving the members.

Advocacy will be a key component of the Coalition; this approach distinguishes it from existing transportation networking and research groups. T4VT is committed to working strategically and collaboratively with these and other groups to amplify our shared goals.

Members are asked to sign a Member Agreement, which asks signatories to affirm that this is a policy and advocacy coalition, people to contribute where and what they can, and not publicly contradict T4VT's positions.

Though the process of soliciting members has just begun, the following organizations have participated in discussions that shaped the coalition's principles and purpose (inclusion of a name does not suggest or obligate a group to become a member): AARP-VT, CarShare Vermont, CATMA (Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association), Energy Action Network, Green Mountain Transit, Local Motion, Sierra Club, UVM Transportation Research Center, Vermont Clean Cities Coalition, Vermont Council on Rural Development, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network, Vermont Environmental Education Program, Vermont Heart Association, Vermont Lung Association, Vermont Natural Resources Council, Vermont Public Transit Association, Vital Communities