

**Richard Watts**  
**Testimony to the House Transportation Committee**  
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**Richard Watts**

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Zach Flaherty, student researcher from Randolph with me today

More on these points, here <https://www.stvt.org/>

**Some Points**

Public transportation is essential. 4.7 million trips in 2017 in Vermont.

Choice riders, low-income, those too young and too old.

Ride the bus every day....see how this works first-hand (apologize leave by 11:50 to catch bus)

Interested today in things we do now to support and grow the systems we have...

**Ridership declines:** Your investment huge. Negative feedback loops, cut service, less riders etc. etc.

**A positive feedback loop:** Transportation Demand Management and related programs. Work that can be done by private/public employers with state leadership.

Most trips in Vermont in a car, and most of the time people driving alone. And most places have free to the user parking. When we hit capacity we add parking or travel lanes.

CCRPC for example is about to spend \$500,000 to study adding a travel lane to the interstate in Colchester.

TDM works in the reverse, instead of adding capacity, it's about reducing demand. And providing real alternatives PLUS transit, safe walking/biking etc.

**Chitt County here, but can apply in various ways.**

Statewide 90% plus trips car, driving alone. At UVM for the 2000 faculty and staff its about 56%.

And transit ridership is 10%. Well above state averages.

Parking costs up to.6 percent salary, (100 to \$600 a year depending) and can be difficult

Bus is free, guaranteed ride home, free carshare membership, bike share and occasional use.

And importantly, UVM pays GMT \$300,000 a year for these rides. And it creates a positive feedback loop. These riders want more and better service. These are trips on the Link Routes for example, from Milton and St Albans that add capacity for other riders.

It has to do with charging the real cost of parking, and providing real alternatives. Which includes safe bike and walking infrastructure for that last mile.

REWIRE program – in a suburban location. Many more private and public employers could do this. Take the real cost of parking and use that to provide transit incentives.

State employees bus rides, only for Montpelier.

### **Legislators in this building – as an example.....**

Private and public solutions that include charging the real cost of parking. Look in your own parking lot. Start here. And combine that with real alternatives. Not for everyone. And not every place. But each trip in transit is another champion/learned rider for transit.

### **The nega-mile & transportation efficiency**

Cheapest, greenest, cleanest, safest mile is the mile not driven in an automobile....Borrow from success of the nega-watt. Extend efficiency charge. EVS Part of the solution. But take up too much space in the conversation. Because of funding. Truly life cycle, would choose other approaches, and does nothing for those who can't afford or too young or old.

### **Some other ideas (from a colleague)**

Change impact fee rules to give us more flexibility to use impact fees to fund transit operations. Transit operations is now considered transportation capacity....Support increases in density and developer bonuses to develop along established transit routes. Provide incentives through Criterion 5 in Act 250 or in 9K, public infrastructure.

Eight transit providers, some efficiencies in combining more routes

Create a seamless mobility system where one can book a bus and then an e-bike or e-scooter from their phone in one fee. Many apps already for this. Use private sector apps.

Half-way through a study on one of the Link Routes (the 116) which also has an ACTR from Middlebury to BTV through Bristol.

Previous research on gas tax. Critical funding source.

### **Transit Use Report**

2017 route performance report:

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/publictransit/documents/FY%2017%20Public%20Transit%20Route%20Performance%20Report%20-Final%20Report.pdf>