

Sec. 16. STUDY OF METHODS TO INCREASE PUBLIC TRANSIT

RIDERSHIP IN VERMONT

(a) ~~As Vermont plans for a future with reduced greenhouse gas emissions as determined in the State Energy Plan, improvements to transit service to enhance the use of mobility options and accessibility will be critical to achieving the State's environmental goals.~~

(b) ~~The Agency of Transportation shall, in consultation with stakeholders, such as the Vermont Public Transportation Association, the Public Transit Advisory Council, human services agencies, hospitals, nonprofit agencies that provide transportation to their clients, as well as any other stakeholders that are identified, study methods to increase use of public transit in Vermont for both residents and visitors with specific emphasis on rural connectivity that~~

~~This study will: Review AOT's current initiatives and those in other territories, states and countries; (1) determines what factors limit the use of public transit, as defined in State statute, in Vermont including proximity to routes, availability of park and rides, quality of service delivered, first and last mile(s) hinderances, use and availability of ride hailing services, availability and ease of use of volunteer resources, joint procurement of services among State agencies, and other factors as identified by the Agency;~~

~~(2) reviews the current research on what methods best serve to increase ridership, particularly in small cities and rural areas, including research published by the Transportation Research Board and other national groups, literature, marketing and activities regarding methods to increase ridership with special emphasis on rural areas; determine unmet need from current studies and examine the benefit of data collected during the outreach for the Public Transit~~

Policy Plan (PTPP), recent plans published by the Agency of Human Services, and other State agencies:

(d) The Agency shall evaluate recommendations for potential inclusion in its fiscal year 2021 budget proposal as a request for the funding necessary to achieve the recommendations for any new initiatives identified in the study, determined by the working group pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. The request for funding shall be separate and distinct from the Agency's funding request for public transit.