

Complete Streets in Downtowns and Village Centers

Boost funding to adapt Main Streets to meet the needs of more users of all ages and abilities to advance local recovery efforts and build prosperous communities.



- **WHAT:** Increase funding for the Downtown Transportation Fund and expand eligibility to support state designated village centers that have developed plans to support local businesses with amenities to boost walking, biking, transit, and commerce. Additional funding will meet the increasing demand and need from municipalities to create more and safer mobility options, expand access and choice, and make necessary public investments to support recovery efforts, advance equity, and build inclusive, vibrant, and welcoming communities in the future.
- **WHY:** The COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered how most people go about their daily lives with huge shifts in how we move in our communities, how we get groceries and food, whether we go outside, where we go, who we see, and what we do. While all the designated downtown communities have made investments to retrofit their streets to serve the needs of people on foot, on bikes, on transit -- demand for funding outpaces the need two-to-one and village centers are ineligible. Moreover, the pandemic has accelerated the need to adapt Main Streets to support economic activities like dining, shopping, and community events. Creating safe, walkable streets and choices for getting around are critical during the initial crisis response, and also to achieving a long-term economic recovery that is equitable, sustainable, and enduring. Investments in walking and bicycling facilities will help achieve the greenhouse gas reduction goals in the Global Warming Solutions Act.
- **WHO:** This proposal would expand the Downtown Transportation Fund eligibility to include approximately 38 municipalities, creating and expanding opportunities for transportation investments in both larger downtown centers as well as smaller rural villages. Currently, the Downtown Transportation Fund only supports transportation-related improvements within and serving the state's 23 Designated Downtowns. This proposal would expand the eligibility to include state designated village centers that have participated in the Better Connections program and Chittenden County designated village centers that have completed a similar public input-based bicycle and pedestrian plan (Chittenden County municipalities are ineligible for the Better Connections program since they receive direct funding for similar purpose). The Better Connections program is a multiagency partnership (VTrans, ACCD, ANR, and Department of Health) that supports local transportation planning and community revitalization efforts. Approximately 15 designated village centers have or will participate in the Better Connections program in 2021.
- **HOW:** Specifically, the proposal:
 - Increases the Downtown Transportation Fund to two million dollars to support more transportation improvement projects to make Vermont communities safer, equitable, attractive, and more pedestrian, bike, and transit friendly.
 - Amend the statute to enable state designated village centers that have participated in the Better Connections program to apply for the Downtown Transportation Fund grants.
- **FUNDING:** \$5.5 million in state transportation and general funds