



SIERRA CLUB

VERMONT CHAPTER

The Vermont Sierra Club Bicycle and Pedestrian Testimony, April 2022

Cleaning up Vermont's transportation is about more than Electric Vehicles. Seven steps that can be taken that are within existing rules include:

1. The Vermont State Road Standards shall be updated to include multimodal road designs from the National Association of City Transportation Officials guidebook, the Dutch CROW Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic, studies for more equitable road space allocation (such as the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy road allocation policy), and Congress for New Urbanism guidelines, and VTrans shall make the implementation of Complete Streets multimodal guidelines mandatory.
2. Where possible a separate bike lane and the pedestrian walkway shall be provided that is away from vehicular traffic. This moderate speed lane and the slower walkway shall be convenient to use and not cause active transportation users to make detours to get to common destinations. These separated lanes shall be part of a connected network of lanes that are usable for everyday purposes.
3. Recognizing that separated facilities are not practical for the majority of routes in Vermont, the road shoulders outside of any white fog line shall have a paved 4-foot width, to allow vulnerable users to be out of the high-speed vehicular travel lane, (see Vision Zero safety principles). Shoulders within one mile of a town center or transit hub shall be considered of above-average importance and priority. VTrans shall have a stand-alone dedicated program to bring existing roads up to this standard within 10 years.
4. Vehicle travel lanes shall be reduced from the standard 11-foot width to a 10-foot width through village centers and in the proximity of any other higher risk areas such as school zones (Greenbook section 7.2.19), and the 85th percentile formula shall not apply for setting speed limits in these areas (Greenbook 7.2.20). Anywhere there are already existing lower speed limits of 20 to 40 mph for these zones, it shall not require a town engineering study to reduce the lane width.
5. On any roadway where these measures are physically impossible, there shall be signage reminding vehicle users that the road is shared.
6. Improved drivers education and awareness campaigns shall remind vehicle users that all users have a right to the road. Every Drivers Education exam shall include at least one question on bicycle safety, from a set of 10 to 20 points written in consultation with the Transportation Research Center.

Education materials must include references to the public health benefits of biking, Vermont's carbon reduction goals, benefits to vehicle drivers (such as reduced traffic congestion and improved parking availability), and information on how bike users pay their share of road user costs through taxes and fees other than the gas tax while having an insignificant impact on road wear.

7. VTrans shall remove Level of Service and Throughput evaluations and replace them with Green House Gases Generated and Vehicle Miles Traveled evaluations (similar to California Senate Bill 743 of 2013) when prioritizing transportation projects for creating their annual budget.

Vermont deserves a more complete transportation network that cares for our state, our people, and our future better than a choice between cars, pickup trucks, or nothing. Walking and Bicycling are a foundational part of any transportation system, and we urge the Vermont Agency of Transportation to build roads for everyone.

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2014 Photo of Karl Kemnitzer, on top of Mt. Washington with his solar-powered cargo bike.

