

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Windham Regional Commission Transportation Planning Initiative

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WHAT IS THE WINDHAM REGIONAL COMMISSION?

Mission: To assist towns in southeastern Vermont with providing effective local governance and to work collaboratively with them to address regional issues.

Serves 27 towns over 920 sq. miles in southeast Vermont.

23 towns of Windham County

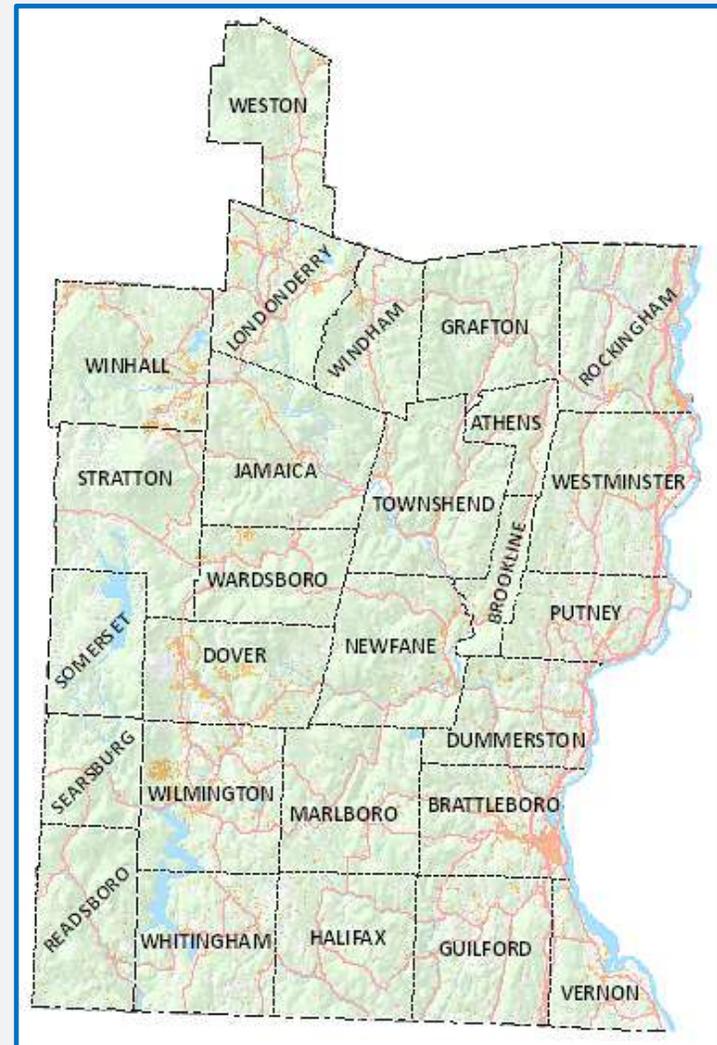
Readsboro, Searsburg and Winhall in Bennington County

Weston in Windsor County

Largest: Brattleboro pop. 12,000

Smallest: Somerset pop. 3

26 town garages, salt sheds, road crews



WINDHAM REGION TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

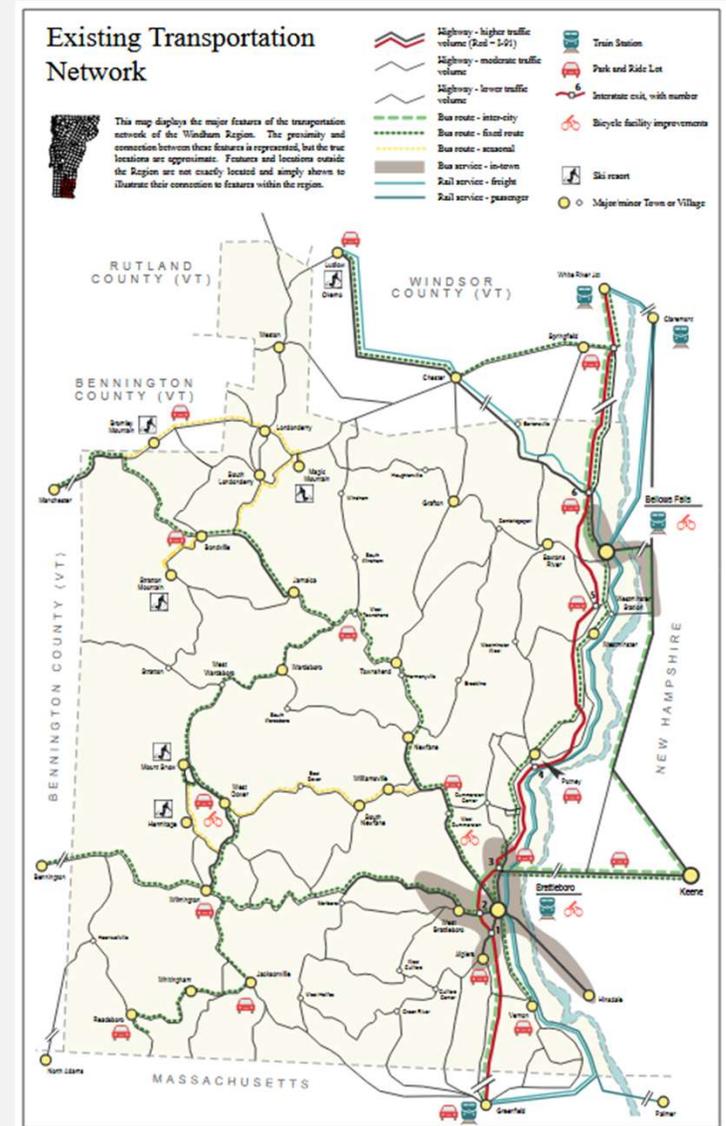
Approx. 1,700 miles of roads.

Passenger (Amtrak) and freight rail – primarily on New England Central Railroad ownership. Short section of Green Mountain Railroad in Town of Rockingham. Rail development in MA could have significant impacts to region.

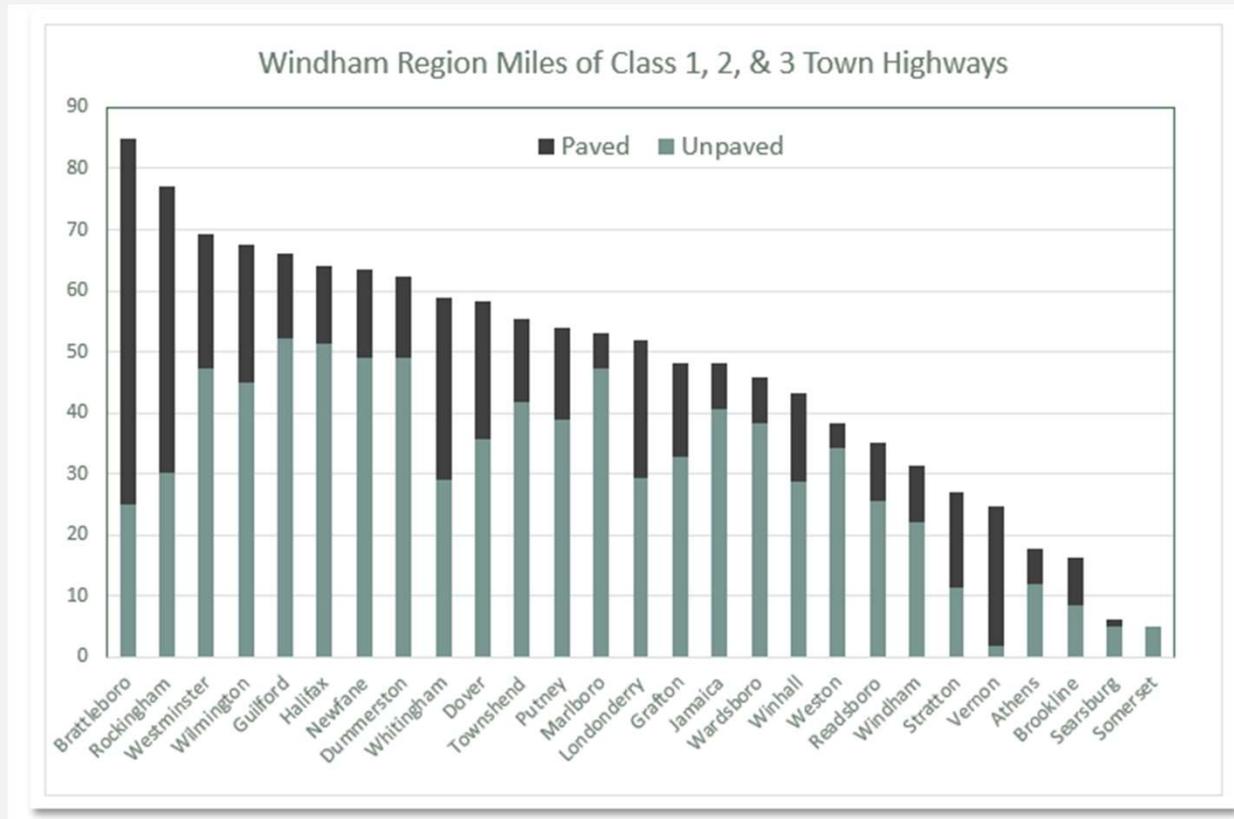
Southeast VT Transit (resulting from merger of Deerfield Valley Transit and CT River Transit in 2015) is primary transit provider.

No airports.

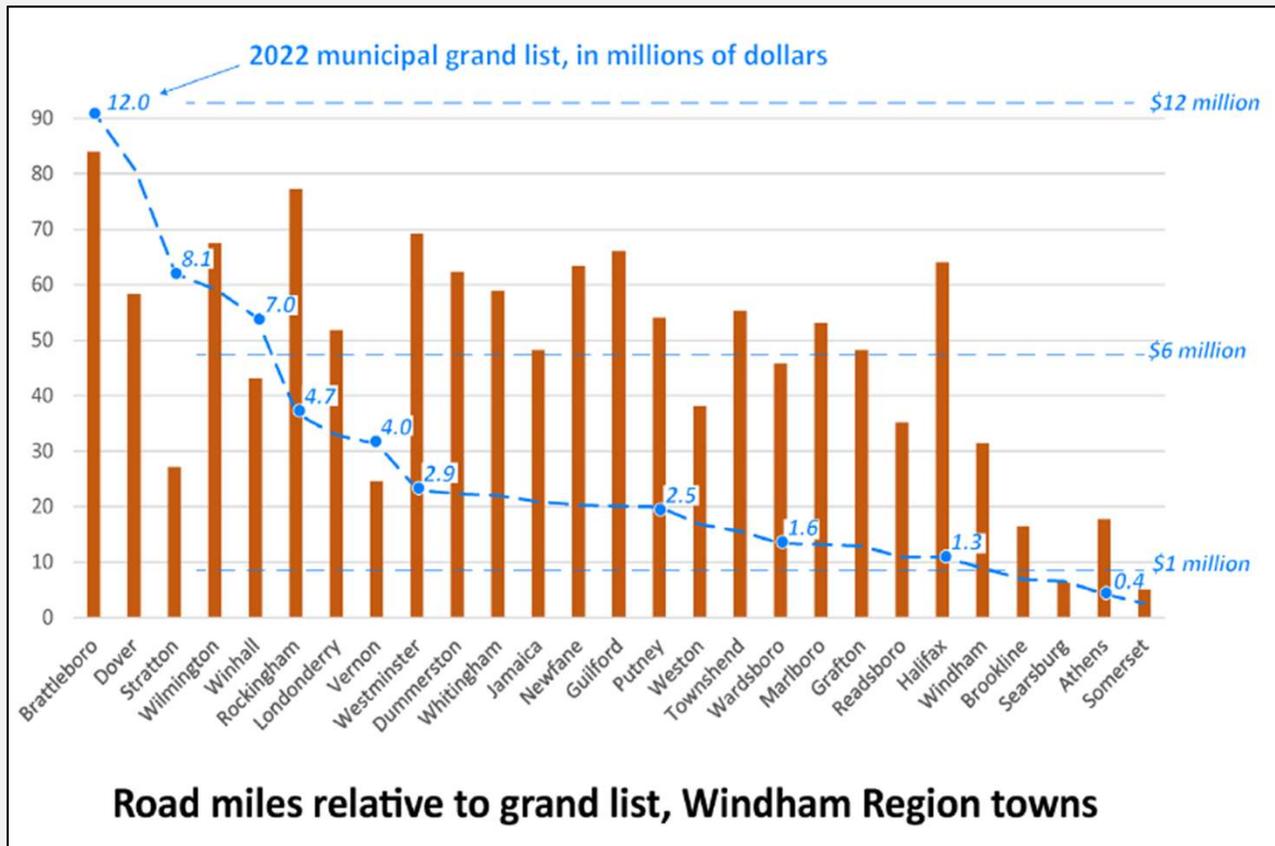
Significant unmet bike/ped needs throughout region, especially in smaller villages (absence of sidewalks; undersized; deferred maintenance).



MOST ROAD MILES ARE UNPAVED



ROAD MILE RESPONSIBILITY OFTEN DOES NOT ALIGN WITH TOWN GRAND LIST VALUE



WRC WORK IN FY2025 AT A GLANCE

- Held 8 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings in state FY2025.
- Engaged 26 towns in transportation planning; spent 85% of budget on municipal technical assistance.
- Coordinated 14 activities among towns and VTrans.
- Updated transportation plan as part of regional plan update last year (Act 181 update in process).
- Assisted 14 towns with grant applications (Transportation Alternatives, Better Roads, Bike/Ped).
- 70 data collection activities for VTrans.
- Serve on Southeast VT Transit Board; support regional Elders and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program with Mount Ascutney Regional Planning Commission.
- Assist with a variety of town inventories (road erosion, bridge and culvert, etc.)
- Host regular convenings of the region's road foremen; provide direct technical support for road foremen (i.e., use of tablets and other technology in their work).

ROAD FOREMEN MEETINGS

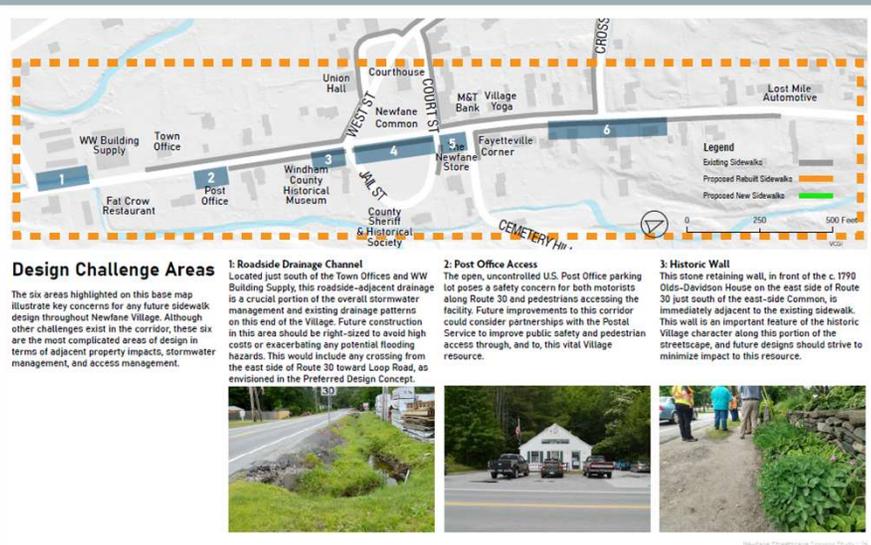
- **Interacting with Green Mountain Power** regarding weather emergencies and power outages, hazard tree issues, and pole installation and relocation.
- **What to Expect When Underground Power Lines are Installed on Your Roads.**
- **How to Navigate the Changing Municipal Truck and Truck Equipment Marketplace**
- **Pavement Management & Preservation Strategy**
- **Several sessions on Grants for highway departments**
- **Road Maintenance Best Management Practices to Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species – What do you need?**
- **Municipal Roads General Permit**
- **Do I Need a Stream Alternation Permit?**
- **Constructing Sand/Salt Sheds**
- **Highway Department Community Outreach** towns share experiences on how they interact with their community
- **Paving 101 & Paving Unpaved Roads: methods, cost/benefit**
- **Town Project Experience Sharing:** Dover weather stations; chip seal project; mapping hazard trees app



GRANT DEVELOPMENT & MUNICIPAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In 2024-2025 we supported the development of 34 grant applications across all VTrans programs, and one MTAP project (Searsburg).

Challenge: grant funding is insufficient to support full implementation in significant part because of the time from when the application is submitted to when the project is actually bid out for construction (roughly 4-5 years).

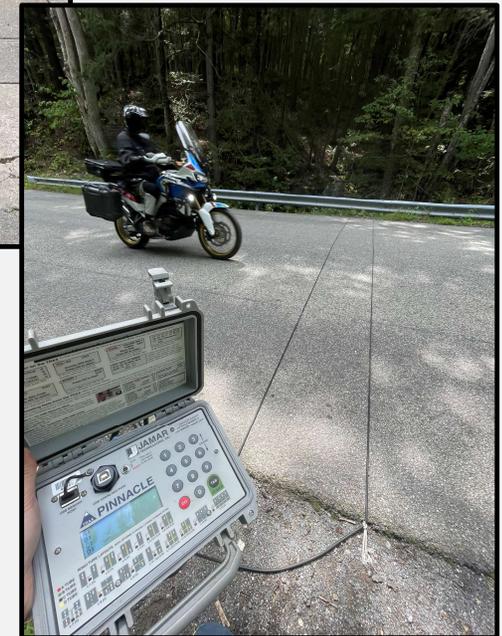


Currently serving as municipal project manager for 15 projects.

- Trail scoping study (Rockingham)
- Flood resiliency scoping studie & projects (Athens, Windham)
- Village sidewalk projects (Newfane, Jamaica, Rockingham)
- Box culvert studies & projects (Stratton, Athens, Guilford, Londonderry, Windham)
- Federal Lands Access Program – National Forest (Stratton)
- Streambank restoration/bridge replacement or abandonment options (Searsburg)
- Salt shed (Windham)
- Slope failure/severe erosion – Imtec Lane (Sonnax & Chroma) (Rockingham)

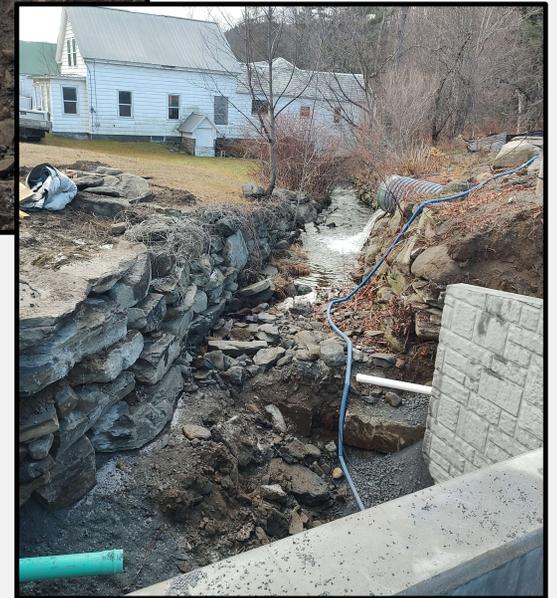
COUNT PROGRAM

- **Traffic counts:**
 - Town and state highways, data on vehicle volume (numbers), class (type), and speed
 - Typically do 15-25 counts per year; have done counts in all our 27 towns
 - For speed studies (what is the extent of speeding? when does it occur for targeted enforcement?), highway reclassification, extent of truck traffic, justify maintenance activities and paving.
- **Pedestrian counts:**
 - On sidewalks, multi-use pathways, existing or proposed crosswalks (plus trails, not transportation-related)
 - Use in grant applications, sidewalk and crosswalk scoping studies, understanding use patterns and long-term trends, justify infrastructure improvements, downtown economic development, justify pedestrian accommodations during highway bridge work
 - Use patterns and long-term trends examples: increase/decrease during Covid pandemic in downtown foot traffic and multi-use pathway traffic; documented pathway use to/from a school
- **Bicycle counts:**
 - On multi-use pathways and state and town highways
 - Use in grant applications, long term trends, justify infrastructure improvements, justify pedestrian accommodations during highway bridge work, understand use patterns



WHITINGHAM - FRCF

Using a Flood Resilient Community Fund (FRCF) grant Whitingham was able to complete their longstanding goal to replace two old undersized culverts leading to their Municipal Center and Fire Station, as well as widen the stream channel along the town property. This project is complete outside of final paving that will take place in the Spring.



ARE TOWNS ABLE TO RECOVER FROM DISASTERS WITHOUT FEDERAL AID?

Vermont state and local governments are historically heavily reliant upon federal funding for emergency preparedness, and disaster response and recovery.

Considerable transportation system resilience planning and projects are supported by through FEMA funding, which has undergone dramatic change (delays, program elimination, reduction in declarations, reduction in disaster aid when disasters are declared).

Lessons from the Caledonia and Essex counties federal disaster declaration denial?

VT Digger Op-Ed 10/12/2025: [Chris Campany - Preparing for greater self-reliance in the wake of disaster](#)

What can a municipality do to be in the best position to recover from disaster amid federal funding uncertainty?

- Establish a dedicated disaster reserve fund.
- Establish lines of credit before a disaster ever strikes.
- Learn about public financing tools and options for mitigation projects, recovery and rebuilding.
- Develop a capital improvement plan and related budget to identify and prioritize projects. At a minimum this could be a prioritized bulleted list with reasonable cost assumptions.
- Use your town plan and your local hazard mitigation plan to inform your capital improvement planning.
- Give serious consideration to what infrastructure must be rebuilt and what can be abandoned if damaged or destroyed, also known as “strategic abandonment.”