



**Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

Planning Our Transportation Future

A PUBLIC SUMMARY

You're invited...

Imagine looking 25 years into the future. What sort of transportation system do you see in Chittenden County?

Does it meet the needs of a growing and diverse population? Is convenient, affordable public transit available throughout the region? Has congestion been alleviated and safety enhanced on our major roadways?

Join us at the **Regional Transportation Solutions Workshop** and help make better transportation a reality.

Date: January 26, 2002
Time: 8:30 am to 2:40 pm
Location: Winooski High School

Register today. Choose one of three convenient ways to register:

- Call us at **865-1794**
- Complete the online registration form on our Web site (www.ccmpto.org)
- Send an email that says "registration" in the subject line and includes your name, address, and telephone in the message area. Our email address: info@ccmpto.org

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Let's get things rolling!

Did you ever wonder how decisions about Chittenden County's roads, bike paths, and transit are made?

The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) is a key player in the process. A federally mandated agency, the CCMPO plans, prioritizes, and coordinates the use of about \$30 million in federal, state, and local transportation funds each year. Its members include key officials from each of the County's 18 municipalities, as well as representatives from the private sector and federal, state, and local agencies with an interest in transportation.

In 1997, the CCMPO developed a long-range transportation plan that focused on topics such as land use, traffic patterns, road maintenance, and transit. This Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) will be updated to reflect new data and new public input and will include projections to the year 2025.

The Regional Transportation Solutions Workshop is a major source of public input for the MTP update. Through this and other public gatherings, the CCMPO actively seeks the input of County residents through discussion of current issues and proposed solutions.

The Workshop gives you an opportunity to be part of the action. Meet and share your views with key decision makers. Find new solutions to transportation issues that affect you and your family every day.

So register today, mark your calendar, and join us on January 26 to shape our community's transportation future. ■

Steering Our Course:

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE COUNTY

After listening to residents at public meetings, conducting a countywide scientific survey, and conducting engineering and planning studies, the CCMPO documented the following issues. As you read them, consider how they compare to your own observations about the County's transportation system.

Increasing Traffic Congestion. Almost every mode of travel is adversely affected by traffic congestion on arterial streets. People in cars and buses are delayed in their travels, freight moved in trucks is held up, pedestrians can't cross the street safely, and bicyclists cannot share the road safely. In addition, traffic that detours to alternative routes causes safety and noise problems and generally reduces the quality of life in neighborhoods.

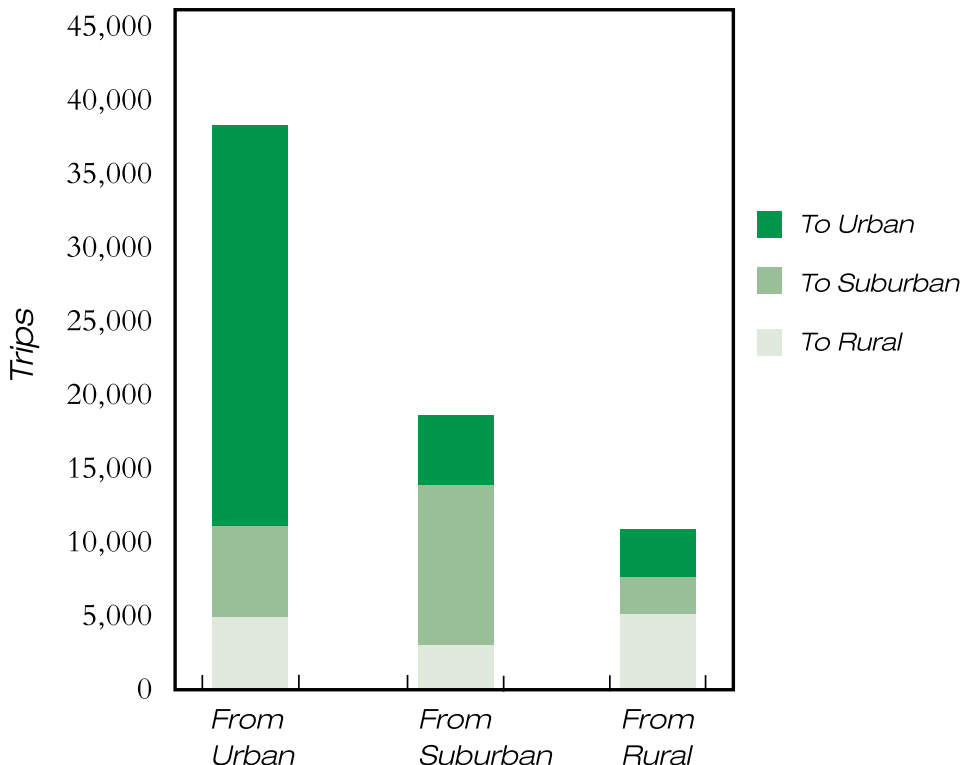
Limited Transit Service. Bus and rail service play a limited but necessary role in meeting the County's transportation needs. The County's transit system provides access to

services and jobs for people who cannot drive or do not own a car. While the public supports countywide transit, financial and institutional issues limit its viability.

Difficult Bike and Foot Travel. Pedestrians and bicyclists must overcome many hurdles to use the transportation system. These include the high arterial traffic volumes discussed above, disconnected bike paths and sidewalks, difficulty crossing wide, busy roads, and low statewide priority given to funding pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Sprawling Land Development. If sprawl continues to be our predominant development pattern, the automobile will remain the only viable choice for most trips. In contrast, a shift to higher-density, mixed-use development would make public transit, pedestrian travel, and bicycle travel viable options.

Travel Flows Between Communities: Urban, Suburban, and Rural



Local Problems, Regional Solutions. Vermonters traditionally prefer a local approach to solving everyday problems. However, many transportation problems — such as traffic congestion, limited transit service, and sprawl — are more regional in scope. A broader view, acknowledging the interdependence of our communities and limited availability of funds, will approach problems and solutions on a local, countywide, and statewide level.

Quality of Life and Economic Vitality. If current trends continue, the population of Chittenden County will increase by 45% in the next 25 years, from 146,000 to over 210,000. Employment is expected to grow by over 50%, increasing from 124,000 to almost 191,000. The funding available for transportation services and projects is limited, and the public agrees that preserving the existing system is a priority. At the same time, increasing demand will require investments beyond simply preserving the current system. ■

Where We're Going: BEHAVIORS AND TRENDS

A Changing Community

Although Burlington is Chittenden County's largest community, its recent growth has been among the slowest of the County's major municipalities. If the trends of the past thirty years continue, this urban center will continue its low level of population growth while suburban areas experience moderate growth.

The rural municipalities, in contrast, are predicted to grow fastest through 2025. According to a study conducted by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, if current trends continue, 46% of the population growth between 2000 and 2025 will be located in the outlying municipalities of the County. In contrast, only 14% of the growing population will locate in the urban core of Burlington, South Burlington, and Winooski.

This poses several challenges to our transportation system. All residents, including people with special access needs and our rising population of older adults, will need and want to travel to widely dispersed destinations quickly, safely, and inexpensively.

Strong Dependence on Automobiles

How do you feel about your car?

About half of residents in a recent CCMPO survey believed that nothing could replace their cars as their primary means of travel. A larger group, however, said they would take the bus if it were more convenient. The majority would walk to work or work at home if the opportunities existed.

Ownership and usage data also indicate that current alternatives to the automobile have limited appeal: At least 95 percent of the County's households own one or more vehicles. In a typical twenty-four hour day, almost 85 percent of trips are made by automobile. Walking accounts for 6 percent of trips; bicycles and county buses account for 1 percent each. During peak morning and evening travel times, over 90 percent of trips are made by car.

Condition of Our Major Roads

Major highways such as US 7 and US 2, known as "arterials," account for two-thirds of all vehicle miles traveled in the County. Yet 65 percent of these roadways have received "fair" or worse ratings for safety, service, and structural condition.

Traffic congestion has increased rapidly on arterial roadways and is projected by the CCMPO to increase over 300% by 2025. Problems associated with congestion, such as noise, reduced air quality, through traffic on residential streets, delays for freight, and hazardous environments for pedestrians and bicyclists will intensify if nothing is done.

Public Transit

Chittenden County relies almost entirely on automobiles and trucks to meet its transportation needs. Public transit primarily serves the populations that tend not to own cars: low-income individuals, senior citizens, and the young.

For the vast majority of residents, our public transportation system does not represent a practical, everyday alternative to private vehicles. While the CCMPO's public meetings and

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Did you know?

Chittenden County's public transit system provides over 2 million passenger rides per year. It includes:

- *Twelve scheduled bus routes of the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA)*
- *Door-to-door services for special needs populations provided by the Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA)*
- *Rail service, from Essex Junction to in-state and out-of-state stops, on Amtrak's Vermonter train*
- *Commuter rail service, with stops in Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, and Charlotte, on the Champlain Flyer*



High Accident Locations

When funds are allocated to improve highway safety, certain areas will be of particular interest to planners. In a report based on 1990 – 1994 data, certain road segments and intersections in Chittenden County were found to have an unusually high rate of accidents.

The road segments included:

- VT 128 in Essex (at Osgood Hill, Bixby Hill, and Thomas Lane)
- VT 2A in Williston
- VT 15 in Essex (at Five Corners)
- US 2 in Burlington and South Burlington

The high-accident intersections include:

- US 2 in Richmond (at VT 117)
- VT 15 in Winooski (at I-89 ramp)
- US 2 in South Burlington (at Airport Drive)
- US 7 in Burlington (at US 2 and Main Street)
- VT 15 in Winooski (at Dion Street)
- VT 116 in Hinesburg (at Shelburne Road/ CVU Road)
- US 7 in Colchester (at VT 2A and US 2 intersections)

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surveys consistently show strong support for increased transit service, unless funding and institutional hurdles are overcome, it will be difficult for transit to play a larger role in the County's transportation system.

Non-Motorized Transportation

County residents strongly support non-motorized transportation. In a recent CCMPO survey, most people felt that providing sidewalks, bike paths, and bike lanes along existing roads is important or very important.

Some facilities for non-motorized transportation, such as the Burlington Bike Path, are heavily used. Other routes for bicycle and pedestrian travel vary in quality and usage. While the majority of bicycle and multi-use facilities were constructed recently and are in good condition, some sidewalks are in need of major repairs or reconstruction.

Most dedicated facilities for non-motorized transportation are concentrated in and around the metropolitan area. As vehicular traffic increases in outlying areas, the hazards of non-motorized transportation also increase in these areas. Busy streets can be difficult to cross, and people who walk or bike must often share the road with cars, trucks, and buses.

Freight Services

About 6 million tons of freight flows into, out of, and within the County each year, far exceeding any other region of Vermont. Most of this freight is incoming, due to the small scale of our industrial base and our need for fuels and energy supplies.

Our top three trading partners are the other regions of Vermont, New York, and New Hampshire. Canada accounts for a significant volume of through traffic.

Over 91 percent of the County's freight tonnage moves by truck, while 5.7 percent moves by rail. ■

A Complex Journey

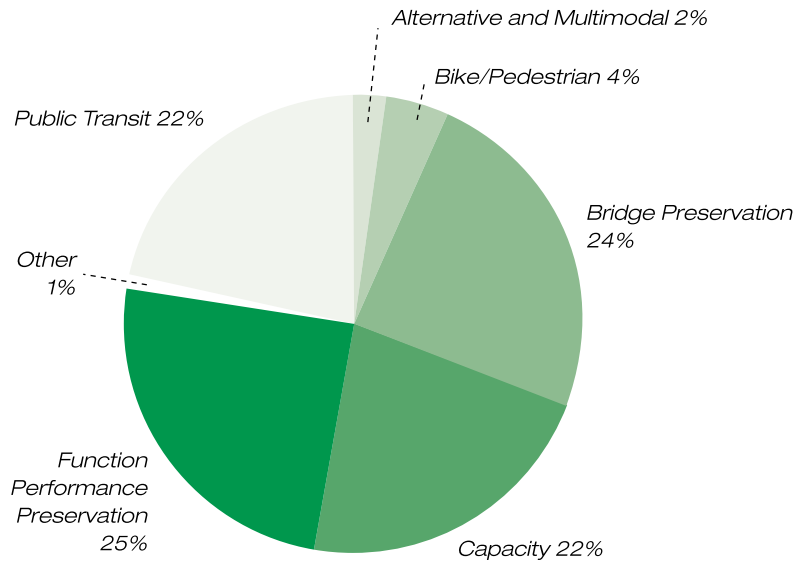
Transportation planning is inherently a dynamic, political process. It occurs principally in the public realm, involves a variety of interests, and directs the allocation of enormous sums of public money.

Transportation projects are also influenced by federal, state, and, in some cases, local permitting requirements. The development review process typically considers factors such as traffic safety, impact of existing and planned infrastructure, access, and parking.

Funding comes primarily from federal highway and transit programs, all of which require a state match. In Vermont, this is provided by the Transportation Fund, which raises approximately \$180 million per year through gas taxes and vehicle purchase and registration fees.

Transportation revenues are likely to grow slowly over the next 25 years. Budgets will need to balance the development of new infrastructure with maintenance, management, and operation of existing infrastructure. ■

**Use of Funds by Program Area,
FY1995-2000 \$104.1 Million**



You're invited...

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This **Regional Transportation Solutions Workshop** offers you the opportunity to learn about the transportation issues affecting our County. Consider new ideas for making travel safer, more efficient, and more convenient. Let your voice be heard. Even take an active role in creating real, positive change.

In the morning, you and other participants will gather to learn about transportation problems and improvement strategies in Chittenden County. Then you'll join one of several small discussion groups to consider a specific problem and possible solutions. Finally, you'll rejoin the other participants to explore the common themes identified by the groups.

The workshop will be informal, lively, and engaging.

You could even win door prizes! Break times and a complimentary luncheon will provide opportunities for you to relax and prepare for the next session.

Get ready for the Workshop... it's easy! Just review this publication to learn about the current status of transportation in Chittenden County. You'll also find our Metropolitan Transportation Plan Bulletin #1, which includes a detailed Workshop Schedule, at your town offices or town library, and on our Web site (www.ccmpo.org).

So register today, then join us on January 26 to share your thoughts, ideas, and experiences. You'll share a journey toward a better transportation system in Chittenden County — for yourself, your children, and every member of our community.



**Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

*Communities working together
to meet Chittenden County's
transportation needs*

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The Road Ahead: OUR VISION AND GOALS

Based on comments gathered at six public meetings held around the County, the CCMPO developed a vision statement and a list of twelve supporting goals. Both documents describe the transportation system's purpose and role relative to the community, the environment, economic vitality, equity, and cultural heritage.

Vision for Transportation in 2025

Our transportation system enhances and connects healthy, vibrant communities. It is safe, efficient, multi-modal, and accessible to all. It supports economic vitality and is designed and operated to complement and respect our cherished natural resources and cultural heritage.

Regional Goals

- 1. Preserve and improve the physical condition and operational performance of the existing transportation system.*
- 2. Reinforce sustainable land use patterns, such as growth centers, as set forth in local and regional plans.*
- 3. Create a transportation system that offers constantly improving safety, accessibility, flexibility, and comfort for everyone.*
- 4. Establish a transportation system that minimizes the time and total cost of moving people and goods, allowing the region's economy to thrive.*
- 5. Protect or enhance the region's built and natural environments.*
- 6. Create a transportation system that builds community, enhances neighborhood vitality, and minimizes noise, glare, and vibration.*
- 7. Provide levels of access and mobility that insure people and goods can travel when and where they need to go.*
- 8. Consider ways to improve transportation system efficiency before increasing transportation capacity.*
- 9. Establish a transportation system that uses diverse sources of power and maximizes energy efficiency and conservation.*
- 10. Develop a transportation system that features a variety of travel modes and encourages the reduction of single occupant vehicle use.*
- 11. Educate the public — from children to seniors — about the implications of different development patterns and mode choice decisions.*
- 12. Provide improvements to transportation facilities and services expeditiously through an inclusive and cost-effective process.*