



**Chittenden County  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization**

# TransActions

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE CCMPO

MAY/JUN '04

VOL 6, NO 5

## SPOTLIGHT

### A New Regional Transportation District



CCMPO has undertaken numerous plans for public transportation in Chittenden County. It has worked for years to change the service area, governance, and tax support of public transportation in the region. In April 2003, the CCMPO Board made a commitment to establish and determine the funding for a new Regional Transportation District (RTD). To undertake this work, the CCMPO Board established the Public Transportation Task Force which will work collaboratively with the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA). That Task Force has been meeting monthly since February.

The purpose of the Task Force is to assist in the implementation of the public transportation portion of the CCMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for 2025, the CCTA Short Range Transit Plan, and the Transit Funding Report made to the Vermont Legislature in January 2003 to improve economic development, mobility, and the quality of life of those who live, work, and recreate in the region.

Among key issues addressed by the Task Force is the need for the CCTA and other agencies to serve the diverse mobility needs of our citizens, yet operate with limited public funding that is largely consumed by other public service needs. Among related issues we will address are:

- Twelve Chittenden County municipalities elect not to participate in or fund the CCTA system.
- The growing trend toward regional (inter-county) travel for work, shopping, recreation, and school offers evidence of the need to fund a public transportation system that extends beyond Chittenden County.

As always, members of the public are welcome to join with the CCMPO in discussing the issues and potential solutions. Task Force meetings will be held at the CCMPO offices on the first Monday of every month, with time available for public comment. As part of its work a series of community visits are being scheduled. To date meetings have been held in Charlotte, Shelburne, South Burlington, Hinesburg, and Williston. Meetings will be held in all of the towns over the next month. Please attend a meeting in your town.

More information about the Task Force is available at our web site: [www.ccmpto.org](http://www.ccmpto.org) Click on the Public Transportation Project link. Or contact CCMPO at 660-4071. □



 **Our Web site now includes all TIP amendments. Just go to [www.ccmpto.org/TIP/tip.html](http://www.ccmpto.org/TIP/tip.html), or call CCMPO at 660-4071 and ask Christine Forde (Ext. 13) or Daryl Benoit (Ext. 12) for more information.**

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 **more on the web at:**  
<http://www.ccmpto.org/ptp/>



Visit the CCMPO at [www.ccmpto.org](http://www.ccmpto.org)

## A Look at Underhill, VT

Although Underhill has experienced slow population growth in recent years, traffic volume has increased significantly. Much of this traffic consists of commuters traveling from surrounding communities such as Cambridge and Fairfax to Chittenden County's employment centers.

### Commuter and Budget Issues

Within Underhill, most residents rely on private vehicles for commuting because public transportation does not serve the town. Underhill officials would like to create a Web site with a bulletin board that encourages and supports carpooling, but the current budget does not include an allocation for Web site development.

Road maintenance currently consumes most of the town budget, as Underhill is located in a small but distinct snowbelt. Winter days that bring one or two inches of snow to Burlington will often bring five or six inches to Underhill. Thus, in most winters Underhill roads must be plowed almost every day.

### Transportation Planning

A Technical Assistance Study offered recommendations for improving traffic safety on Pleasant Valley Road. However, residents expressed concerns that the recommended changes, such as straightening and widening the road, would adversely impact the rural character of the area. The CCMPO is now responding to these concerns with an alternate study that offers recommendations for smaller-scale improvements that preserve the area's rural aesthetics and lifestyle. □



▲ Pleasant Valley Road, Underhill

## INSIDE CCMPO

### Champlain Path Study Completed

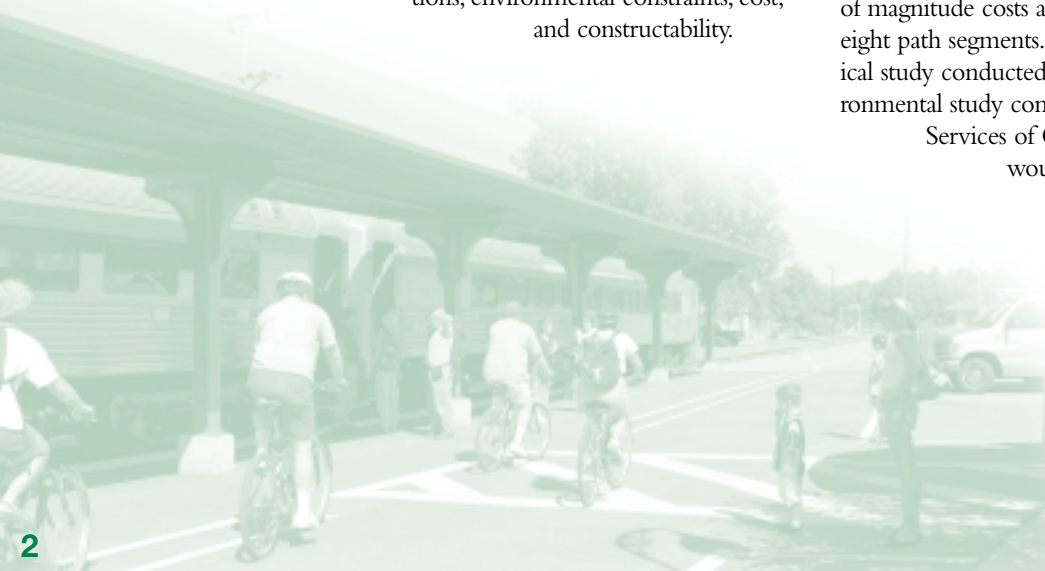
CCMPO has completed a study evaluating the feasibility of constructing a bicycle-pedestrian path between the Charlotte Railroad Station and the Burlington Waterfront Bike Path. The study generally followed the Vermont Railway corridor and considered possible alignments within and next to the railroad corridor, on private land and using existing adjacent low volume roads.

While evaluating possible routes, planners considered the need to maintain separation from railroad operations, environmental constraints, cost, and constructability.

For planning purposes, the path was assumed to be a 10-foot wide asphalt path with 2-foot shoulders on either side. A 6-foot high chain link fence would separate the path from the railroad in areas where the path is adjacent to the railroad. Low retaining walls may be used in areas where the railroad is located on a high berm, while a raised boardwalk is the recommended solution for spanning water or wetland areas.

The feasibility study is a conceptual evaluation that includes order of magnitude costs and general construction requirements for eight path segments. It also presents the findings of an archaeological study conducted by the University of Vermont, and an environmental study conducted by Natural Resource Consulting Services of Grand Isle. Additional, more detailed studies would be necessary to advance the project.

Throughout the feasibility study, CCMPO has been advised by a steering committee consisting of town officials from municipalities along the corridor, VTrans representatives, and concerned citizens. In addition, several public meetings have been held to discuss trail layout and location issues. □



## Local, State, Federal Governments Address Northwest VT Growth Issues

Because the population of northwest Vermont is expected to grow significantly, many towns in the region must now plan for their future infrastructure needs. In response to this need for careful local planning, CCMPO has joined with VTrans, the FHA, and the US EPA in launching a unique collaborative effort. These agencies will work with northwest Vermont's five regional planning commissions (RPCs) to enable individual towns to:

- Develop accurate projections of local growth using state-of-the-art growth modeling tools.
- Evaluate their ability to manage current and future growth.
- Receive training and other types of assistance that help them identify their future infrastructure needs.

Each RPC has worked with VTrans to develop a three-year proposal for addressing the above tasks in several member towns. The efforts of these towns will, in turn, serve as pilot projects for other communities within the region and other areas of the state. Ongoing assistance for these pilot projects will be provided by CCMPO and the Agency of Commerce and Community Affairs.

The RPCs and their member towns are aware that each region brings unique issues, concerns, and resources to the projection and management of local growth. Some regions have professional municipal planners and sophisticated modeling tools; others have few resources and little experience in growth modeling. Individual agreements between VTrans and each of the RPCs accommodate these differences. In addition, the RPCs may combine resources to address common needs, such as training, among the regions and municipalities. □

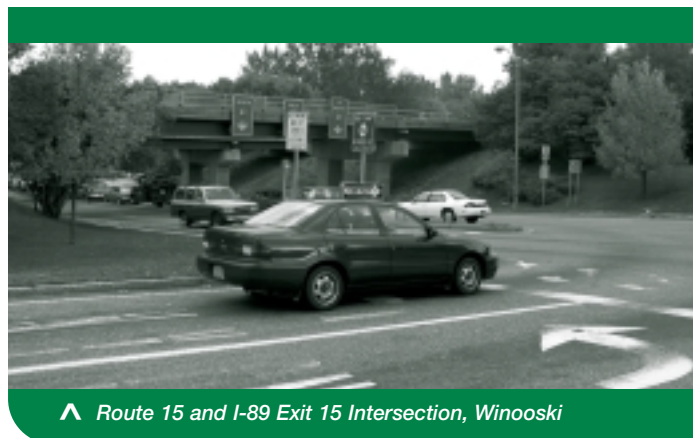
## Study Completed for Route 15/I-89 Exit 15 Intersection

A recently completed Technical Assistance Study analyzed alternatives to improve safety and relieve congestion at and near the intersection of Route 15 and Interstate 89 (I-89). Prepared by Resource Systems Group, Inc. at the request of CCMPO, the study focused on specific recommendations for the Exit 15 northbound exit ramp and the Roland Court intersection.

Suggested improvements for the exit ramp include eliminating the slip lane and revising the lanes from a double left and free-flow right to a single left, double right configuration.

Recommendations to improve safety at the Route 15/Roland Court intersection include construction of a left turn pocket in the existing median of Route 15 to provide a refuge for vehicles turning left from Roland Court to travel westbound on Route 15.

CCMPO will continue discussions with Winooski's Traffic Advisory Board and VTrans on these and other potential improvements. □



▲ Route 15 and I-89 Exit 15 Intersection, Winooski

## A CONVERSATION WITH...

### Stan Hamlet, Underhill's CCMPO Board Member

#### What are your concerns about transportation in Chittenden County?

First, I understand the reasons for the Circ, but I believe it will create more sprawl than I'd like to see. I also think we could better use the money for maintenance of our existing infrastructure.

Second, I think we need to move away from single occupancy vehicles and toward greater reliance on public transportation, but I don't see much progress in the foreseeable future.

#### Why do you think there hasn't been more progress?

Well, look at the Champlain Flyer. I was in favor of it, but that was because it was supposed to coincide with reconstruction of Route 7. As it happened, the Flyer came and went long before the reconstruction. As a result, it didn't attract many riders and that left a bad taste for commuter rail.

#### What about buses?

Without better and expanded service, I don't think it's going to be appealing to most people.

#### What kinds of transportation improvements could help alleviate congestion?

Park and ride lots could be very helpful. It would be great to have park and ride locations that are convenient for people in towns like Underhill.

#### Are there other transportation issues that affect Underhill?

Road maintenance is always a big budget item. Our road crew does a great job, but winter weather and commuter traffic from outlying areas both take heavy toll on our roads. □


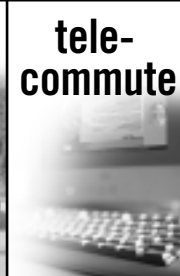
## Weeklong Event Promotes Transportation Alternatives

On May 3-7, Way to Go Week will encourage Chittenden County residents to try low-cost, environmentally friendly alternatives to their cars. Featured transportation modes will include walking, biking, telecommuting, carpooling/vanpooling, and taking the bus.

Way to Go Week builds on the success of last year's Curb Your Car Day, which attracted 6,816 participants. Through that single-day event, Chittenden County residents avoided driving 23,984 miles, saved 1,066 gallons of gas, and prevented 1,576 pounds of pollution.

Way to Go Week is sponsored by CCMPO, CCTA, Local Motion, Lake Champlain Committee, the Alliance for Climate Action 10% Challenge, the Chittenden Bank, and the Point FM.

For a complete list of events, online registration form, and information on the benefits of alternative transportation, visit [www.waytogovt.org](http://www.waytogovt.org). □

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p><b>walk</b></p> 	<p><b>take the bus</b></p>  <p><b>Dime Day</b></p>	<p><b>tele-commute</b></p> 	<p><b>bike</b></p> 	<p><b>carpool/vanpool</b></p> 
<p><i>Try a new way. Every day.</i></p>				

The preparation of this document was financed jointly by the eighteen municipalities in Chittenden County and the Chittenden County Transportation Authority; the Vermont Agency of Transportation; and the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

Communities working together  
to meet Chittenden County's  
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