

Town Transportation Toolkit

How Upper Valley communities can cut climate impacts of transportation while improving transportation options

Vital Communities

October 2019

In both Vermont and New Hampshire, **transportation is the largest single source of greenhouse gases**. These emissions must be addressed on the national, regional, state, and local levels; this toolkit is for community volunteers who would like to **locally** tackle the climate impacts of our car-centered transportation system.

This toolkit is made up of three parts.

1. **Introduction:** context, priorities, and strategies for approaching transportation projects
2. **Projects List:** a couple dozen projects that are volunteer-friendly and will make a difference
3. **Resources:** organizations, government entities, toolkits and guides, and reading material

Read the Introduction before diving into Projects List, and always check online for the most up-to-date Projects List and Resources, which will grow over time as we all learn what works best.

Have questions or need more information? Email us at uvtma@vitalcommunities.org – we are excited to help.

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Introduction

Why work on many modes of transportation?

There are **two main strategies** for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation:

1. Make vehicles more efficient, using less fuel per mile and/or switching from combustion engines (burning liquid fossil fuels) to electric engines.
2. Reduce the overall number of miles travelled by vehicles, especially cars carrying only one person, which is the least efficient form of transportation even with an electric vehicle.

In order to achieve Vermont and New Hampshire's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we must electrify the cars we use AND reducing the total amount of car travel.

This toolkit provides *some* information related to strategy #1, mainly focused on encouraging a switch to electric vehicles. However, **the primary focus of this toolkit is on strategy #2: promoting a variety of transportation options that reduce how much we drive by ourselves.** These options include transit (bus), carpools, vanpools, biking, walking, and telecommuting (working from home).

Both strategies reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Strategy #2 generates numerous other community benefits as well, as described in the next section.

The benefits of reducing total car travel

- HEALTH & WELLNESS
 - Active transportation, like biking and walking, is also a form of exercise and healthy body movement – much needed as our country struggles with the diseases of sedentary life and disconnection with our ecosystems.
 - Using public transit increases the number of steps taken in a day, because we typically have to walk some distance to use the bus. (source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3407915/>)
 - Spending long hours behind the steering wheel, especially in traffic, contributes to stress. Being a passenger in a car (carpooling) is less stressful than being the driver. Studies show that carpool passengers had lower blood pressure and did better on mental tests than did drivers.
- SAVINGS
 - Personal Savings: in the Upper Valley, as in most rural areas, people typically commute 20+ miles each way to work. Taking into account wear and tear on your car, gas, and insurance, driving alone to work costs more than \$8,000 per year! By

- taking the bus or carpooling with even one other person, commuters can save \$4,000-\$5,000 annually.
- Community Savings: New Hampshire residents spent \$1.7 billion on gasoline in 2017 and Vermonters spent \$759 million on gasoline, with 78% of that money leaving our region because we do not produce petroleum locally. (source: https://www.eia.gov/state/seds/sep_sum/html/pdf/sum_ex_tra.pdf). Every dollar not spent on gasoline can instead stay in-state supporting our local economy.
- MOBILITY & EQUITY
 - Our population of elders is growing and will continue to grow. There are also people of all ages who can't afford a car or can't drive. A strong bus, van, carpool, bike, and walk network will ensure that everyone, regardless of their ability to drive or own a car, can get where they need to go.
 - SMART LAND USE
 - When we plan our communities for maximum transit access, walking, and biking, we encourage vibrant, multi-use downtowns and village centers while reducing sprawl and fragmentation of rural areas.
 - COMMUNITY COHESION
 - We often don't think about it because we're so used to driving alone in our cars, but the personal automobile has a profoundly shaped how and when we interact with our neighbors. Building carpool networks, establishing vanpools, biking and walking to work and school, and taking the bus all contribute to community cohesion by increasing the likelihood that we interact with each other in a public space. There is much evidence that a lack of community cohesion is a factor in many of the issues facing our communities. [Read more about](#) community cohesion as it connects to transportation planning decisions.

How we make change

Reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions requires **understanding the barriers** that prevent people from making the decision to bike, walk, carpool, or take the bus, etc. It also requires **understanding the relationship between individual behavior change and the limits of community infrastructure**. What the heck does all that mean? Here's a scenario:

Say you want to cut down on your personal greenhouse gas emissions plus get some exercise on your short commute to work. You haven't ridden a bike in years so you sign up for a free bike skills workshop at your local library so you can get comfy riding again. (*The apparent barrier is your lack of skills and confidence on a bike.*) The workshop is great and gets you excited to start biking to work a few days a week. You get your bike tuned up and try biking the next day. Your ride to work is great because it's mostly downhill and the road shoulder is fairly wide, so you ride at the speed of traffic and feel safe. But on the way home, your ride is uphill (so you ride more slowly), the shoulder is much narrower, and visibility is low, so you feel very exposed to the cars whizzing by and almost get clipped by a car at one point. There is no alternate route. You decide to not bike to work anymore. (*The lack of safe bike infrastructure is the REAL barrier to you bike commuting.*)

In the example given, bike skills seem like an easy lever for change, but will do little good until you improve bike infrastructure on a particular route. Once the infrastructure is addressed, ensuring people have the confidence and skills to ride is the right step.

Here's another scenario:

The local transit company receives funding for a new route which improves access to the local business park. *(Infrastructure has just been improved, so we can expect a lot of new people taking the bus.)* However, after a few months, ridership is still low. In collaboration with the transit company, the workplaces at the business park administer a survey to employees finding out why they aren't using the bus. It turns out many employees saw the bus each day but never tried it and didn't know anyone else who had either, so never considered it. The workplaces team up to provide bus travel training to employees and also launch a month-long bus commute challenge featuring prize drawings. *(People now have the information, confidence, and motivation to actually start using the bus.)* By the end of the month, bus ridership has doubled.

In that example, the infrastructure was present, but people needed prompts to build new habits around using it.

The conclusion here is that interventions to change behavior only work if there is some infrastructure in place to allow people to adopt that new behavior. And likewise, infrastructure can exist but there may be social or psychological barriers to people using it. In the Vital Communities experience, attending to the relationship between the two is key.

The Five W's of community engagement

WHO: there are partners everywhere

Broad coalitions and unlikely partnerships might be just the key to success. Ask around. Who is already interested in or working on an aspect of green transportation, even if from a different angle that you are (e.g. economic, climate, health, equity, community cohesion, or resilience)? If you can't find anyone, there are people at your regional planning commission who are working hard on transportation improvements, and so you can start there.

Possible partners:

- faith groups and social clubs
- senior centers
- health care providers and health advocates
- people working on climate adaptation and community resilience
- social service agencies
- schools and colleges
- workplaces
- bike shops, auto dealers
- your neighbors
- people *with* cars
- people *without* cars

- students and elders
- town energy committees, town bike-pedestrian committees
- libraries
- general stores
- town parks and recreation departments, town planning departments
- regional planning commissions
- energy committees from neighboring towns
- and more.

WHAT: there are so many possible projects! How do I choose?

Find out what your community needs

You may already know what projects you want to work on or what is clearly needed in your community. After you read the Projects List section, it may be useful to do some data gathering to help you figure out where there are interests, opportunities, and needs—and how that might help you decide which project is the best fit for your community right now.

Data gathering can simply mean talking and listening to a wide range of people to find out what they think!

If you want to be a bit more scientific, you can ask community members to fill out a survey. Feel free to use the Vital Communities [\[survey template\]](#) and please read the section in this toolkit titled “**HOW: behavior change is hard.**” A few points to keep in mind when administering a survey:

1. Surveys are self-selecting! That is, people who are really excited by the survey topic (for or against) are likely to take it, and this can amplify certain results.
2. Good places to get responses are outside the post office, the dump, the general store, the gas station, at the senior center, at community dinners, and via social media and your town’s online community discussion list—anywhere a broad range of people are likely to be.
3. Remember to go outside your social circle when seeking survey responses and aim to get responses from a representative sample of the community (in terms of age, income/wealth, geography, race and ethnicity, etc.).
4. Think about whether you want to administer the survey on paper or online or both. Younger people will likely prefer an online survey. Elders might prefer a paper copy.

Feel like getting technical? Check [out this handy \(and short!\) Duke University guide](#) to developing surveys.

How to prioritize projects

If you take a look at the **Projects List** section and identify several transportation projects to work on, but don’t know which one to start with, consider the following questions to help you prioritize (adapted from the Strategic Energy Action Toolkit of the NH Local Energy Solutions)

1. Will the project generate interest & enthusiasm among potential allies, including the public?
2. Will the project reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Will it have results we can measure?
3. Is it free, low cost, or relatively easy to find funding for?
4. Does the community have assets that will aid in the project (such as individuals, organizations, institutions, community characteristics, and environmental resources)?
5. Will it not unfairly burden or benefit anyone?
6. Is it time sensitive in some way (must happen at certain time or by certain date)?

Often the most important question is, “How excited is our group to work on this project?”

If the answer is “yes,” go for it!

WHEN: a note on timing and time

Start now! But keep in mind a few things:

1. Think about which projects your community is ready to take on now and which might benefit from a gathering of more resources and information before launching. Here is a [Community Readiness Model](#) that may come in handy.
2. Consider project pairing. Begin a short-term project and a long-term project together.
3. Changing behavior in a community – and the policy and infrastructure change that may need to precede behavior change – take a lot of time and energy. Think about the *long-term* nature of change and don’t be discouraged by an apparent lack of progress. Be patient. Stay at it.

WHERE: commuters and corridors

Start in *your* community! This might be as small as a section of your neighborhood or as large as your town or a group of neighboring towns.

Once you determine the boundaries of your project area, think about which kinds of trips to focus on. At Vital Communities, we generally focus on commuters. This is because trips to and from work are fairly consistent and usually make up a large proportion of someone’s travel. You can also focus on the trips of school kids, of elders, or others. Or social, shopping, or recreation trips. Just keep in mind that the more regular the trip, the easier it might be for people to create a new travel habit.

It can be helpful to think in terms of corridors. For example, Route 4 in Vermont is a busy road that serves parts of Hartford, Hartland, and Woodstock. Those three towns are working together to build a carpool network for residents who commute along the Route 4 corridor to the Lebanon/Hanover area.

HOW: behavior change is hard

We all know from trying to break a bad habit that it takes more than *knowing your habit is “bad.”* So what *does* it take to change? When it comes to changing transportation behavior, simply knowing the facts is rarely enough. As discussed in the “How we make change” section, there are typically a host of social, psychological, and infrastructure barriers that prevent people from replacing drive-alone car travel with carpools, transit, biking, and walking.

Vital Communities has been surveying Upper Valley workers and residents on their commuting habits for 15 years and has uncovered the most common barriers that face Upper Valley residents. [\[Attach our list of common barriers\]](#). We have also compiled a list of the most common reasons that survey respondents cite for why they *do* choose to carpool, bike, walk, and take the bus, etc. [\[You can find that here.\]](#)

Behind the scenes of effective transportation outreach is Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM), a set of tools to help change people’s behavior related to the environment. CBSM is rooted in social psychology research that shows that environmental behavior change happens most easily at the community level and through direct contact with people.

Here is a *brief* summary of some tools used to change behavior in the CBSM model:

1. **Commitments:** People are more likely to act if they have made a commitment to act. For example, if you signed up for a month-long green commuter challenge, you’re more likely to leave your car at home that month.
2. **Prompts:** It’s easy to forget a new habit unless you’re reminded. For example, If there are posters around the office prompting you to bike to work, you’re more likely to remember to bike.
3. **Incentives:** People like external motivation. For example, if your workplace offers the prime parking spaces to carpools, you’re more likely to carpool.
4. **Norming:** People do what others around them do. For example, if you see your neighbors and friends taking the bus, you’re more likely to start taking the bus too.

To gain a more thorough understanding of all the tools and how to apply them to your projects, check out these great easy-to-understand online guides on CBSM. [Click here for a short overview of the elements of CBSM.](#) And here is a longer guide.

The Projects

[TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, events, data & policy, long-term, short-term*]

SET AN EXAMPLE

If you haven’t already, green YOUR commute!

Bike or walk one of your regular short trips per week. Telecommute once a week. [Start taking the bus](#) when you can. Form your own vanpool.

Aside from setting an example, this can also be a great way to uncover some of the infrastructure limitations and social/psychological barriers that others may face when trying the same thing.

TAGS: carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, short-term

PROJECTS TO PROMOTE EXISTING RESOURCES

Sometimes people just don't know the options in front of them. Use traditional, online, and social media plus in-person outreach like tabling at community events and gathering places (e.g. Saturday at the dump!) to inform community members about available transportation options.

2. Promote Emergency Ride Home programs!

People often choose to drive their car to work because they fear being called back home or to their kids' school in an emergency. But did you know that if you carpool, vanpool, take the bus, bike, or walk to work, you can be reimbursed for a cab or a rental car if an emergency arises and you need to get home, to the park & ride, the hospital, or to your child's school or daycare?

Vital Communities commuter surveys show that 60-70% of people aren't aware of the emergency ride home programs available in the Upper Valley. Promote these programs to help people get over one barrier to leaving their car at home. Click here for information on the Go! Vermont Guaranteed Ride Home program and the UVTMA's Emergency Ride Home program.

TAGS: carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, short-term

3. Help people find a carpool - promote Go! Vermont and CommuteSmartNH online databases

Carpooling can save commuters tons of money, reduce wear and tear on personal vehicles, decrease traffic congestion, and be welcome social or rest time. Plus, some workplaces offer carpoolers the prime parking spots as an incentive. But people often have a hard time finding someone to carpool with. [Go! Vermont's website](#) and [iPhone/Android](#) app and [CommuteSmartNH's website](#) lets you see other commuters who match your schedule and personal ride criteria. (Go! Vermont even rewards you for all of your green commutes!)

Vital Communities commuter surveys show that many people would carpool if they had a carpool buddy, online carpool matching is a preferred way to do this, and yet there is broad unfamiliarity with both states' carpool matching services. Promote these two carpool matching resources to help people get over the barrier of not knowing someone with whom to carpool.

Both databases can be used in both states and have features allowing people to maintain privacy and be choosy about who they ride or drive with.

TAGS: carpool, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, short-term

4. Promote the local transit service

Commuter surveys consistently show that many people tune out the buses in their communities, thinking the buses are exclusively for elders or don't serve convenient locations. Others know about the buses but view them and their riders in a negative light. Still others don't seem to notice the buses at all. Promote the bus service in your community to help people get over the barriers of "the bus isn't convenient for me," "people like me don't ride the bus," or "what, there's a bus?"

The 2017 Vital Communities [campaign to promote Advance Transit](#) is an example of social "norming" to destigmatize bus ridership and highlight the convenience. (Refer back to our [\[Behavior Change\]](#) section for more about norming and the other tenets of Community-Based Social Marketing.)

One exciting feature to highlight when promoting local bus service is how easy it is to access route information and schedules on your phone. All bus companies in the Upper Valley have their schedule and route information integrated with Google Maps, allowing easy trip planning. To view a trip by transit, just click on the bus icon at the top of the window. (See image.)

Plus, the State of Vermont is piloting [Transit App](#), an aptly named smartphone app that shows real time bus information based on user location.

TAGS: *bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, short-term*

EVENTS & COMMUTER CHALLENGES

Events and challenges can motivate people to try a new commute for the first time! Make sure potential participants also have the information and skills needed to try that new commute.

5. Get your school signed up for Vermont-wide [Way to Go!](#)

This annual commuter challenge for schools gives out lots of great prizes including a Grand Prize of an All Earth Renewables solar tracker for the winning school!

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, Vermont, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, events, short-term*

6. Sign up for the next [CommuteSmartNH](#) commuter challenge; stay tuned for the annual Upper Valley Curb the Car Day in May.

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, New Hampshire, community engagement, kid friendly, events, short-term*

7. Organize your own neighborhood commuter challenge!

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, events, short-term*

8. Organize Bike, Walk, and Roll Day at district schools

Use the [Vital Communities toolkit](#), with the goal of making the event ongoing.

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, events, short-term*

9. BONUS: Take a fun Amtrak trip with family, neighborhood, or school!

From Randolph, White River Junction/Claremont/Windsor/Bellows Falls to Brattleboro, Western Massachusetts or onward to New York City or Philadelphia! Just remember, Amtrak goes south in the morning and north in the evening, so only southbound trips can be day trips.

TAGS: *Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, kid friendly, events, short-term*

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

These tend to take time and funding, but can make a huge difference for a community!

10. Install bike racks in town

Local Motion in Vermont is an authorized dealer of Dero bike racks and sells them at cost. More information here: <https://www.localmotion.org/bikeracks>

National bike organization [People for Bikes](#) has bike infrastructure [funding opportunities](#). Keep an eye out for opportunities that include bike racks. The next round of funding should be announced October 2019.

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, New Hampshire*

11. Install level II electric vehicle charging stations

Check out Drive Electric VT's installation guide for residential and commercial <https://www.driveelectricvt.com/charging-stations/installation-guide>

And the Drive Electric VT guide to charger station financing: <https://www.driveelectricvt.com/charging-stations/financing>

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) has an [Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Infrastructure Commission](#)

TAGS: *Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, long-term*

12. Establish or Improve Park-and-Ride

Park and rides provide important parking spaces and meeting points for carpoolers and bus riders. These lots can be state-owned or municipally-owned. They can also be parking lots belonging to a business or organization that needs the parking spaces primarily at night or on weekends (e.g. a concert venue or a house of worship) at which arrangements were made for commuters to use the lot during weekdays.

Here is an excellent [New Hampshire guide to establishing a park and ride](#) put together by several of the regional planning commissions.

And here is the [Vermont Agency of Transportation \(VTrans\) webpage](#) for all things related to park and rides.

Your community may already have the park and rides it needs. But does your local park and ride have the amenities that encourage people to use it? When considering possible improvements to a park and ride, popular amenities include:

- better walk/bike access
- waiting shelter
- lighting and safety features
- electric vehicle charging stations

If improvements have been made recently, make sure there is adequate signage and information about local transit and carpooling options. Publicize any improvements so people know about them!

For maps of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Upper Valley park and ride locations, [click here](#).

TAGS: *carpool, bus/transit, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, long-term*

PROJECTS TO BUILD SKILLS

For most of us, driving or riding in a car is second nature. But biking and riding the bus confidently can both take some practice. Many people learn to ride a bike as a kid and then don't ride much after they start driving. They may be able to ride a bike on a smooth level surface but not have great bike handling skills or have confidence riding on the road with cars. And for many, getting on a commuter bus for the first time might seem daunting. "How do I know where the bus goes?" and "I think I'm at a bus stop, but I'm worried that the bus won't show up" are common sentiments. It doesn't take much to help people build bike and bus riding skills and confidence.

13. Sign up for the [e-bike lending library](#) (for adults) or the [Bike Smart bike trailer](#) (for kids) through Local Motion

Sign up to check out a bike from [Local Motion's traveling e-bike library](#), or contact Local Motion to bring the library to your community next.

Local Motion's [Bike Smart program](#) is a complete bike skill education program for Vermont children ages 5 and up. Bike Smart is based on a game-rich bike skills curriculum developed by Local Motion and the Center for Health and Learning and is made possible by a fleet of four 20' trailers: each equipped with everything an instructor would need to teach children how to be confident competent bicycle riders.

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, short-term*

14. Host Everyday Bicycling workshops

Sign up to host a Vital Communities Everyday Bicycling workshops. These are available to Vermont (sponsored by Local Motion) and New Hampshire communities. Read below for the workshop

descriptions and email uvtma@vitalcommunities.org to schedule one in your community or at your workplace. [insert photos]

Everyday Bicycling Basics: Fix A Flat & More *This easy welcoming workshop for beginners gives you the skills to manage common problems encountered on a bike ride. While learning how to change a tire, you'll become familiar with brakes, chain/gears, and how to remove a wheel. Participants leave with free tire levers, chain lube, and patch kit!*

Bring a bike to practice on, if you have one. Hands-on practice will be done in pairs, so there are always enough bikes to go around! Please note: many entry-level bikes aren't designed for much adjustment and can be frustrating to work on. If you have questions about whether to bring your bike to this workshop, call 802.291.9100 x111 or e-mail us.

Everyday Bicycling Basics: Getting Into Bicycling

Haven't been on a bike since you were 13? Come to this workshop to refresh your skills and learn:

- how to fit a bike and helmet*
- what gear you need (and don't need)*
- how to “read” the street and ride safely*
- how to do a “power start” and “controlled stop” and how to better handle your bike*
- snacks provided! ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BRING A WORKING BIKE AND A HELMET.*

Everyday Bicycling Basics: On-Street Bike Skills *Designed to follow the “Getting Into Bicycling” workshop. Build your skills & confidence for riding your bike on the road. We will review some skills in the parking lot and then head out for a narrated bike ride with periodic pull-offs to discuss conditions encountered and how best to respond. Snacks provided! ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BRING A WORKING BIKE AND A HELMET.*

Read more [on the Vital Communities website](#).

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, kid friendly, events, short-term*

15. Borrow the Vital Communities Bike Rodeo Kit to teach kids bike safety skills.

“Bike Rodeos” are a fun way to teach kids (and adults too) bike handling and safety skills. Vital Communities has a bike rodeo kit that we lend out for free. The kit contains an instruction binder, traffic cones, spray chalk, and various props needed to set up a bike rodeo course and hold the event. Email uvtma@vitalcommunities.org to reserve it now.

[Insert Cornell bike rodeo guidebook]

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, kid friendly, events, short-term*

16. Bring family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors onto the bus

It often takes a little extra to get people confidently riding transit. “Travel training,” which traditionally serves those who need special assistance, can be valuable to almost anyone. Simply getting people on the bus that first time can undo the majority of their hesitation about the bus. Become a “travel trainer” yourself by planning a short bus trip for family, friends, neighbors, or coworkers with a fun destination at the end. [Read about a Vital Communities travel training with students from the Center for Cartoon Studies.](#)

TAGS: *bus/transit, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, kid friendly, short-term*

POLICY & ADVOCACY PROJECTS

Keep the pressure on local leaders and fellow voters to support multi-modal transportation infrastructure and policy.

17. Join (or start!) a bike-pedestrian committee

The Town of Hanover and City of Lebanon both have bike-pedestrian committees that work to improve the walk and bike connectivity in town. If you live in either of those towns, get involved! More info about the [Hanover Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee](#). And more info about the [Lebanon Pedestrian & Bicyclist Advisory Committee](#).

Live in another town? Start your own committee! The Lebanon Pedestrian & Bicyclist Advisory Committee is willing to field questions from people trying to form a new bike-ped committee. You [can contact them here](#).

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement*

18. Familiarize your town’s planners and developers with the Vital Communities Mobility Checklist and include specifics about multi-modal transportation when you town updates its master plan.

This award-winning checklist helps developers, planners, and town boards understand how to “think beyond the car” and integrate biking, walking, and transit into their plan development. It was created with the help of the Upper Valley’s professional planning community and revised in 2014. The Mobility Checklist is available at VitalCommunities.org/Transportation.

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, data & policy, long-term*

19. Attend your local Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. Become a member if your town doesn’t have a TAC representative

Each regional planning commission has a Transportation Advisory Committee (made up of appointed representatives from each town served) that advises regional planning commission staff on local projects. These meetings are typically monthly or bi-monthly, open to the public, and can be a good way to learn about and get involved with short- and long-term local and regional transportation projects in the pipeline.

New Hampshire towns:

For information on the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission TAC:
<https://www.uvlsrc.org/projects/committees-related-to-projects/transportation-advisory-committee/> Upper Valley member towns: Acworth, Canaan, Charlestown, Claremont, Cornish, Croydon, Dorchester, Enfield, Goshen, Grafton, Grantham, Hanover, Lebanon, Lempster, Lyme, New London, Newbury, Newport, Orange, Orford, Piermont, Plainfield, Springfield, Sunapee, Unity, Wilmot

For information on the North Country Council TAC: <http://www.nccouncil.org/ncc-committees/transportation-advisory-committee-tac/>
Upper Valley member towns: Bath, Benton, Haverhill, Landaff, Warren, Wentworth

For information on the Southwest Region Planning Commission TAC:
<http://www.swrpc.org/trans/committees/tac>
Upper Valley member towns: Alstead, Langdon, Walpole

Vermont towns:

For information on the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission TAC:
<https://www.trorc.org/programs/transportation/tac/>
Upper Valley member towns: Barnard, Bethel, Bradford, Bridgewater, Chelsea, Corinth, Fairlee, Hartford, Hartland, Newbury, Norwich, Pomfret, Randolph, Royalton, Sharon, Strafford, Thetford, Topsham, Tunbridge, Vershire, West Fairlee, Woodstock

For information on the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission TAC:
<https://www.swcrpc.org/tac/>
Upper Valley member towns: Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor, Windsor

For information on the Windham Regional Commission Transportation Committee:
<http://www.windhamregional.org/committees/transportation>
Upper Valley member towns: Grafton, Rockingham, Westminster

For information on the Northeastern Vermont Development Association TAC: email Doug Morton at dmorton@nvda.net.
Upper Valley member town: Ryegate

For information on the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission TAC:
<http://centralvtplanning.org/programs/transportation/transportation-advisory-committee/>
Upper Valley member town: Washington

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, data & policy, long-term, short-term*

19. Promote the Vital Communities [Commuter Calculator](#) and talk about the FULL price of car ownership

Many people are acutely aware of how pinched their household budgets are, but few have added up *how many of their own dollars* are going to their own vehicles. As you may remember from the

introduction, Upper Valley commuters typically drive 20+ miles each way to work. Taking into account wear and tear as well as gas and insurance, etc. that's around \$8,000 per year! The online Vital Communities Commuter Calculator that can be used to determine exactly what a person spends on their commute to and from work. It also shows how much that same commute would cost by bike, on foot, by carpool or vanpool, or by bus. Share this tool as part of your community outreach around healthy green transportation.

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, data & policy*

20. Support transit improvements and continued transit funding by your community. Support new bike & walk infrastructure, and advocate for sidewalks and wider shoulders.

Pay attention to decisions your town selectboard/city council and municipal planning body are making related to healthy and green transportation options and make sure your voice is heard. Does your municipality vote on funding for your local transit company at Town Meeting? Make sure transit advocates show up! Is your town or city working on a master plan update? Time to add in a strong transportation section!

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, schools, kid friendly, data & policy, long-term*

INCREASE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

From mini grants to vanpools, there are many outside resources that can help shift the transportation opportunities in your community.

Pay attention for funding opportunities for towns, schools, and other entities.

Some Vermont Agency of Transportation programs:

1. [Better Connections Program](#)
2. [Electric Vehicle Incentive Program](#)
3. [Go! Vermont Local Community Assistance Program](#) (\$500 mini-grant)

Some New Hampshire Department of Transportation programs:

1. [Transportation Alternatives Program](#)
2. [CMAQ Program](#)
3. [DERA Program](#)

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, Vermont, New Hampshire*

Help people learn more about e-bikes and maybe even purchase one

Vermont residents and businesses can [request a free consultation with vBike](#) to learn how to choose the e-bike, e-cargo bike and/or e-assist system that best fits their needs based on the terrain and distance they intend to ride, what they want to do with their bike, cargo hauling needs and many other considerations.

There are also two Vermont programs that help people finance the purchase of an e-bike. Promote the [Green Mountain Power e-bike rebate program](#) and the [VSECU low-interest loan program](#) for transportation bikes!

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, community engagement, kid friendly, short-term*

Become a volunteer driver and recruit others to volunteer too

Many people in the Upper Valley need access to medical care and other critical services but don't have transportation of their own and for various reasons cannot use a bus. Local transit companies (plus other entities like faith groups, health care facilities, and senior centers) provide rides through volunteer driver programs as a supplement to regular bus service. However, every one of these programs needs more volunteer drivers. Sign up to become a volunteer driver and recruit others to sign up too. Volunteer drivers can choose which rides they provide and will get reimbursed for gas.

Volunteer in Sullivan County, New Hampshire
(through Southwestern Community Services)
603-542-9609
tpalmer@scshelps.org
scshelps.org/transportation.htm

Volunteer in Windsor & Orange Counties, Vermont
(through Stagecoach Transportation)
802-728-3773
info@stagecoach-rides.org
stagecoach-rides.org/dial-a-ride

Volunteer in Southern Windsor County, Vermont
(through Volunteers in Action, Mt. Ascutney Hospital)
802-674-5971
mtascutneyhospital.org/careers/volunteer-opportunities/volunteers-action

TAGS: *Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement*

Explore the feasibility of a vanpool from your community and host a community vanpool informational meeting (with pizza and childcare!)

Go! Vermont offers a \$700 per month subsidy for vans serving Vermont residents or workers. (This means that if you live in New Hampshire but work in Vermont, you still qualify.) For more information, contact Ross MacDonald at Go! Vermont (Ross.MacDonald@vermont.gov) or go to

connectingcommuters.org/vanpool. In addition, some workplaces subsidize the cost of employee vanpools.

When considering an effort to form a vanpool from your community, think about recruiting residents who work along a specific corridor and have similar shift times. Otherwise, you may find 30 people interested in forming a vanpool but they all commute in different directions at different times of day.

TAGS: *vanpool, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement*

GREEN YOUR WORKPLACE

Here are some green and healthy transportation ideas to present to the decision makers at your workplace

Designate one or many “carpool only” parking spots.

These should be the prime office spots so they motivate your coworkers to use them. Insert photo.

TAGS: *carpool, Vermont, New Hampshire, short-term*

Install bike racks, ideally under cover to protect bikes from the elements and keep seats dry in the rain.

Local Motion in Vermont is an authorized dealer of Dero bike racks and sells them at cost. More information here: <https://www.localmotion.org/bikeracks>

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont*

Start a workplace bike share

A bike share can motivate employees to leave their car at home if they need to make short trips during the workday. A basic bikeshare for a small workplace is quite easy to get started. All you need is:

1. a bike with an easily adjustable seat post (so it accommodates many heights)
2. a combo lock
3. a helmet
4. a shared calendar for reserving the bike
5. a place inside or outside the workplace to lock the bike
6. an easily accessible designated cupboard, shelf, or box in which to store the helmet, any additional safety gear (like a hi-visibility vest), a tire pump, a spare tube, chain lubricant, a couple rags for cleaning, and anything else that’s associated with the bike share

It’s a good idea to have one point person responsible for regularly checking tire pressure, lubricating the chain, and checking overall function and safety.

Other tips:

- a bike with a basket is great for tossing in backpacks and laptops

- some people might not like the idea of sharing a helmet with others; it might be a good idea to have some disinfectant or lice-busting products handy for those folks.

TAGS: *bike/pedestrian, Vermont, New Hampshire, community engagement, short-term*

Present a commuter incentive plan to your workplace decision makers

Vital Communities has long had a workplace commuter incentive program, which adds \$5 to an employee’s pre-tax income for each day they carpool, take the bus, bike, walk, or telecommute. Refer to the Vital Communities “Building a Commuter Incentive Program” for more info.

TAGS: *carpool, bike/pedestrian, bus/transit, telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, data & policy*

Establish a workplace telecommuting policy

Sometimes, the easiest way to reduce commuting costs is just to get rid of the drive altogether. Many types of employees could benefit from working at home every once in a while or regularly. For example:

- You have enough report writing to fill one day of writing at home. You do not schedule meetings on Fridays in order to cut down on one day of travel.
- You are a web programmer and have high-speed internet at home. You spend two of your three workdays at home and come in Thursdays for all-staff meeting.
- You have a second job teaching horseback riding. You work four ten-hour days Monday-Thursday, take Friday and Saturday off, and work at a farm on Sunday.
- You pulled a sixteen-hour day Thursday and deserve a day on the river. You’re taking this Friday off.

It helps if the workplace provides a positive culture around telecommuting. Leadership should participate and employees should be encouraged to try it if their job allows.

To view the Vital Communities sample telecommute policy, [click here](#):

TAGS: *telecommute, Vermont, New Hampshire, data & policy*

Resources

Vermont Links

[Drive Electric Vermont](#)

[Go! Vermont](#)

[Local Motion](#)

[Sustainable Transportation Vermont](#)

[Upper Valley Town Energy Committees “Community Discussion List”](#)

[vBike](#)

[Vermont Agency of Transportation \(VTrans\)](#)

[Vermont Climate & Health Alliance](#)

[Vermont Transportation Efficiency Network](#)

[Way to Go!](#)

New Hampshire Links

[Bike Walk Alliance New Hampshire](#)

[CommuteSmart NH](#)

[New Hampshire Department of Transportation \(NH DOT\)](#)

[Transport NH](#)

[Upper Valley Town Energy Committees “Community Discussion List”](#)

Tools & Guides

[Community-Based Social Marketing](#)

[Cornell bike rodeo guidebook](#)

[Duke University survey guide](#)

[Fostering Sustainable Behavior Change \(CBSM\)](#)

[New Hampshire guide to establishing a park and ride](#)

Tri-Ethnic Center [“Community Readiness Model”](#)

Victoria Transport Policy Institute [“Community Cohesion as a Transport Planning Objective”](#)

[Vital Communities Commuter Calculator](#)

[Vital Communities Mobility Checklist](#)

[Vital Communities Bike, Walk, and Roll to School Day Toolkit](#)

Other Links

[League of American Bicyclists](#)

[Mobility Lab](#)

[People for Bikes](#)

[Streetsblog](#)

[Victoria Transport Policy Institute](#)