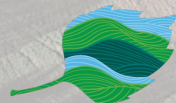


BUILDING HOMES IN THE RIGHT PLACES

How Smart Growth Supports Energy & Climate Goals

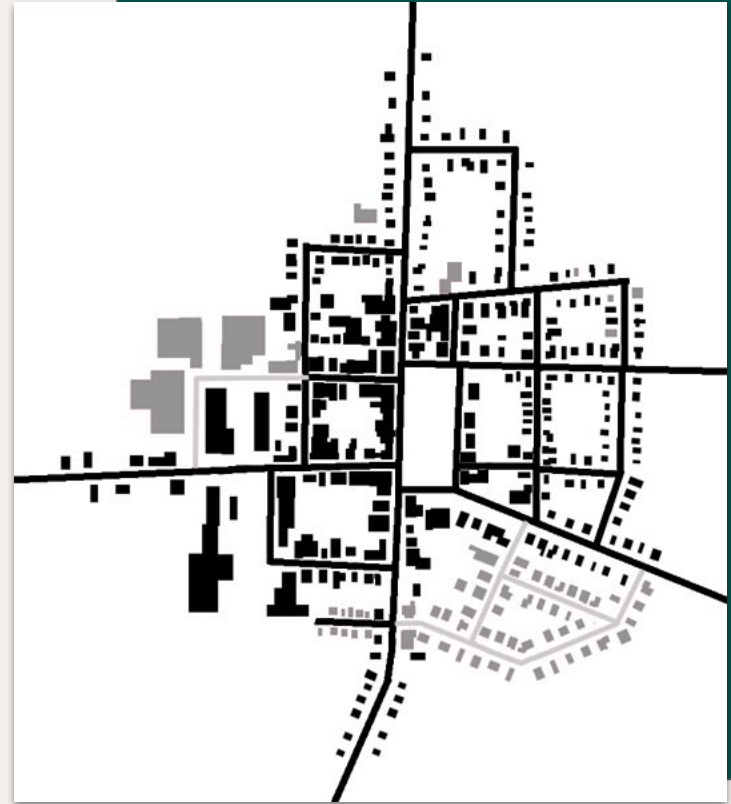


VNRC

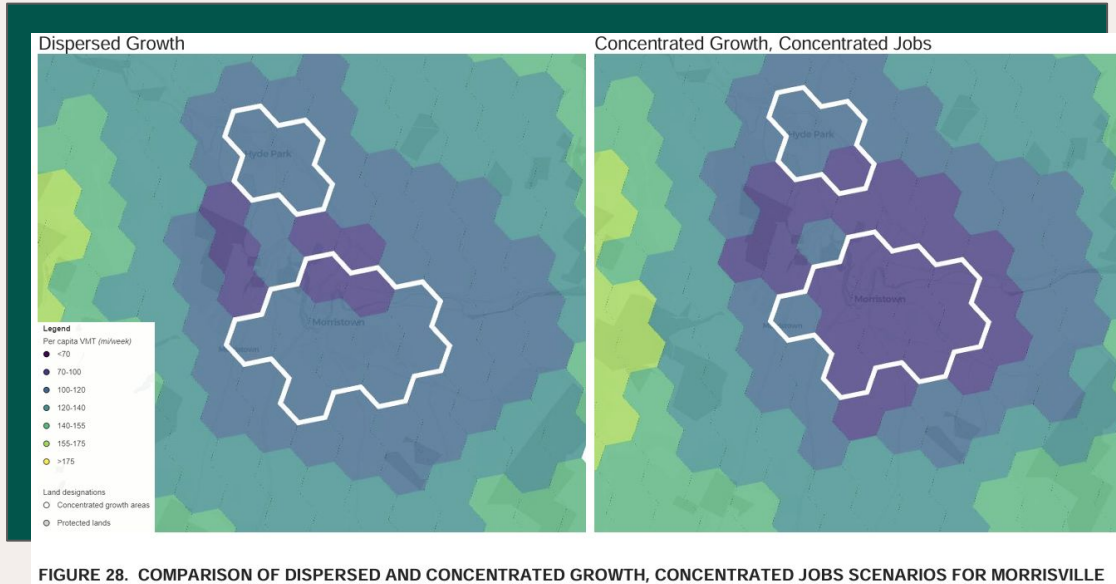
VERMONT NATURAL
RESOURCES COUNCIL

A “SMART GROWTH” APPROACH

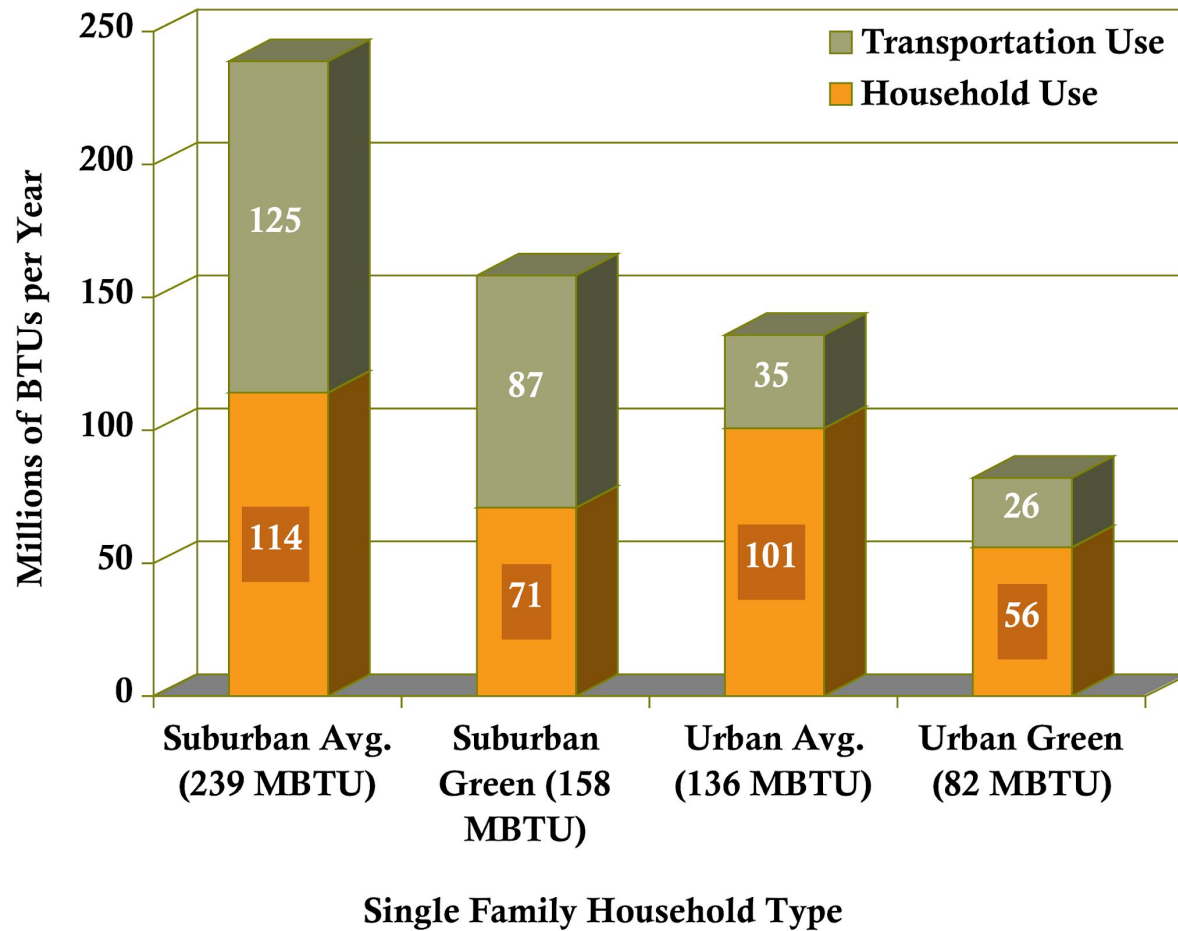
- Smart growth = homes and jobs in connected, walkable, resilient places
- It's not just *more* housing—it's the *right type, place, and price*
- Benefits: affordability, community vitality, lower emissions



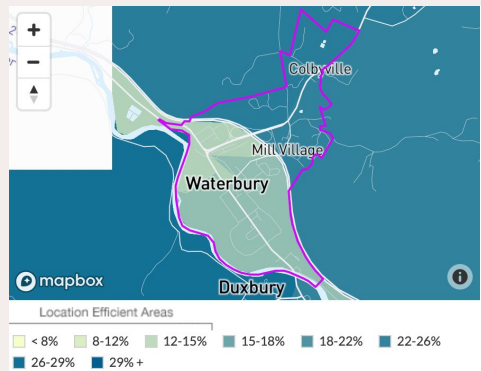
WHERE WE GROW MATTERS



- Our development patterns shape how much energy we use
- Sprawling growth → more driving, higher costs for families, towns, loss of farms, ecosystems
- Compact, connected communities → less driving, more efficiency



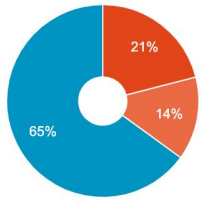
Waterbury Village



Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

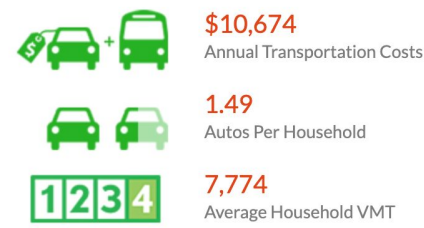
Factoring in both housing *and* transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income

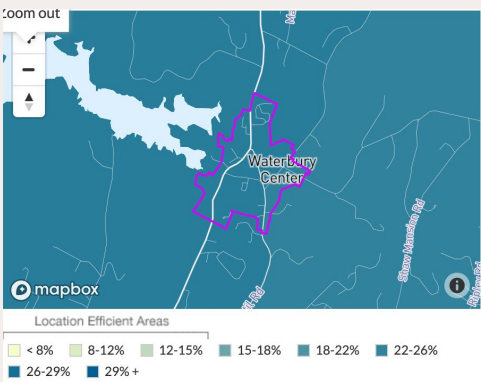


Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the cost of living.



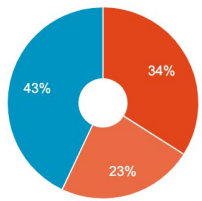
Waterbury Center



Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

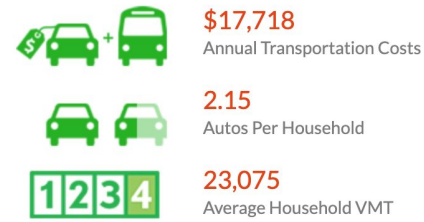
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- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income



Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the cost of living.



Concentrated Growth, Balanced Land Use	Dispersed Growth Scenario
Reduce weekly VMT* to 110 miles per capita;	Increase weekly VMT to nearly 120 miles per capita;
Reduce GHG emissions by over 13,000 metric tons annually;	Increase GHG emissions by over 17,000 metric tons annually;
Avoid 1 traffic death per year;	Increase traffic deaths per year by 1.5;
Avoid over 31 traffic injuries per year;	Increase traffic injuries per year by 52;
Reduce physical inactivity mortality by nearly 4 lives annually;	Increase physical activity mortality by nearly 3 lives annually;
Reduce annual maintenance costs by over \$1.5 million;	Cost an additional \$2 million in annual maintenance costs;
Avoid 364 additional road miles.	Require 500+ additional road miles.

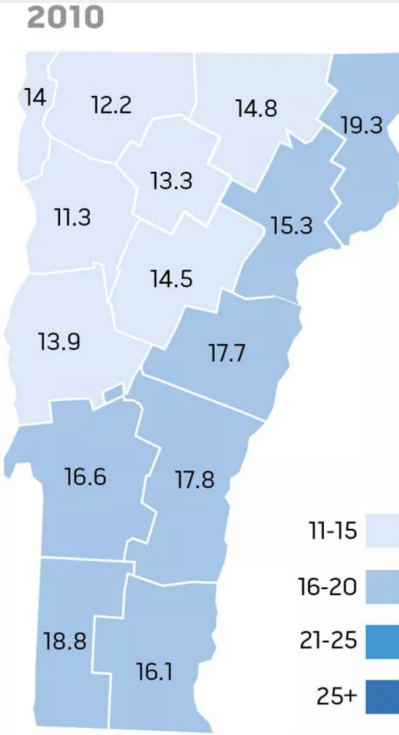


WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

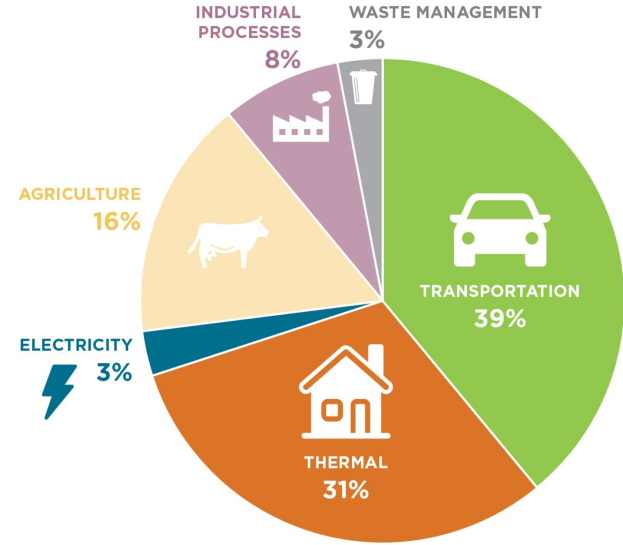
Boston Real Estate
State at a Crossroads
Conference to
of Growth
Burlington, VT—Vermont
infrastructure, and g
4 days ago

Vermont Public
Even with more
still rising
In 2024, the statewide
9% jump from the pri
1 month ago

WCAX
Vt. home buyers
housing
Vt. home buyers still
available housing. P
Jun 3, 2025



Vermont's GHG emissions by sector, 2021



Sources: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont GHG Emissions Inventory and Forecast: 1990-2021, 2024. **Note:** There is a small amount of emissions from the "fossil fuel industry" category (i.e. fugitive emissions from fossil gas pipelines in VT), accounting for 0.4% of Vermont's overall emissions in 2021, that does not show up on this graph.

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s population is living
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0 million over...

ENERGY & CLIMATE BENEFITS

- Compact growth reduces transportation emissions
- Efficient buildings in connected areas lower heating costs
- Supports renewable energy and grid resilience
- Minimizes pressure on undeveloped land, protecting forests and green spaces that act as carbon sinks



WHAT HOUSING “IN THE RIGHT PLACES” LOOKS LIKE

- Homes near jobs, schools, and shops
- Walkable streets and transit options
- Mix of housing types and prices
- Protected farms, forests, and waters



Bristol



Chester



Waterbury



Fairlee

HOW WE CAN SUPPORT HOUSING IN THE RIGHT PLACES

- Meet demand for walkable, connected communities
- Provide more ways to get around
- Use existing infrastructure wisely
- Avoid hazard zones



ACT 181: THE BLUEPRINT

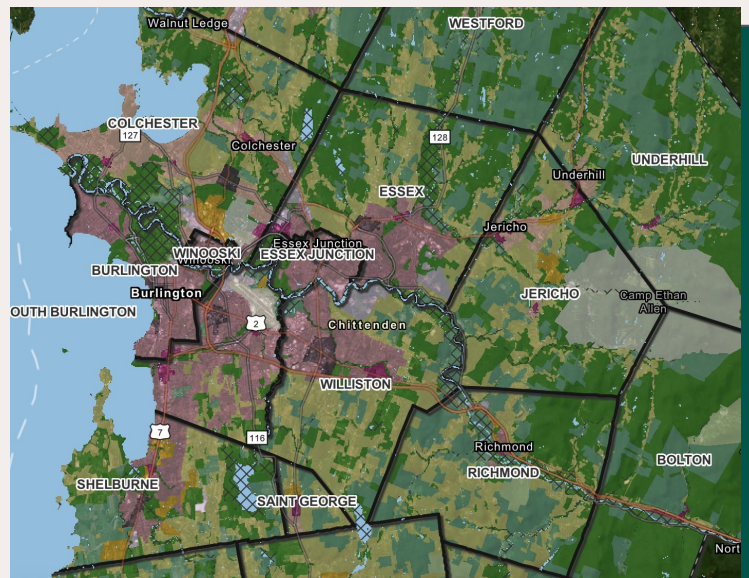
- Modernizes Act 250 and strengthens state designations
- Aligns regional *Future Land Use Maps* with climate-smart growth
- Creates tools for housing in the right places



YOUR ROLE: HOW ENERGY COMMITTEES CAN ENGAGE

Take Action!

- Review your region's *Future Land Use Map*
- Engage in local and regional planning updates
- Support investments in downtown housing, transportation & infrastructure
- Apply for a *Small Grant for Smart Growth*



Where we build determines how we live, how we move, and how much energy we use.

- Act 181 gives us the blueprint—now it's up to us to act.
- Resources:
 - VNRC Resilient Communities Campaign
 - CCRPC Climate & Land Use Guide
 - VNRC Community Planning Toolbox
 - VHFA housingdata.org



