

2010 Campaign for Active Transportation

Chittenden County, Vermont



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chittenden County, Vermont is poised to expand on its reputation as a model community for walking and bicycling as part of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation, which seeks to double federal transportation funding for walking and bicycling in the next transportation bill. With more than 300 miles of designated on-road facilities, more than 110 miles of shared use paths, and more than 440 miles of sidewalks, residents and visitors have numerous options to walk or bike to their destinations or just explore our friendly communities. There is great potential to increase the number of people choosing to walk and bike by completing critical gaps in the existing network and expanding education and encouragement programs. The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) and its partners are excited to build on our regional successes through the 2010 Campaign.

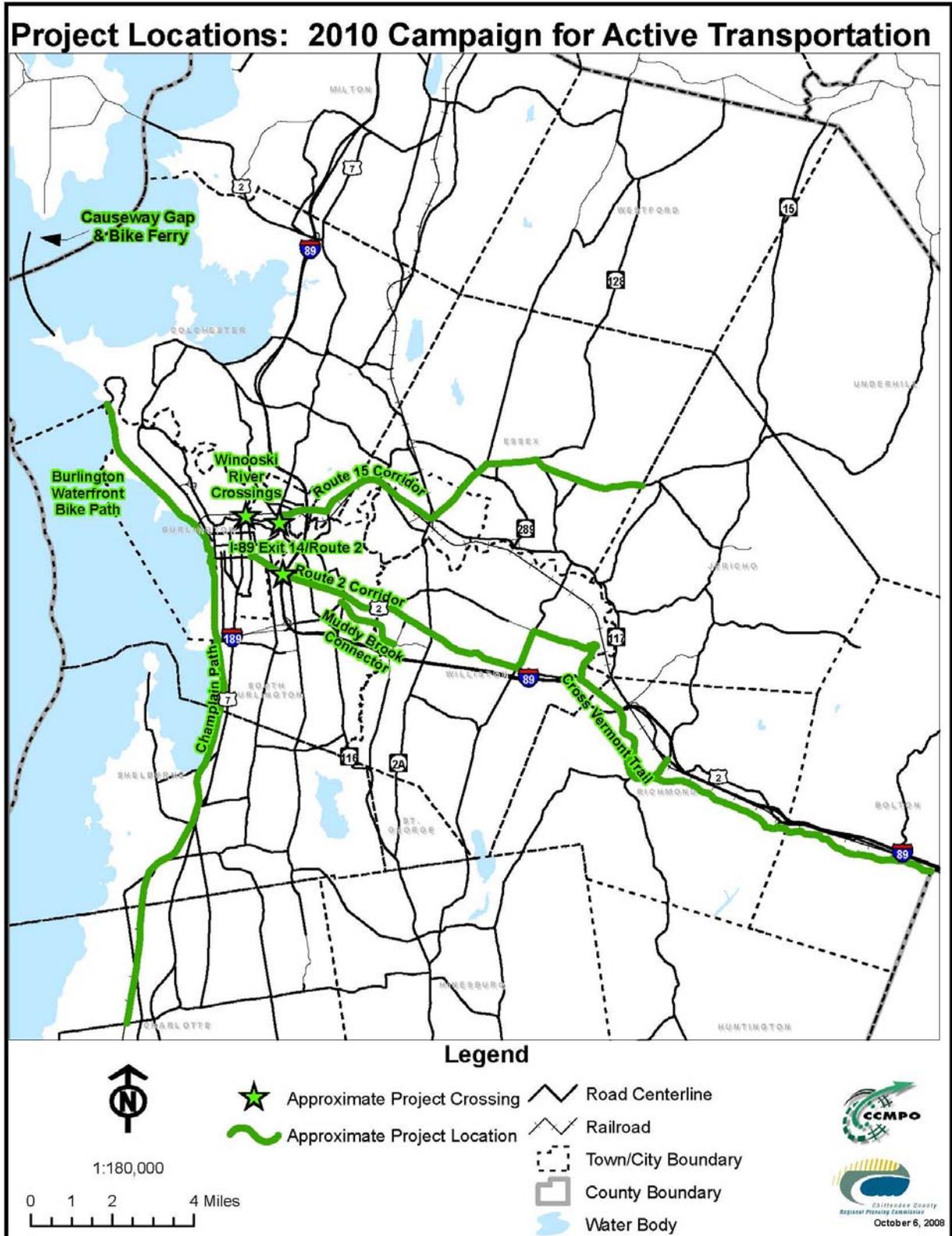
Our region enjoys **strong partnerships** between regional and state agencies, municipalities, advocacy groups, and individuals. Together these partners have participated in updating the CCMPO Regional Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan, the statewide Vermont Pedestrian and Bicycle Policy Plan, and numerous local-level plans to provide a vision for walking and biking in our communities and to identify priorities to achieve that vision. Now more than ever walking and bicycling are **smart choices** that expand mobility for all people, improve the air we breathe, reduce congestion on local roads, improve our personal health, decrease transportation expenses and increase our sense of community.

Project Priorities

The 2007 Pedestrian and Bike Summit hosted by local partners brought more than 70 advocates together to identify critical projects and outline steps to complete them. The highest priority projects resulting from that exercise—and which guide our 2010 Campaign efforts—include:

- **Route 15 Corridor** connecting Winooski, Colchester, Essex and Essex Junction (\$8M)
- **Winooski River Crossings** to connect Burlington and Winooski (\$3.2M)
- **I-89 Exit 14/Route 2 Interchange** which connects Burlington and South Burlington (\$7.5M)
- **Route 2 Corridor** to connect South Burlington and Williston (\$9.1M)
- **Champlain Path** rail with trail connecting Burlington and Charlotte (\$8.4M)
- **Muddy Brook Connector** between South Burlington and Williston (\$4.2M)
- **Cross Vermont Trail**, a complete statewide west-to-east trail adventure (\$0.5M)
- **Colchester-South Hero Causeway and Bike Ferry** infrastructure to improve the Island Line Trail connecting Chittenden County and Grand Isle County (\$1.2M)
- **Burlington Waterfront Bike Path** rehabilitation to provide a safe and fun waterfront route (\$3.9M)
- **Lake Champlain Bikeways** to expand and improve bicycle routes connecting the Lake Champlain Valley in Vermont with New York and Quebec, Canada (\$0.5M)
- **Education & Enforcement Programs** to encourage and promote walking and biking as part of a healthy, active lifestyle (\$2.5M)
- **CCMPO Sidewalk Program** to provide additional resources for our communities to develop and expand local walking and bicycling facilities (\$1M)

Many of these are projects for which scoping or other planning studies have been completed and include recommended alternative alignments and construction cost estimates—costs which continue to rise each year, meaning the time to act is now.





INTRODUCTION

Chittenden County is the transportation and economic hub of Vermont. Nestled between the shores of Lake Champlain and the eastern flanks of the Green Mountains, the Greater Burlington region is home to 150,000 people, a quarter of the state's population.¹ Chittenden County is also Vermont's largest employment center, with a labor force of approximately 87,000 workers and 95,000 jobs, about one-third of the state's total jobs.² Our region prides itself on being progressive and proactive, and improving alternative transportation options such as walking and bicycling for residents and visitors is a top priority at this critical time.

The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO), along with its 18 member municipalities, advocacy groups, local stakeholders, congressional delegation and other project partners, are poised to initiate new projects and expand on current efforts that make walking and biking in our communities more convenient, more accessible, safer, and more fun. The CCMPO oversees transportation planning and policy throughout the county and recognizes the importance of walking and biking in creating a truly multimodal transportation system. Our strong partnerships with organizations and agencies at the local, regional and state levels are focused on improving multimodal transportation facilities and programs for residents and visitors. We are excited to be a part of the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation, an initiative led by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to demonstrate the national importance of walking and bicycling programs across the country and which proposes to double the federal investment in active transportation in the next federal transportation bill.

Planning and constructing appropriate facilities, creating convenient and logical connections with other transportation modes, and developing meaningful education and encouragement programs creates places where people feel safe and comfortable walking and riding their bikes for transportation, fitness and fun. With more people bicycling and walking, communities experience reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality, greater health and well-being, an improved sense of community, and a more diverse economic base. Communities that support and encourage active transportation such as biking and walking are seen as places with a high quality of life, which brings increased property values, economic growth, and increased tourism. Given that Chittenden County is within a day's drive of 70 million potential visitors,³ there are tremendous opportunities for increased tourism and economic development that capitalize on improved and expanded walking and biking facilities.

Current and past planning efforts in Chittenden County have identified key walking and bicycling projects and programs that would benefit our residents, our businesses, and our visitors. These projects include critical connections between towns, missing links between existing on and off-road facilities, maintenance of sidewalks, paths, and lanes, and programs to encourage more people to walk and bike rather than drive. The cost of each of these types of projects continues to rise, so the time to act is now when we can get the most value from our limited funds. Active transportation partners in Chittenden County are ready to create a truly multimodal transportation system.



TRANSPORTATION TODAY

The 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation offers tremendous potential for improved walking and biking opportunities and expanded transportation choices. According to the US Census, 75% of Vermont workers drive alone to their jobs.⁴ In Chittenden County, 7% of workers walk or bike to work. In 2006, 7% of Chittenden County households did not have access to a personal vehicle while 40% of households had two vehicles and 19% had three or more.⁵ Expanded and improved options for walking and biking enable households with vehicles to re-evaluate their transportation choices and create mobility choices to those without vehicles.

Recent studies have shown that residents are pleased with walking and biking opportunities in our area, but there is a desire for more—and improved—facilities. According to a survey conducted by the CCMPO in 2006, 74% of respondents agree that walking in our area is pleasant, and more than half (52-58%) agree that: there are enough sidewalks; they are in good condition; bicycling is pleasant; and road crossings are safe. Fewer than half (44-46%) of respondents, however, agree that biking is safe for adults and teens and that they live close enough to destinations to walk. Only about a third of respondents believe that there are enough bike paths and lanes, and less than 25% agree that biking is safe for kids. Similarly, 86% of respondents indicated that they want improved safety (providing sidewalk/bike paths) and 79% want more biking and walking facilities (such as bike lanes).

Improved walking and bicycling opportunities would address the needs of the changing demographics of Chittenden County, which is home to nearly 3,000 refugees from across the world. Since 1980 the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program has been helping refugees and immigrants join our local communities. Many of these individuals and families rely on alternative transportation to get to work, run errands, attend appointments, and socialize with friends. Walking and bicycling are key components in their ability to access goods and services in our area. Many refugees and other low-income Vermonters are also eligible to receive refurbished bicycles through Bike Recycle Vermont, a program of the greater Burlington advocacy organization Local Motion. Bike Recycle Vermont also teaches job training and bike repair skills to adults and children.

Walking and biking are also critical elements of a truly multimodal transportation system. While the urban core of Chittenden County is served by the Chittenden County Transit Authority's (CCTA) public transit system, transit options are limited in the suburban and rural areas of the county. Residents and town staff in many of these towns have initiated projects to explore and develop transportation alternatives, and local businesses are pushing for new ideas and offering creative financial mechanisms to expand transit and connections with other towns. In the town of Hinesburg, for example, a new program called Hinesburg Rides provides a three-tiered approach to moving people. Residents in the town of Charlotte have also begun discussing transportation alternatives, including expanded



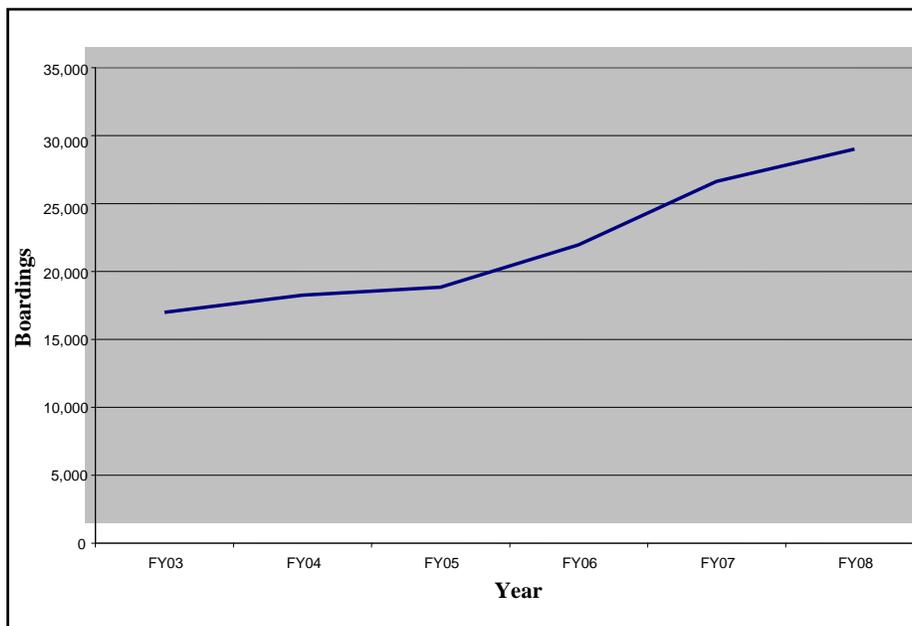
*Bike racks on CCTA buses
Photo: Local Motion*



public transit service and developing more paths to access transit stops. As public transportation expands into communities, the proper infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, trails/paths, and bike parking should encourage users to walk or bike to transit stops and park and ride lots.

Multimodal connections are critical to an effective and efficient transportation system. All CCTA buses have been equipped with bicycle racks since 1997, and use of the racks has increased at an average annual rate of more than 14% for years in which data is available (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: CCTA Bicycle Boardings, FY03-FY08



Active transportation also benefits other transportation options. CarShare Vermont, a local nonprofit car-sharing organization, launched service in the city of Burlington in 2008 and is planning to expand into other communities. Vehicles are located in dedicated parking spaces, and members can walk or bike to those locations or combine those trips with public transportation. New transportation choices such as car-sharing allow individuals and families to reduce the number of vehicles owned and to increase trips made by walking and biking.

Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Culture

Despite being mostly rural, more than two-thirds of Chittenden County’s 18 towns have volunteer recreation path committees or bicycle/pedestrian committees who work toward building opportunities for residents and visitors. Our region is home to thriving outdoor and bicycling shops due to the supportive local culture, and numerous clubs and organizations host rides and walks while university and college cycling teams compete around the country.



Vermont experiences all four seasons, and residents embrace each one. Each summer month more than 20,000 people walk or bike along the Burlington Waterfront Bike Path, according to CCMPO data counts. Established in 1986, this trail is one of Burlington's most popular amenities and is easily combined with the free College Street Shuttle and other public transit to explore our towns. During the colder months residents bundle up as they head to work and play, with some people cross-country skiing on paths or even ice skating to their destinations. New research by the University of Vermont's (UVM) Transportation Research Center is studying how the availability and maintenance of facilities may encourage greater seasonal use of biking and walking infrastructure.⁶

Our area attracts major events featuring feet and wheels. In 2008 the KeyBank Vermont City Marathon and Relay celebrated its 20th anniversary. The marathon attracts top competitors, recreational runners, and thousands of fans who contribute to local restaurants, shops, and other businesses. Each Labor Day weekend the Green Mountain Bicycle Club hosts the popular Green Mountain Stage Race, a four-day event culminating in an exciting criterium in downtown Burlington.

OUR SUCCESSES

Planning

Local, regional, and state planning efforts have created a positive vision for walking and bicycling in our communities. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) completed the Vermont Pedestrian and Bicycle Policy Plan in 2008 which provides the statewide direction for walking and bicycling. The plan envisions "safe, well used, convenient, and accessible conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities." Since 1997 VTrans has spent \$32 million statewide on 72 miles of completed biking and walking facilities and 114 miles in development.



*Green bike lanes on Main Street/Route 2 Bridge over I-89 are a national pilot project
Photo: Local Motion*

In 2008 the CCMPO completed the Regional Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan Update, which provides the vision of a complete regional walking and bicycling network. The Plan also includes Education & Encouragement Programs to promote walking and bicycling and updates the performance measures used to evaluate progress on Plan recommendations. Municipalities participated in a mapping exercise to ensure that the most up-to-date data is included in the Plan. In addition, the city of Burlington completed their own comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2005, and the City recently completed a Transportation Plan which envisions a fully walkable city, a complete bike network, and Complete Streets treatment on major routes.



Regional planning continues using a long-term and holistic approach to land use and transportation. The 2006 Chittenden County Regional Plan, completed by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), recognizes that a multimodal transportation system provides choices in how people and goods move throughout our region. The Regional Plan incorporates the CCMPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is the long-range transportation plan for the county that establishes goals and objectives, analyses of trends, and an inventory of proposed projects. Nearly half of the goals in the MTP support improvement of alternative modes of transportation:

- Goal 2:** Reinforce sustainable land use patterns, such as growth centers, as set forth in local and regional plans.
- Goal 3:** Create a transportation system that offers constantly improving safety, accessibility, flexibility, and comfort for everyone.
- Goal 6:** Create a transportation system that builds community, enhances neighborhood vitality, and minimizes noise, glare, and vibration.
- Goal 9:** Establish a transportation system that uses diverse sources of power and maximizes energy efficiency and conservation.
- Goal 10:** Develop a transportation system that features a variety of travel modes and encourages the reduction of single-occupant vehicle use.

Programs

The CCMPO and other partners have been actively involved in supporting local **Safe Routes to School** (SRTS) programs. In fact, a regional SRTS pilot program was launched two years before the national SRTS program was announced. Due to continued local interest and the limited availability of state SRTS funds, in 2007 the CCMPO created a Safe Routes to School Lite program as a supplement to the national program. CCMPO makes a total of \$20,000 available to interested Chittenden County schools to plan and prepare for the state's next round of non-infrastructure grants. Vermont's Safe Routes to School program, with more than 60 participating schools statewide and 22 in Chittenden County, integrates health, fitness, traffic relief, environmental awareness and safety into a single program that brings together schools, local governments, and the broader community to create healthier lifestyles for children and a safer, cleaner environment for all.

In addition, the CCMPO **Sidewalk Program** awards \$250,000 annually for sidewalk projects that best meet the organization's pedestrian plan policies. This five-year old program enables local communities to plan, design, and construct vital sidewalk and path connections within and between towns, providing access to schools, libraries, town government, local businesses, parks, and other facilities and amenities.

Regional partners have also created and grown programs that encourage using alternative transportation, including walking and bicycling, over driving alone. One such program is the **Way to Go! Commuter Challenge**, an annual event that encourages the use of cheaper, healthier, and more earth-friendly transportation alternatives. This 10-year old program has enjoyed increased participation each year: registration in the program more than doubled from



2005 to 2006, increased nearly two-thirds from 2006 to 2007, and jumped another 60% from 2007 to 2008.⁷ The number of people choosing active transportation greatly contributed to these figures: nearly half (40%) of Way to Go! registrants pledged to walk or bike during the event.

Local businesses and organizations are also taking the lead in making walking and bicycling a priority for their employees. As part of its transportation management efforts for some of Vermont's largest employers, the Campus Area Transportation Management Association's (CATMA) **Bike/Walk Buck Rewards Program** provides a financial incentive to eligible employees to walk or bike to work a minimum number of days during designated months. Participation in the program has increased from a monthly average of 138 in FY02 to 190 in the first six months of FY07.⁸ CATMA also surveys employees and students of its four member institutions (University of Vermont, Fletcher Allen Health Care, Champlain College, American Red Cross) every year, and the percent of the more than 9,000 employees reporting biking or walking as their main commuting mode has tripled from 4.7% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2006. The presence of local colleges and a university also has a tremendous impact on local active transportation. Research has demonstrated that communities with a higher proportion of college students are associated with higher rates of bicycle choices.⁹ Chittenden County hosts five institutions of higher education, including the UVM which boasts a student population of nearly 13,000.

Local employers understand the benefits of walking and bicycling and have created their own programs to get employees out of their personal vehicles. In 2005, after successful participation in the Way to Go! Commuter Challenge, the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) expanded indoor and outdoor bicycle parking and added a company-owned bike for local errands. Burlington-based Burton Snowboards, a global company making snowboards and other outdoor gear and apparel, launched their own free bikes program in 2008 for employees to use for local errands and meetings. NRG Systems in Hinesburg encourages bicycle commuting by rewarding those who log the most miles with gift certificates to a local bike shop.

Data Collection

Active transportation planning and data collection efforts are occurring at multiple levels. The CCMPO purchased new counters to enhance and add flexibility to the organization's data collection program, and the organization borrows additional counters from VTrans to supplement regional data collection efforts. Local organizations are also beginning their own data discovery efforts. The local Green Mountain Bicycle Club created a Utility Miles program in which members track miles for non-recreational trips such as errands and commuting. The program calculates how much carbon dioxide is prevented from being released by tailpipes and highlights the impact of cycling on air quality. In addition, the program increases the visibility of cyclists on local roads by promoting alternative transportation for day-to-day activities, and encourages healthier traveling habits than driving. South Burlington High School piloted a similar program in which participants saved one ton of carbon dioxide from August to December, 2007. UVM's Transportation Research Center is also examining data from new perspectives, such as how seasonal weather conditions affect behavior choices to walk or bike.



The CCMPO, VTrans, and the UVM Transportation Research Center have partnered with the US DOT to collect detailed data on transportation system use and travel behavior in Vermont as an add-on to the US DOT's National Highway Transportation Survey (NHTS). The NHTS provides detailed information on the public's use of the transportation system by all motorized and non-motorized travel modes, and is the only national source of household travel statistics in the United States. Some 1,500 Vermont households were contacted in this effort to study system improvements including transit, carpooling, safety, walking/biking, tailpipe emissions, and mobility for special groups such as seniors or children. This one-year project began in April 2008 and results (expected in late 2009) will provide local transportation planners and advocates with up-to-date information about the transportation choices and behaviors of residents.

Awards

The greater Burlington region is a perennial favorite for national walking and bicycling awards. Since 2004 the City of Burlington has been a bronze-level **Bicycle Friendly Community** by the League of American Bicyclists. The Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign is an awards program that recognizes municipalities that actively support bicycling. In addition, Prevention Magazine recently named Burlington the 42nd **Most Walkable City** in the country.¹⁰ The density of the downtown area contributes to its high ranking, along with the number of downtown destinations such as shopping, dining, and entertainment. The magazine also notes that Burlington is ranked 2nd nationally in the number of people who walk to work. Recognizing its all-around livability, Burlington was named as one of Outside Magazine's **Best Towns 2007**.¹¹

The City of Burlington joined the Sierra Club's **Cool Cities** campaign when Mayor Peter Clavelle signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. This commitment to Cool Cities demonstrates the desire to address climate change through smart solutions—including increased walking and bicycling opportunities.

2010 CAMPAIGN—THE VISION

As the regional transportation planning and policy organization, the CCMPO is leading the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. This effort is a collaborative partnership through the CCMPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Steering Committee consisting of community residents, member municipalities, local and regional planners, state health and transportation agencies, local advocates, public transit, and CCMPO Board and committee members. Several current projects, along with already completed studies, are guiding our efforts in the 2010 Campaign, including the CCMPO's 2008 **Regional Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan** Update which provides the vision and guidance for creating for an interconnected regional network throughout Chittenden County.

Local Motion launched its **Close the Gaps Campaign** in 2007 to complete important missing links in the regional nonmotorized transportation network and to educate residents about our regional system. At the project's kick-off summit, more than 70 participants analyzed regional maps and created a prioritized list of projects to focus bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts.



Completing these projects will not only create a safer and well-connected system, but will also improve the environmental, community, personal, and economic health of the region.

Given Chittenden County's momentum and successes in creating walkable and bikeable communities, there are numerous opportunities to expand on our efforts. As a part of the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation, the following critical projects were identified by partners as those that would make the most immediate impact in providing safe, convenient, and logical connections throughout Chittenden County (see Appendix A for project location map):

- **Route 15 Corridor:** In 2008 the CCMPO completed a scoping study of the Route 15 corridor from the city of Winooski through the towns of Colchester, Essex, and Essex Junction to the border of Jericho. The vision is for the corridor to develop into a safe and efficient multimodal corridor with a well connected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as convenient and effective transit services. This principal arterial currently lacks continuous, consistent and safe infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians. Previous studies explored using the existing rail line as a potential bicycle/pedestrian facility to connect the towns along the corridor.
- **Winooski River Crossings:** A 2003 scoping study completed by the CCMPO examined alternatives for a bicycle/pedestrian crossing over the Winooski River that would connect the cities of Burlington and Winooski. At present people illegally use an active railroad bridge which provides a more direct connection than the vehicle bridge. The vehicle bridge is the only other direct connection between the cities and has 4 travel lanes, two 5-foot sidewalks and no shoulders or bicycle lanes.
- **I-89 Exit 14/Route 2 Interchange:** A recently completed CCMPO study examined roadway alternatives to improve traffic flow near a shopping center located at the I-89 Exit 14 interchange with Route 2. The project area—the border of the cities of Burlington and South Burlington—experiences one of the highest daily volumes of vehicles in the state and is the only transportation link between the two cities in that area. Green bike lanes over the interstate bridge were a national pilot project, but bicycle and pedestrian safety is compromised due to the merging traffic patterns at this cloverleaf interchange.
- **Route 2 Corridor:** A corridor study was completed in 2007 for US Route 2 from the city of Burlington to the town of Williston. The project identified creating a safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian network as an objective and a number of recommendations were offered, including intersection improvements, enhancing and linking existing facilities, and creating complementary facilities for different types of users.
- **Champlain Path:** The CCMPO's 2004 Champlain Path Feasibility Study examined shared use path options such as a rail-with-trail corridor that would connect the towns of Charlotte and Shelburne with the cities of Burlington and South Burlington as a way for bicyclists and pedestrians to avoid the heavily traveled Route 7 corridor. This 10-mile



path would parallel the Vermont Railways line and be a southerly extension of the existing Burlington Waterfront Bike Path along the Lake Champlain waterfront, using either the rail or utility rights-of-way.

- **Muddy Brook Connector:** A 2006 CCMPO study examined alternatives to connect the path networks of South Burlington and Williston, particularly crossings over Muddy Brook. This is a critical component of the statewide Cross Vermont Trail.
- **Cross Vermont Trail:** When complete, this project will provide a 75-mile east-west connection across the entire state using both on and off-road facilities, including rail corridors such as the 36-mile Montpelier-Wells River Railroad bed. The Cross Vermont Trail Association was formed with the mission to “assist municipalities, recreation groups, and landowners in the creation and management of a four-season, multi-use trail across the state of Vermont for public recreation, alternative transportation, and awareness of our natural and cultural heritage.” While one-third of the trail has been designated or currently exists, there are a number of crucial pieces—including some in Chittenden County—that have yet to be completed.
- **Colchester-South Hero Causeway and Bike Ferry:** During the summer months Local Motion operates a small ferry for Island Line Trail users to cross a gap in the 5-mile Colchester-South Hero Causeway. In 2009 the ferry logged 6,996 boardings over 13 weekend days in August and early September. For the past six years the Bike Ferry has been linking the two towns—and two counties—in a very unique, but limited way. This project would improve facilities on the causeway and at the gap for ferry operations and emergency/maintenance vehicles on this popular route.
- **Burlington Waterfront Bike Path:** This popular 7.5-mile shared use path, which joins the Colchester-South Hero Causeway, meanders along the shores of Lake Champlain and hosts 150,000 users each year. Years of use and limited maintenance funds have brought the path to a point of necessary rehabilitation. Improvements include trail widening in high-use areas, removing safety hazards, and providing gravel shoulders for joggers when feasible.
- **Lake Champlain Bikeways:** This public/private partnership has created a bicycle network of more than 1,300 miles, providing connections between Vermont, New York and Quebec. In 1999 Lake Champlain Bikeways was awarded Millennium Legacy Trail status, highlighting the local, regional, and national importance of this network. This system can be combined with the Cross Vermont Trail and Quebec’s La Route Verte to create an unparalleled international bicycling experience.
- **Education & Enforcement Programs:** A number of programs developed by partner organizations are designed to educate pedestrians and bicyclists about their rights and responsibilities, as well as to encourage walking and biking as part of a healthy, active lifestyle. Enforcement of laws and regulations is also important to protect the safety and



convenience of the traveling public, regardless of mode. Local Motion’s Five Point Platform for Safe Streets calls for specific actions to improve safety, outreach, enforcement and personal responsibility. There is great potential for more people to choose walking and biking when provided with helpful information, taught useful skills, and encouraged to try new ways of getting around our towns.

- **CCMPO Sidewalk Program:** This five-year old competitive grant program awards funding to local communities for sidewalk engineering and construction. To date 16 projects have been awarded, and the 2010 Campaign provides an opportunity to expand this popular program to include bicycle facilities and improve our region’s integrated active transportation network.

The following budget identifies the estimated costs for each project. Costs from previous studies have been updated 15% annually to reflect rising construction costs based on a survey by the US Department of Transportation.¹²

Project	Cost (Year of Study)	2008 Cost Estimate*
Route 15 Corridor	\$7,932,000 (2008)	\$8,000,000 [†]
Winooski River Crossing	\$1,600,000 (2003)	\$3,200,000
I-89 Exit 14/Route 2 Interchange	(scoping underway)	\$7,500,000
Route 2 Corridor	\$7,900,000 (2007)	\$9,100,000
Champlain Path	\$4,800,000 (2004)	\$8,400,000
Muddy Brook Crossing	\$3,200,000 (2006)	\$4,200,000
Cross Vermont Trail	--	\$500,000
Colchester-South Hero Causeway	\$1,000,000 (2007)	\$1,200,000
Burlington Bike Path	\$2,200,000 (2004)	\$3,900,000
Lake Champlain Bikeways	--	\$500,000
Education/Enforcement Programs	--	\$2,500,000
CCMPO Sidewalk Program	\$250,000 (annual program)	\$1,000,000
TOTAL		\$50,000,000

* Estimates based on construction cost increase of 15% annually

[†] This figure does not include costs associated with roadway widening projects that would also accommodate bicyclists

Trail, path and sidewalk systems along corridors such as Route 15 and Route 2 are logical connections between the Burlington urban core and other towns. Expanded and improved walking and bicycling facilities would reduce vehicle congestion and provide safe, convenient alternatives to driving alone, in addition to providing better access to transit stops. To accommodate the greatest number of users, different types of facilities are necessary—on-road, off-road, shared use paths, sidewalks, rail-trails, and rail with trail. Trails must also provide connections to the types of places that people want to visit in order for people to use them.¹³ Not only do trails provide recreation opportunities, but they allow users to access neighborhoods, shopping, dining, and other recreation areas.



THE PARTNERS

There is widespread regional support for the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. The CCMPO, along with 28 of its local and regional partners, each signed resolutions in support of the 2010 Campaign and expressed a willingness to be a part of improving programs and facilities that would benefit active modes of travel (see Appendix B). These resolutions represent 100% support from the stakeholders contacted about this effort. In addition to those signatories, other local stakeholders that would benefit from the 2010 Campaign include students and youth; seniors; the disabled community; refugee communities; and future residents and visitors. The CCMPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Steering Committee, comprised of community residents, member municipalities, local planners, state health and transportation agencies, local advocates, CCTA, CCRPC, and CCMPO Board and committee members, has guided our progress on the 2010 Campaign.

The CCMPO will continue to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The 2008 update to the CCMPO's Regional Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan suggests that funding levels in the TIP for standalone bicycle and pedestrian projects should be on the order of 6-7% of the total TIP obligation. This range was derived from examining the TIP funding obligations for bicycle and pedestrian projects over the past 10 years.

Decisions at the town level are also demonstrating financial support for improvements to bicycling and walking opportunities in Chittenden County. In March 2008 residents in the town of Shelburne passed a \$1.1 million bond for more sidewalks, bike lanes and a path. These facilities will complement projects completed in 2007 and will connect Shelburne with the city of South Burlington. Similarly, the town of Williston passed a \$2.4 million bond in 2004 to improve and expand their bicycle and pedestrian network.

Local Motion

The greater Burlington advocacy organization Local Motion has been responsible for many of the walking, bicycling, and other nonmotorized successes in Chittenden County, and their staff continues to create new tools and programs. On Earth Day, April 22, 2008 Local Motion debuted Trail Finder, a comprehensive, county-wide online trail resource for all nonmotorized activities that was three years in the making. Staff also announced that they will begin the next phase of Trail Finder, which will add on-road facilities as well as off-road trails outside of Chittenden County.



Burlington & Colchester Trail Bridge
Photo: Local Motion



In addition, Local Motion operates a ferry service during the summer months at a gap in the Colchester-South Hero Causeway. For the past six years the bike ferry has been linking the two towns—and two counties—in a very unique, but limited way. In 2009 nearly 7,000 trail users boarded the ferry over 13 weekend days in August and early September. This project is yet another component in the regional Island Line Trail, which was much improved in 2004 with the opening of the Burlington & Colchester Trail Bridge (the former location of the bike ferry) and a half-mile elevated walkway, funded by a federal earmark from then-Representative Bernie Sanders. On July 24, 2004 more than 2,100 bridge crossings were recorded by the CCMPO across the new Burlington & Colchester Trail Bridge, and throughout July 2007 more than 23,000 users were recorded. The Burlington Waterfront Bike Path, located along the shores of Lake Champlain, serves as a vital north-south transportation and recreation resource, particularly with its connection to the Island Line Trail via the Burlington & Colchester Trail Bridge and elevated walkway.

THE BENEFITS

Children/Schools

Many parents continue driving their children to school for a variety of concerns, such as safety. More walking and biking opportunities from neighborhoods to schools will reduce traffic congestion associated with pick-ups and drop-offs. Less congestion means safer access for students and staff, as well as improved air quality. Sidewalk and path projects would also create new opportunities for families who do not own a vehicle. The new opportunities will also help to address the health of our residents, including children. Nearly one-third of school age children in Vermont are overweight or obese. One of the best opportunities to address this epidemic is through regular, routine physical activity like walking or bicycling to school through the Safe Routes to School program, in which 22 Chittenden County schools participate.

Seniors

The Burlington Livable Community Project, spearheaded by AARP Vermont in collaboration with city government and dozens of community stakeholders, is a multi-year effort to assess the needs and resources of our community for our aging population, and offer recommendations on how to continue improving local services, infrastructure and opportunities for our older residents. While residents aged 55 and older will comprise one-fifth of Burlington's population by 2010, many of the same components of a "livable community" that the Project addresses transcend any age boundaries. One such component is access and mobility. Of the 800 local residents over age 45 surveyed, 75% rely on a personal vehicle as their primary mode of transportation.¹⁴ Active transportation projects could allow for more seniors to choose walking or biking for many of their trips.

Most residents who were surveyed noted that the sidewalk system is accessible but identified areas that could be improved, such as better lighting and maintenance, more benches for resting,



better clearing of ice, snow and debris, conflicts with bicyclists and skateboarders, crosswalk safety and duration of timed crossings. Limited transportation options, including walking, biking, and public transit, hinder community engagement and participation in everyday activities. The project encourages planning road designs such as the Complete Streets concept that support walking, biking, and other alternative modes.

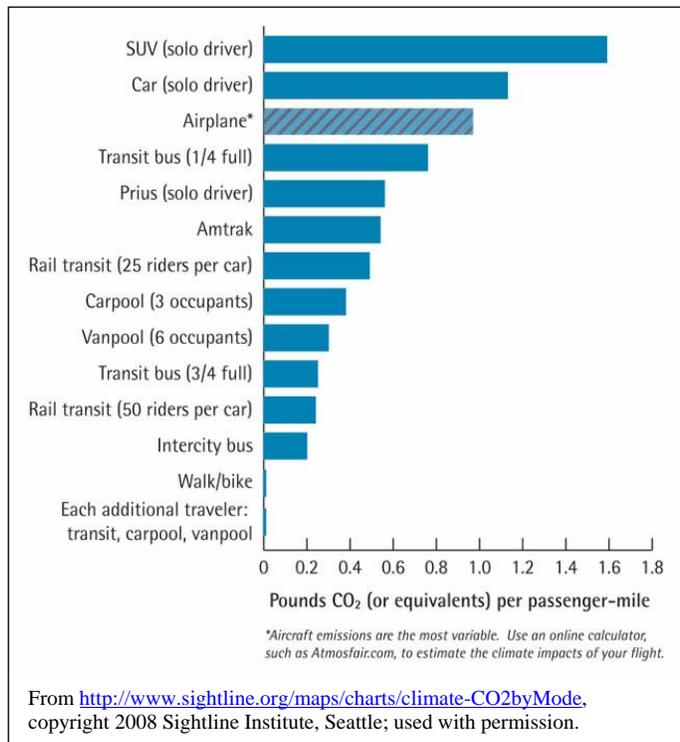
Disabled and Alternately-abled Groups

Improving facilities for walking and biking makes it easier for everyone to reach their destinations. When sidewalks, paths, and trails connect in a sensible, efficient, and safe manner, people with special needs may experience greater freedom and mobility. This becomes especially important given Vermont’s varied seasons. Proper maintenance and repair of existing facilities would reduce or eliminate the number of barriers between people and places.

Air Quality

With the US Environmental Protection Agency’s recent strengthening of federal air quality standards for ozone, Chittenden County moves ever closer to falling out of attainment (i.e., violate the standard for ozone). The air quality in Chittenden County currently meets the new standard, but our region may be at risk should the standard be lowered again or if we experience hot summers or an increase in overall air pollution.

The 2010 Campaign could be a valuable component in addressing our region’s overall air quality. Since Vermont’s transportation sector is responsible for 44% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the state and continues to increase at a rate of 1.1% annually,¹⁵ expanded opportunities for walking and biking could lead to commuters choosing new ways of getting to work. These active modes can also directly address transportation fuel use. Consumption of both gasoline and diesel in Vermont is on the rise (1.4% and 2.7% annually) as a result of an increase in overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which jumped from 3 billion in 1974 to nearly 8 billion in 2005.^{16, 17} With recent increases in gas prices, however, VMT is likely decreasing.





Bicycling and walking are the least polluting and most energy efficient forms of transportation. As such, there is great potential for increased walking and bicycling to help our region remain in attainment. Carbon dioxide accounts for about 96% of greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.¹⁸ Creating more opportunities to choose walking and biking over driving will reduce local tailpipe emissions, particularly during the warm summer months which have the greatest potential to impact our air quality.

Community Health

Improved biking and walking can also directly address our community's health. Ground-level ozone is formed when high concentrations of pollution—typically from vehicles, power plants and manufacturing—are exposed to sunlight. This type of air pollution is harmful to respiratory systems, particularly in children and seniors, and has been linked to such issues as bronchitis, aggravated asthma, nonfatal heart attacks and premature death. While the air quality in Chittenden County currently meets the official standard from an ozone perspective, we are at risk should the standards be tightened as the scientific community has recommended. Walking and biking removes vehicles from our roads, reduces the occurrence of ground-level ozone, and lowers the costs of addressing air quality-related health issues. According to the EPA, the preventative health benefits of its new air quality standards are valued between \$2 billion and \$19 billion.

Getting our residents to walk and bike more also addresses the obesity epidemic. The obesity rate for Vermont adults increased by 77% from 1990 to 2002, and in 2005 more than half (56%) of Vermont adults were overweight or obese.¹⁹ Annual medical expenses related to adult obesity in Vermont total about \$141 million. Among school-age youth in grades 8-12, 24% of Vermont students are above a healthy weight, and 29% of low-income children age 2-5 were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

CHITTENDEN COUNTY IS READY!

With strong partnerships, a proven commitment to walking and biking, visionary plans for our region, and a reputation as a model community, Chittenden County is ready to capitalize on the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. Critical projects have been identified by advocates and the public, and many of those projects have already been planned and studied. Residents and visitors are eager for a comprehensive regional network that is within our reach—if we complete the gaps in the existing infrastructure and continue improving and expanding on the current walking and bicycling network. It's not just about total mileage—it's about meaningful mileage and logical connections.

For more information about Chittenden County's efforts in the 2010 Campaign visit the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization at www.ccmpto.org/BikePed or contact them at 802-660-4071 x17 or bdavis@ccmpto.org.



ENDNOTES

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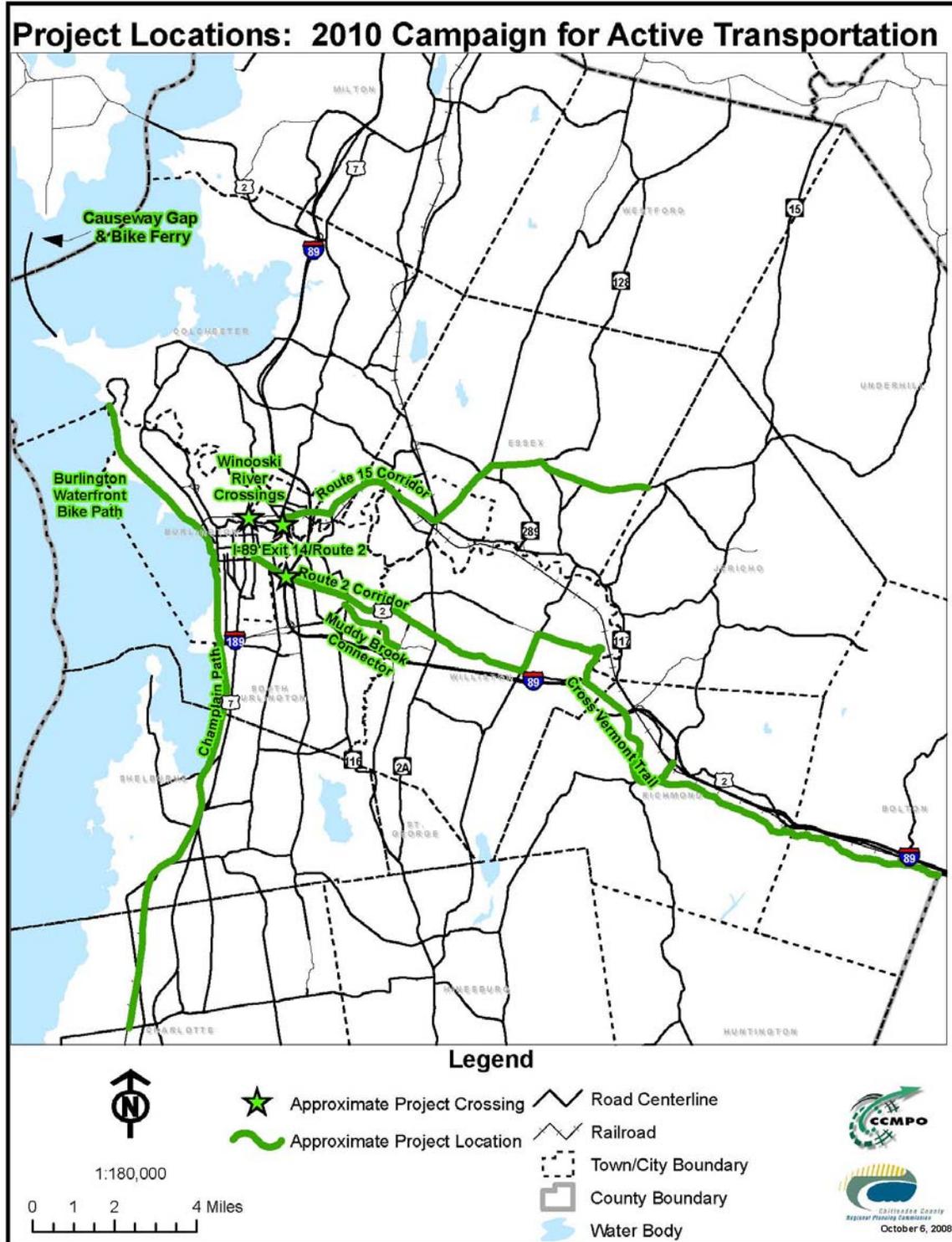
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APPENDIX A





APPENDIX B—Resolutions in support of Chittenden County’s participation in 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation

Resolution to Support Participation in Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation

WHEREAS, nearly half of all trips in the United States are three miles or less¹ and that with significant investment in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, there is an opportunity to demonstrate a substantial shift to these healthy, non-motorized transportation modes; and

WHEREAS, bicyclists and pedestrians represent 14 percent of all traffic fatalities in the United States, yet receive less than one percent of all federal road spending²; and

WHEREAS, SAFETEA-LU created the *Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program* to construct a network of nonmotorized transportation infrastructure facilities in order to demonstrate the extent to which bicycling and walking can carry a significant part of the transportation load, thus playing a major role in transportation solutions; and

WHEREAS, four communities (Columbia, Missouri; Marin County, California; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; and Sheboygan County, Wisconsin) were selected to each receive grants of \$6,250,000 per fiscal year for four years to participate in the *Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program*; and

WHEREAS, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy seeks to expand this program in the next federal transportation reauthorization to include at least 40 communities, with \$50 million per community over six years to promote active transportation (trails, biking and walking) for mobility; and

WHEREAS, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has identified the Burlington, Vermont area as a potential candidate for the expanded program, called the *2010 Campaign for Active Transportation*; and

WHEREAS, the greatest potential to increase walking and bicycling in Vermont is within the urban and suburban communities of Chittenden County – the largest metropolitan area of the State; and

WHEREAS, the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) has charged its Pedestrian/Bicycle Committee to update the 2003 Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, a plan based on constructing inter-municipal links and to close the gaps in the regional pedestrian/bike path network; and

WHEREAS, our region benefits from active bike-pedestrian-trails groups in most municipalities and a strong regional advocacy organization Local Motion; and

¹ FHWA. 2006. Federal Highway Administration University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation: Student Workbook (second edition). Report No. HRT-05-133.

² STPP. 2003. The \$300 Billion Question: Are We Buying a Better Transportation System? www.transact.org/library/300B/Executive_Summary.pdf. Last accessed August 23, 2007.



WHEREAS, AARP has recently completed the Burlington Livable Community Project Action Plan which calls for significant improvements to the city's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Greater Burlington municipalities in Chittenden County continue to plan and develop active transportation infrastructure to:

- improve air quality,
- relieve congestion,
- promote healthy lifestyles,
- support public transportation
- improve transportation efficiency,
- create safer alternative transportation routes,
- reduce the burden on infrastructure maintenance,
- promote economic vitality, and
- invigorate our sense of community.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED: We the undersigned parties strongly support Chittenden County's participation in the *2010 Campaign for Active Transportation* for the significant non-motorized transportation opportunities it will provide.

Adopted this 19th day of September 2007 by:

Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization


Jeffrey B. Carr, Chair

Date 9/24/07



The following municipalities, organizations and agencies each presented signed resolutions to the CCMPO for inclusion in this effort:

- City of Burlington
- City of South Burlington
- City of Winooski
- Town of Bolton
- Town of Charlotte
- Town of Colchester
- Town of Essex
- Town of Hinesburg
- Town of Huntington
- Town of Jericho
- Town of Richmond
- Town of Milton
- Town of Shelburne
- Town of St. George
- Town of Underhill
- Town of Westford
- Town of Williston
- Village of Essex Junction
- Vermont Department of Health
- AARP Vermont
- Burlington Bicycle Council
- Burlington Walking Work Group
- Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- Chittenden County Transportation Authority
- Lake Champlain Bikeways
- Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Local Motion
- Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition