Public Transit Policy Plan

October 16, 2019

Addison County Regional Planning Commission- TAC

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vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP

Existing Goals: 24 V.S.A. §5089

(a) The Agency of Transportation's Public Transit Plan for the State shall be amended no less frequently than every five years. **The development of the State Public Transit Plan shall include consultation with public transit providers, the metropolitan planning organization, and the regional planning commissions and their transportation advisory committees to ensure the integration of transit planning with the transportation planning initiative as well as conformance with chapter 117 of this title (municipal and regional planning and development).** Regional plans, together with the Agency of Transportation's Public Transit Plan shall function to coordinate the provision of public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit regional public transit services, in order to ensure effective local, regional, and statewide delivery of services.

Goals of the Project

- Develop a 10-year vision for improved transit in Vermont
- Update state policies, goals, and objectives for public transportation
- Incorporate human service transportation coordination plan into the PTPP
- Identify components of an enhanced statewide transit system in Vermont
- Engage the public and key stakeholders

Project Tasks

1	2	3	4	5
Summer-Fall 2018 **PROJECT INITIATION**	Winter 2019 **EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS**	Winter-Spring 2019 **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**	Summer 2019 **RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION**	Fall 2019 **FINAL REPORT**

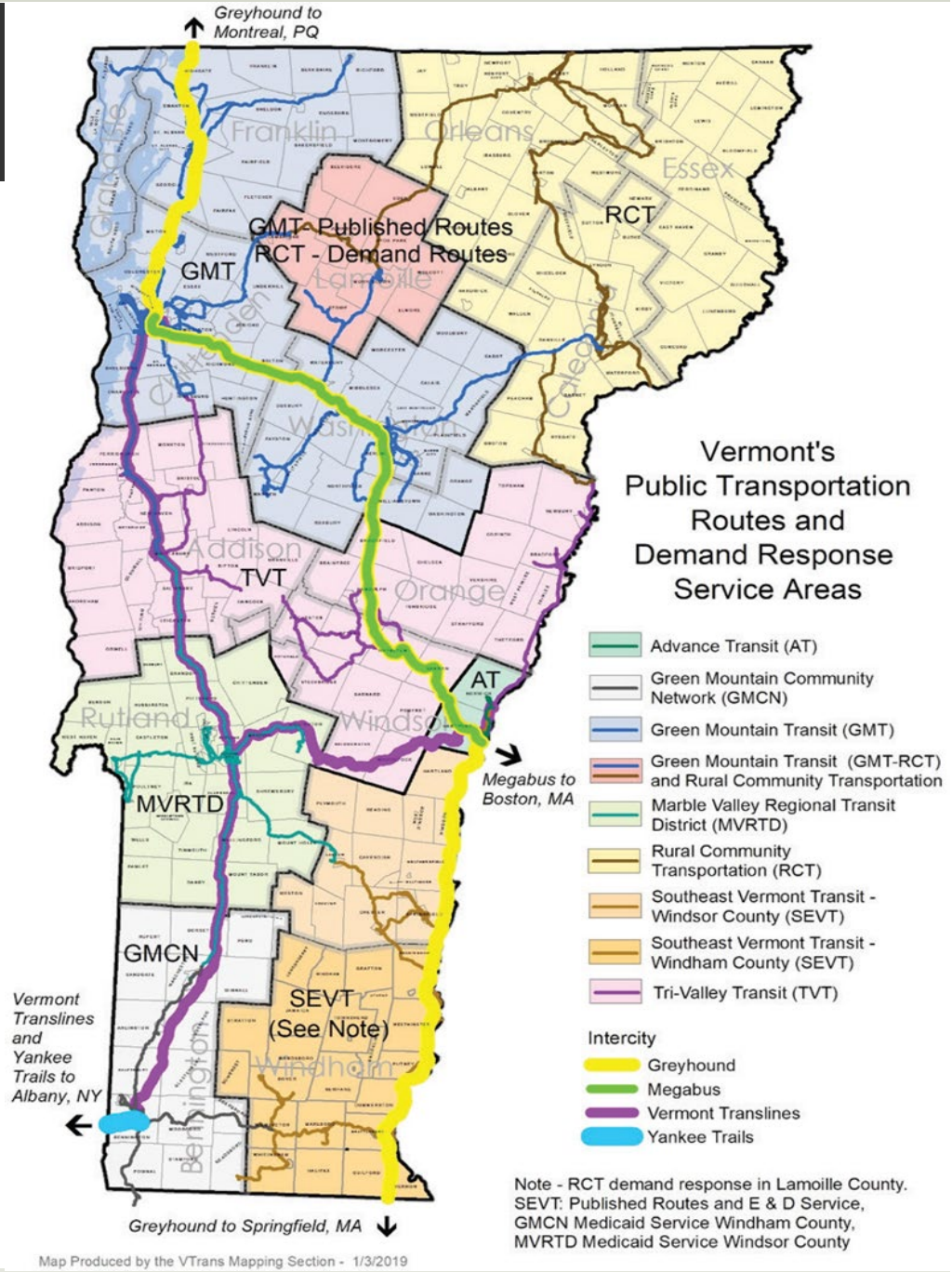
PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Outreach Activities

- 11 Regional Forums (Fall 2018)
- MetroQuest survey (Fall 2018) + (Summer 2019)
- 9 Stakeholder interviews (Winter 2019)
- 9 E&D Committee assessments (Spring 2019)
- 3 Study Advisory Committee meetings (Feb + April + October)
- Appearance on VPR's Vermont Edition (July 2019)
- TPI, PTAC, DAIL, VPTA presentations
- Project website https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP

Transit Service

- Local circulators and shuttles, commuter routes, seasonal fixed routes
- Mobility management-Go Vermont, vanpools, carpools, and travel information. Park & Rides
- ADA complementary paratransit services in urbanized areas, deviated fixed route services elsewhere
- Elders & Persons with Disabilities transportation program
- Services provided to clients of human service agencies
- Intercity and intercity feeder service



Regional Existing Conditions

- Current transit services (local, regional, intercity)
- Land use patterns – challenge for transit in rural areas
- Important trip generators
  - Employment and retail
  - Medical, educational and human services
- Demographic analysis of region
  - Population density
  - Employment
  - Transit propensity (composite index)
  - Characteristics (age, disability, auto ownership, income)
  - Commuting to key job centers

Local Transit

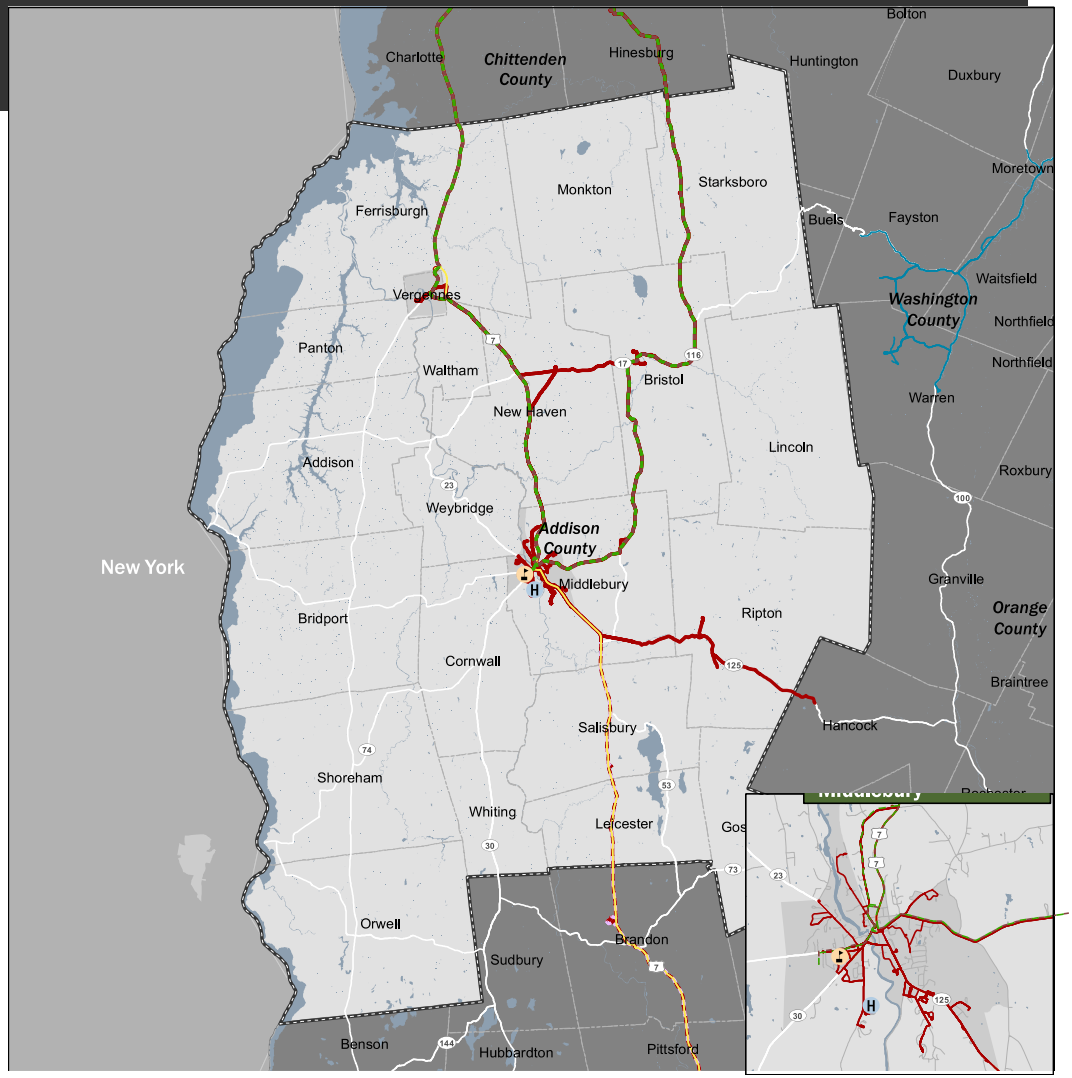
ACTR Local Shuttles

- Middlebury (5 routes)
- Tri-Town
- Snow Bowl (seasonal)

ACTR Commuter Routes

- 116 to Burlington via Hinesburg (with GMT)
- Rutland Connector (with MVRTD)
- LINK to Burlington (GMT weekday/ACTR Saturday)

Vermont Translines

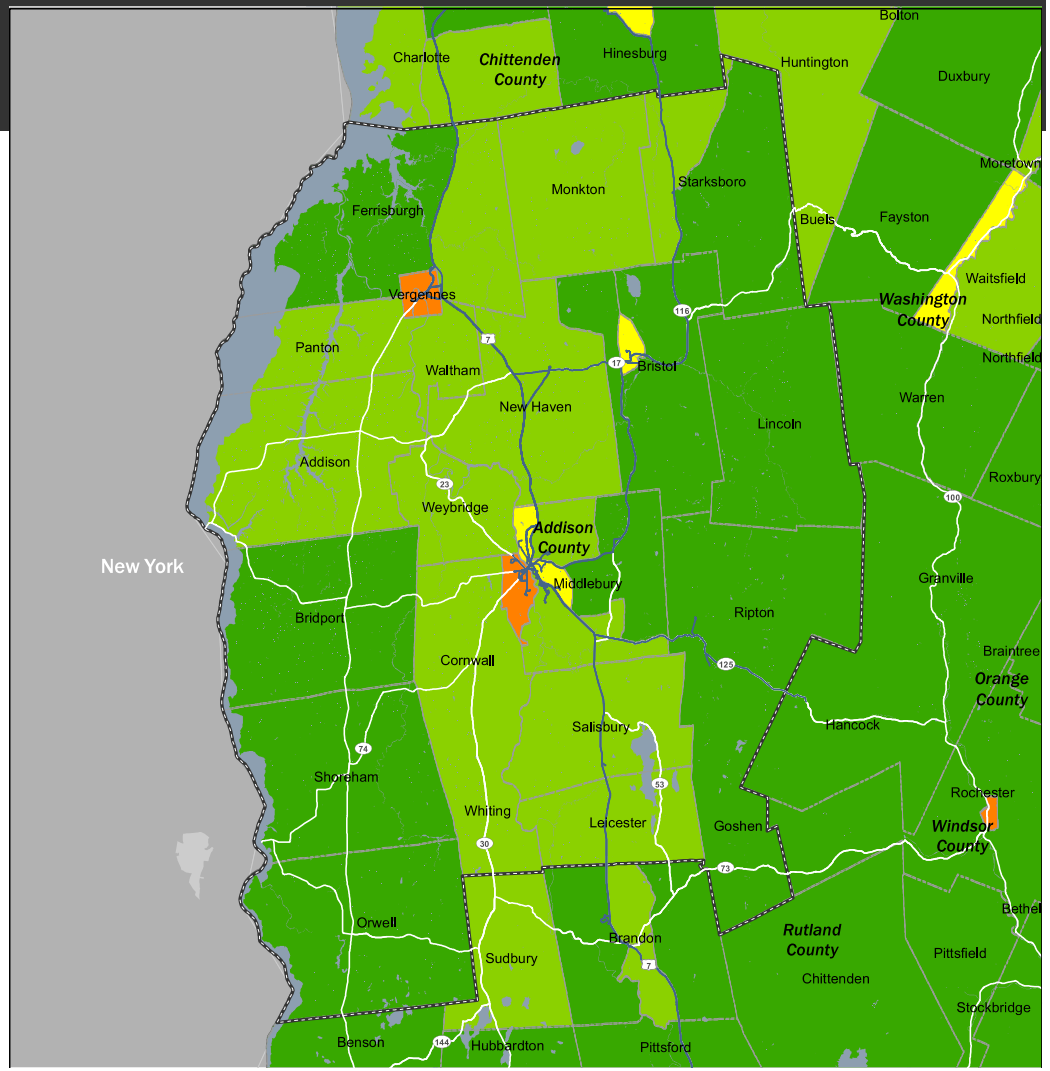


Population Density

Moderate density in Vergennes and Middlebury

Low density in Bristol and East Middlebury

Rural density in the rest of the region



99

500 - 999

1,000 - 4,999

5,000 +

Regional Planning Commission Boundary

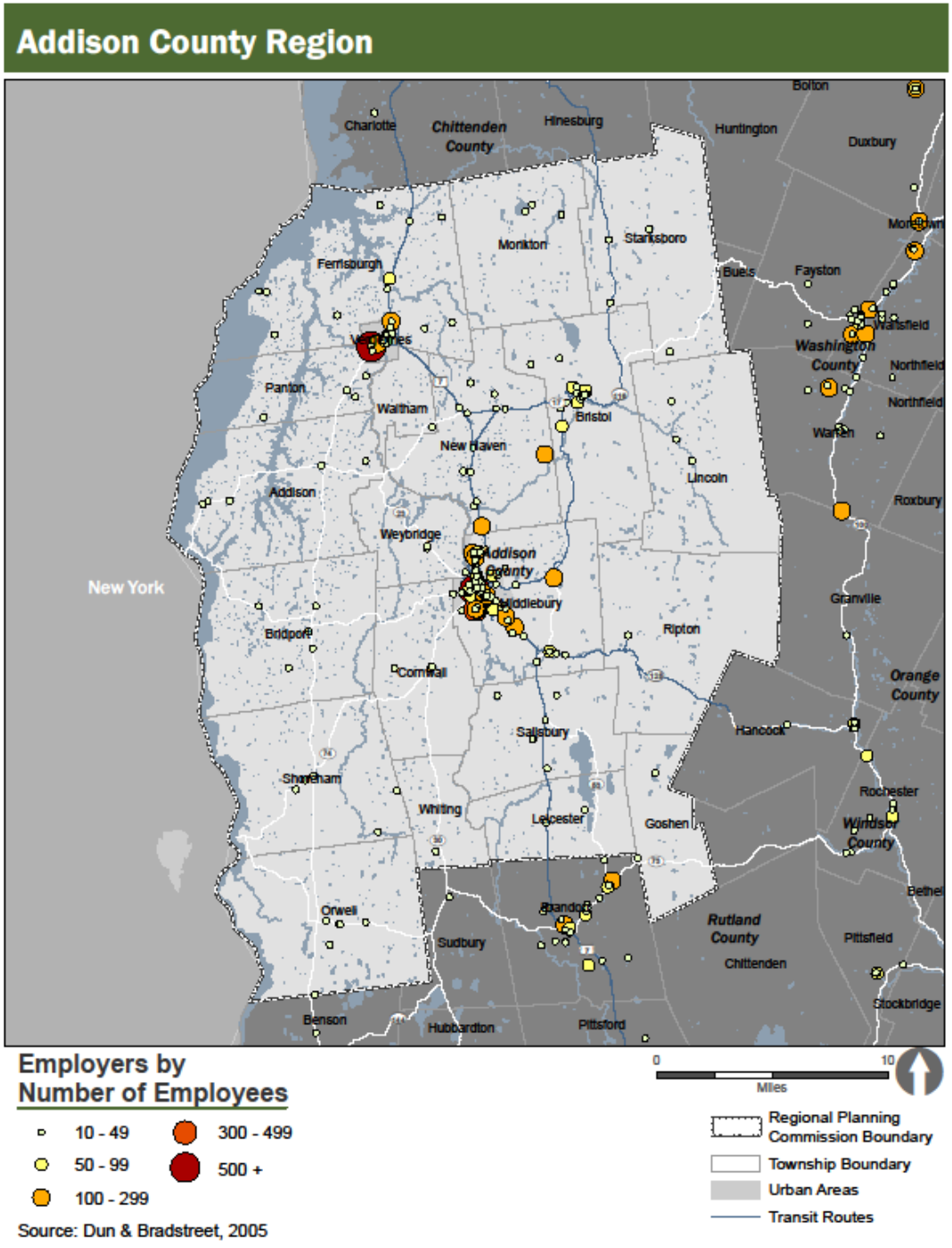
Block Group

Transit Routes

Employment

Larger employers (100+ employees) mainly in Vergennes, Middlebury

Smaller employers(<100 employees) scattered throughout county



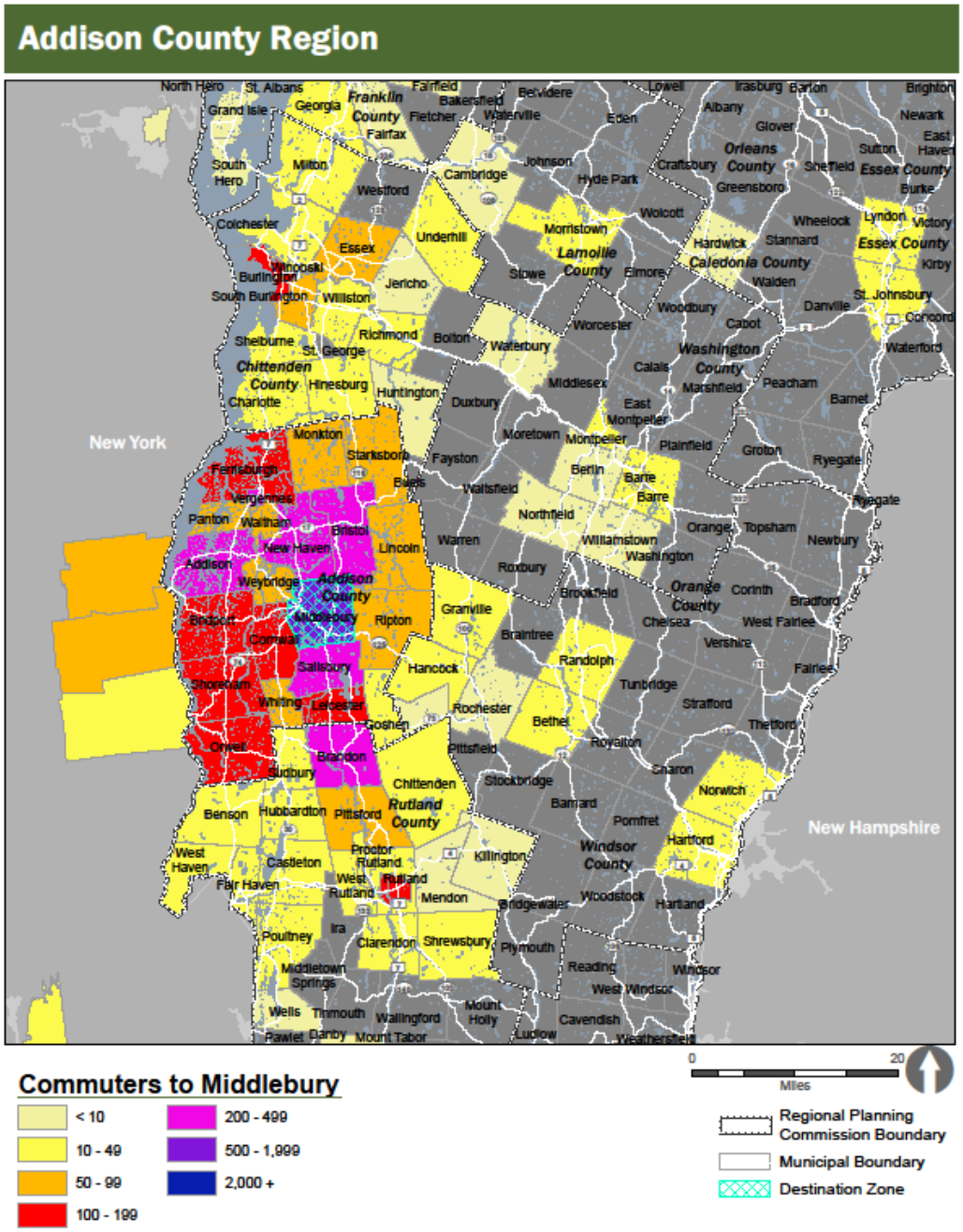
Commuting

Most commuters to Middlebury are from Addison County communities

Significant numbers also from

- Burlington area
- New York State
- Rutland County

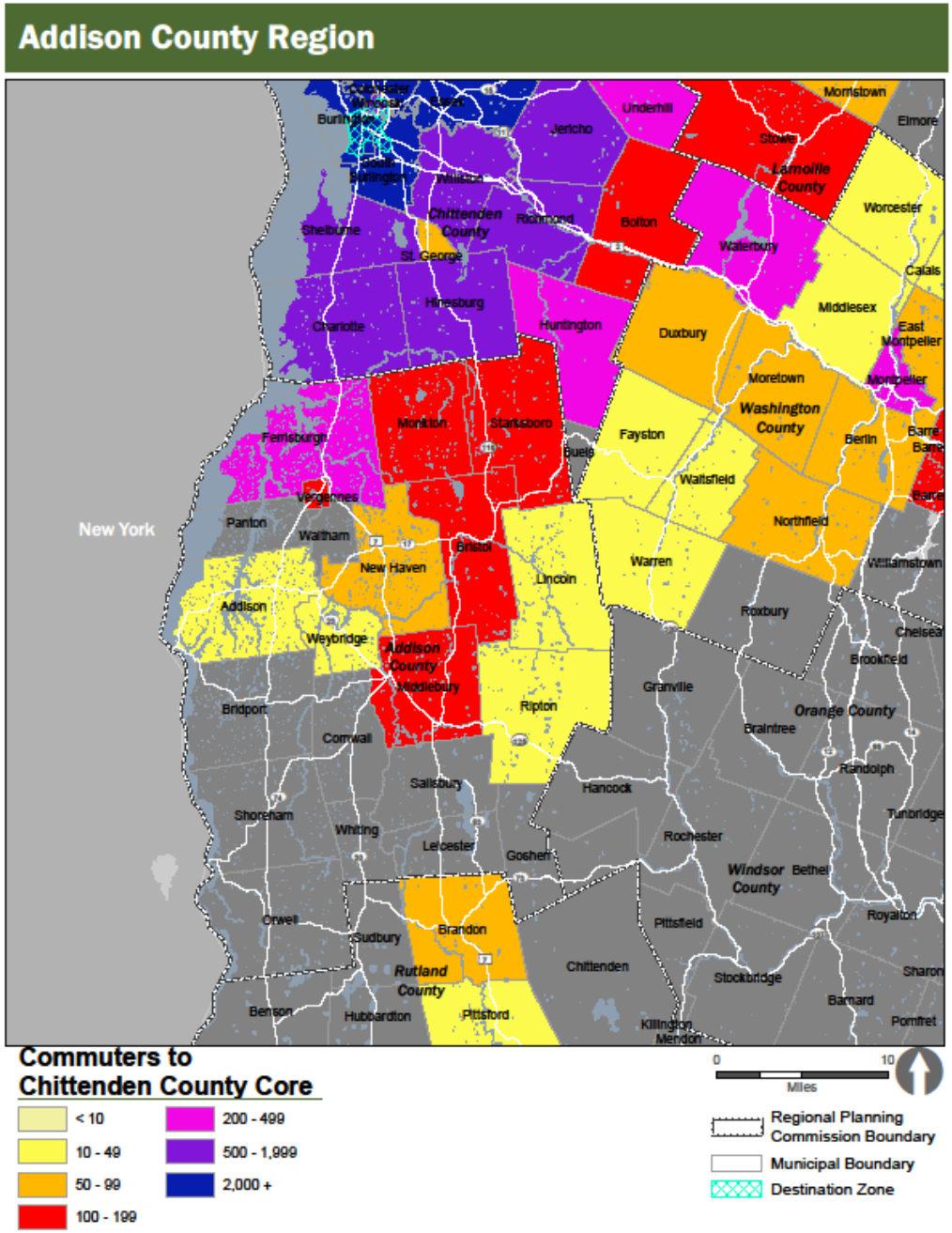
Commuters from many other towns, but in smaller numbers



Commuting

Most commuters to Burlington area from Addison County come from Middlebury and northern communities

- Ferrisburgh
- Monkton
- Starksboro
- Bristol



Transit Propensity

Youth

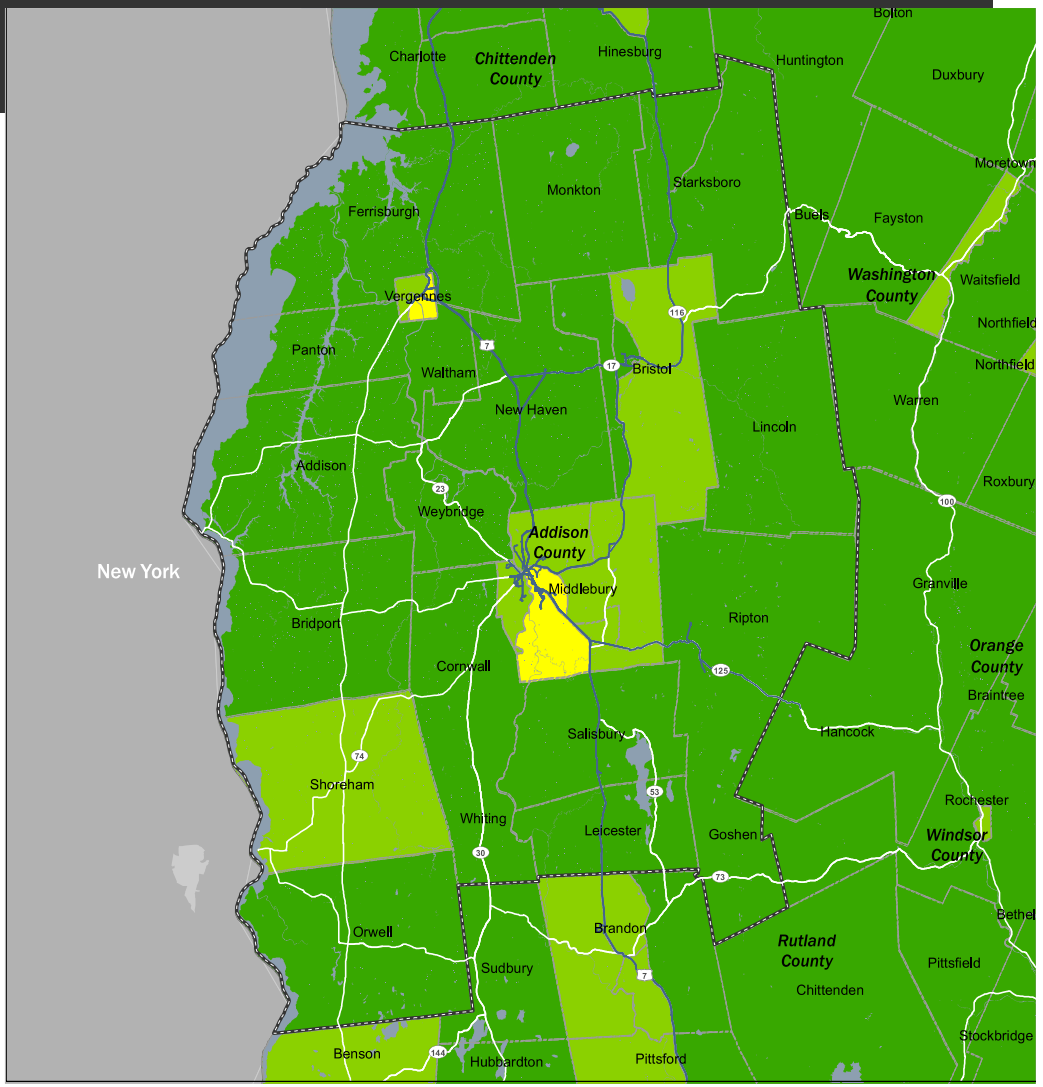
Older adults

Persons with disabilities

Households with 0-1 cars

Low-income persons

Portions of Vergennes and Middlebury only areas with even moderate transit propensity



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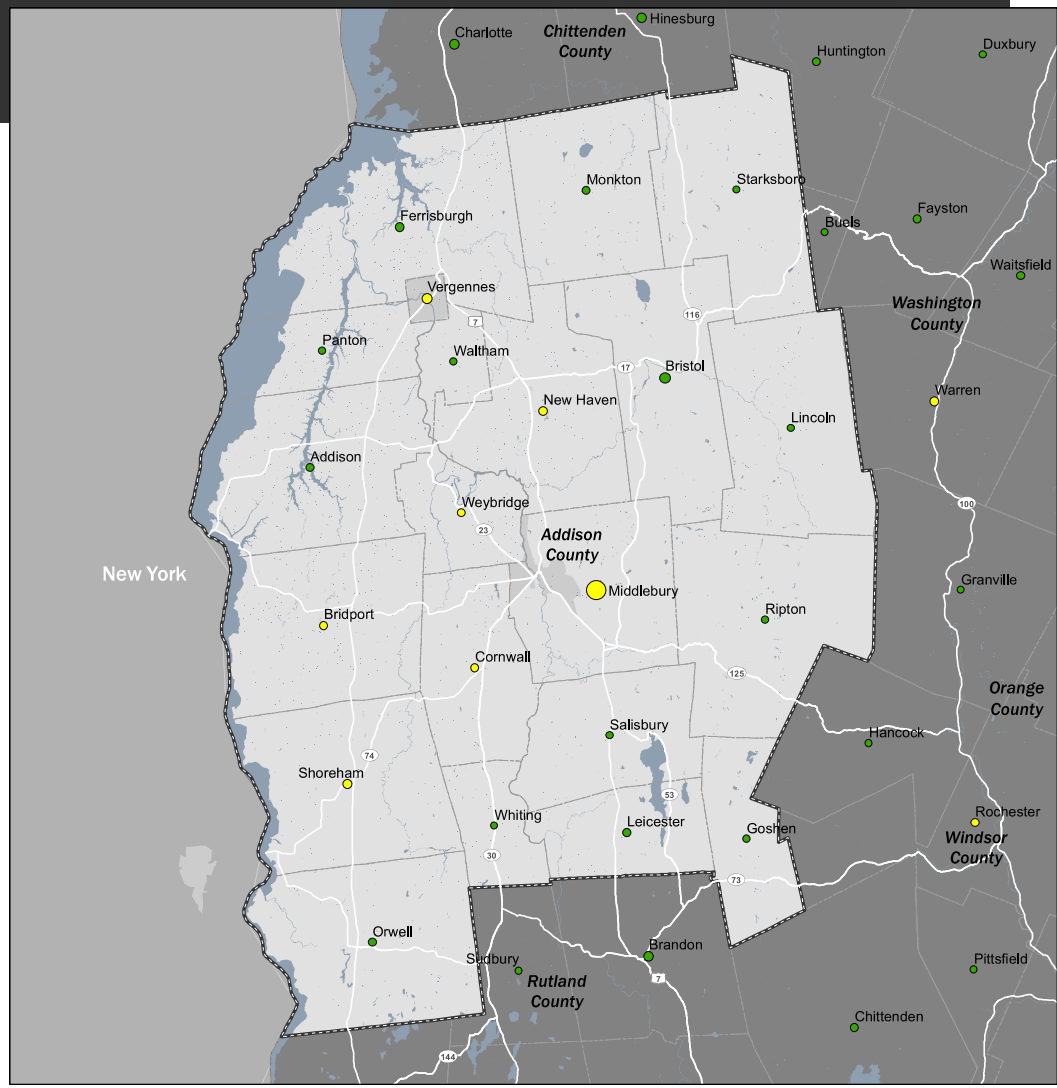
Older Adults

Focus on people over age 80 as younger seniors overwhelmingly continue to drive

Concentrations seen in Middlebury and Vergennes; very small numbers elsewhere

Significant rise in the over-80 population expected in next 10-20 years



1x - 2x Average

> 2x Average

250

750

%

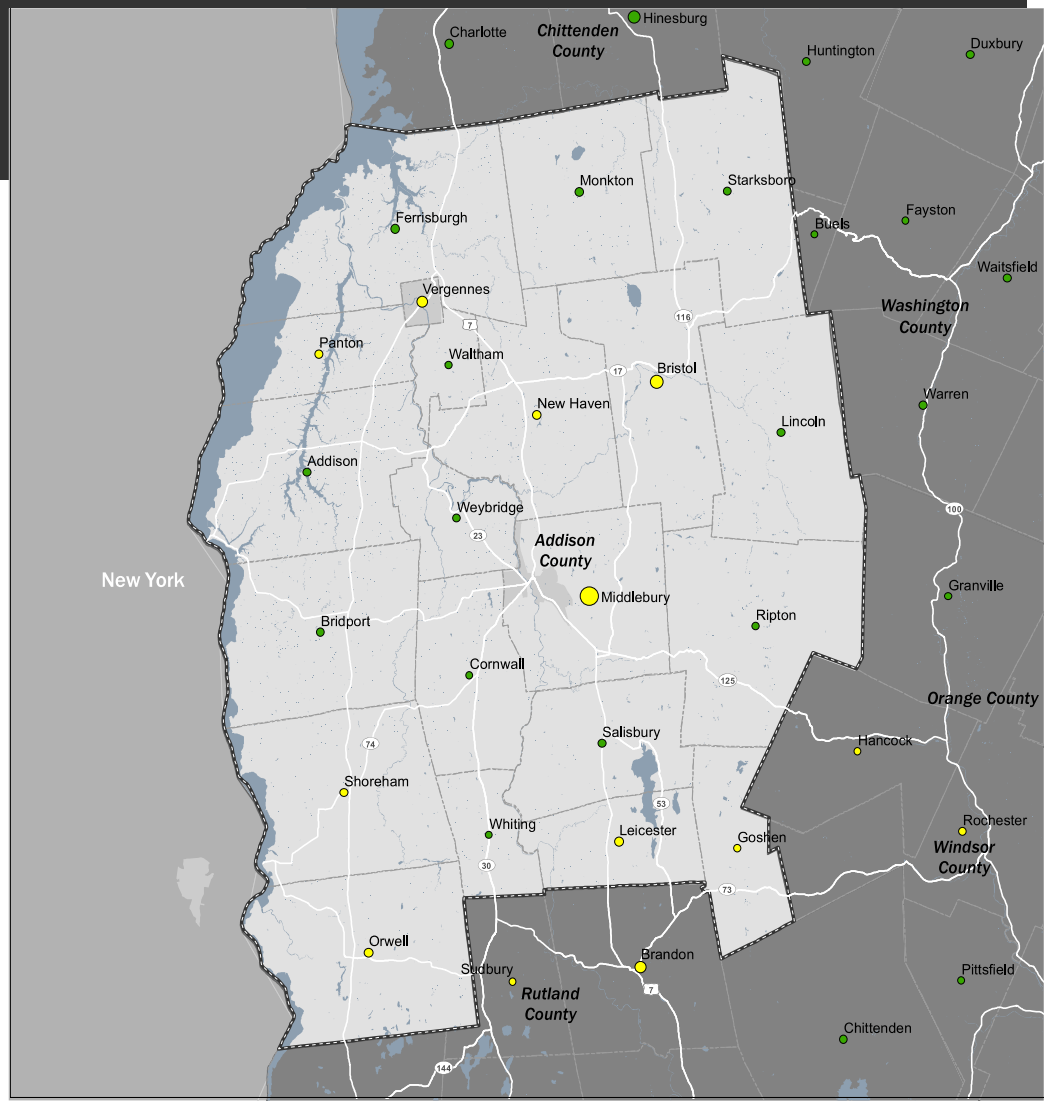
People with Disabilities

Includes four types of disabilities

- Hearing
- Vision
- Cognition
- Walking

Concentrations

- Middlebury
- Bristol
- Vergennes



age

1x - 2x Average 750

2x - 3x Average 2,250

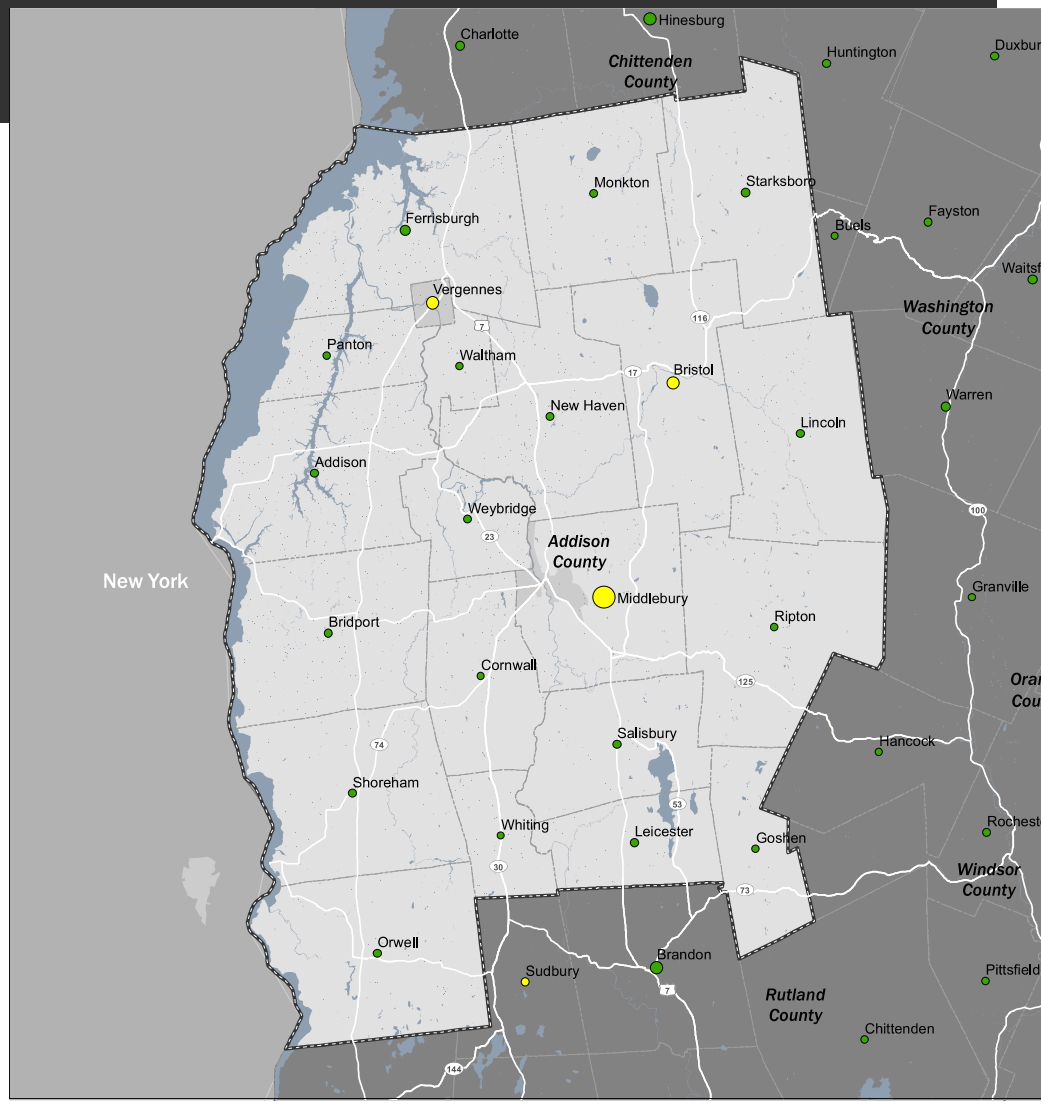
VT Average = 14.0%

Auto Ownership

Considered households with no vehicles and those with two or more members with only one vehicle

Concentrations

- Middlebury
- Bristol
- Vergennes



Total Households with 1 Person & 0 Cars or 2+ People & 0-1 Cars

1,500

500

1x - 2x Average

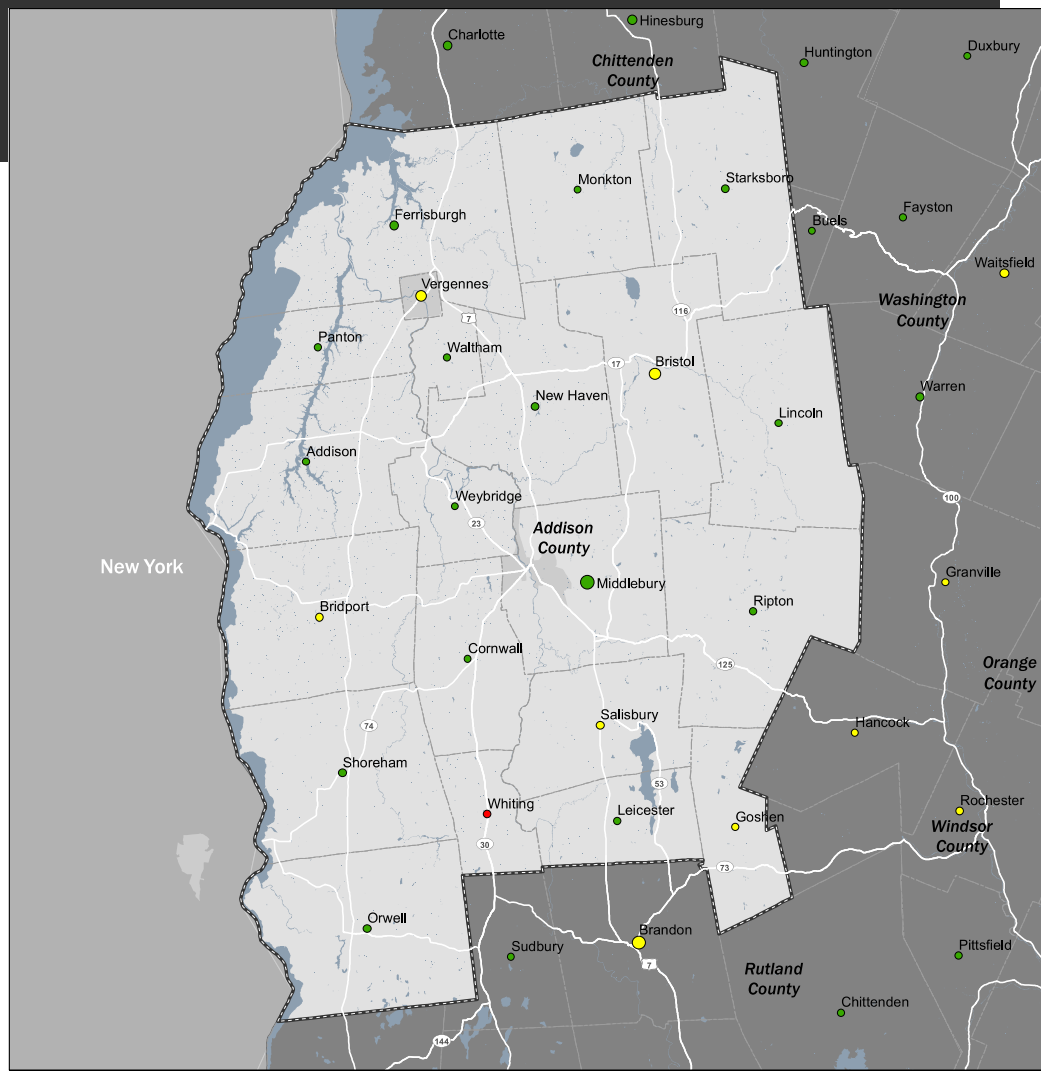
> 2x Average

VT Average = 20.6%

Medicaid Recipients

Significantly above state average in Whiting, though small population

Vergennes and Bristol have moderate concentrations



- Below Average
- 1x - 2x Average
- > 2x Average

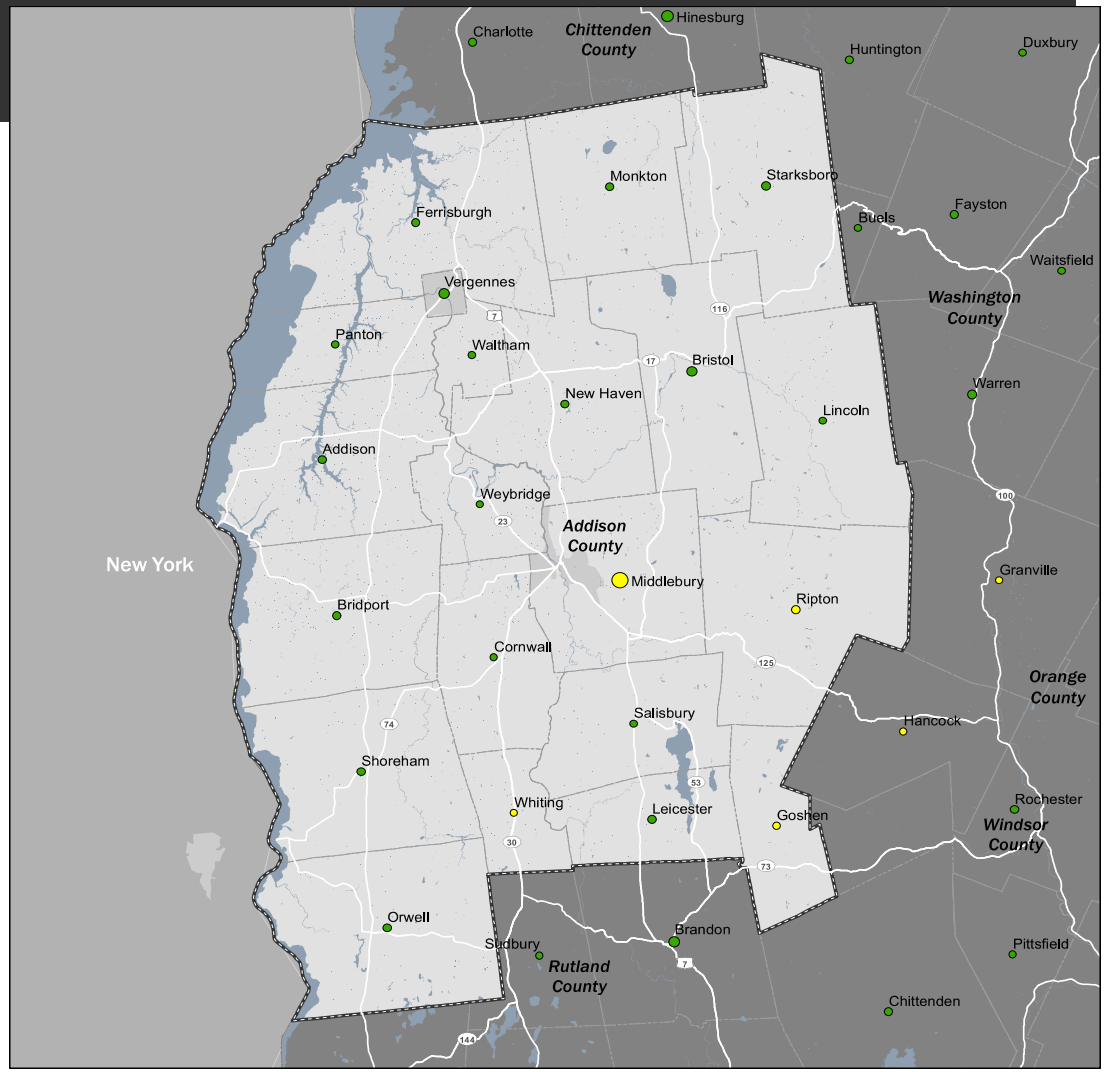
VT Average = 27.2%

1,750
3,500
5,250

Poverty Level

Used federal definition of poverty

Relatively little poverty in Addison County overall; only Middlebury shows a significant number



	age	
1x - 2x Average	625	
> 2x Average	1,875	

VT Average = 11.6%

Themes Across Regions

- Workforce development/access to jobs are transportation priorities
- Rural areas need options
- More integrated walk/bike/transit/driving networks would encourage transit use
- "First mile/last mile" needs
- Existing services and resources may not be well known

Themes from E&D Committees

- Trip limits in some regions not compatible with needs
  - Critical medical care and adult day health
  - Shopping and congregate meals
  - Wellness trips
- Financial resources to bring other human service partners into the program are not available
- Volunteer driver programs are crucial and need strengthening

Needs Assessment

- Current services – strengths and weaknesses
- Geographic service gaps
- Temporal service gaps
- Trip type gaps
- Accessibility needs
- Technology challenges
- Information gaps
- Affordability gaps

Statewide Primary Needs Identified

- Lack of transit access in rural areas
- Lack of resources to meet the needs of vulnerable populations both today and in the future
- Lack of transportation for access to jobs
- In areas that have bus routes, improved service levels and connections are needed

Recommendation Themes

- Addressing aging Vermont
- Expansion of transit access
- Effective outreach and raising awareness
- Using technology to move to next generation of ride scheduling
- Long-term investments

Addressing Aging Vermont

Establish Working Committee with the Agency of Human Services to focus on the issue of mobility for vulnerable Vermonters. The working committee would be led jointly by VTrans and DAIL and include representatives from other state and regional organizations with a stake in issues of aging.

More Comprehensive Planning for E&D by providing a statewide E&D meeting and developing a work plan that would be carried out by all the E&D regions. The goal would be to begin to replicate in all regions of Vermont the data collection process that has been undertaken in Chittenden County and to share best practices having to do with coordination, low-cost trips and volunteer management, etc.

Establish Personal Mobility Accounts to allow individuals to make use of demand response transit services for whatever trip purposes they desired. For this program to function, all Vermont transit providers would need to allow for a "client-pay" billing procedure, as private funds would supplement those available from the E&D program.

Expansion of Transit Access

Spur Growth of Volunteer Driver Programs

1. Create a check box on Vermont vehicle registration forms to sign up as a volunteer driver
2. Streamline the background check process
3. Establish non-monetary incentives for volunteer drivers
4. Increase marketing budget and collaborate with partner organizations
5. Share best practices

Expand Access to Healthcare by partnering with hospitals and health centers to expand Rides to Wellness program statewide, incorporating funding from the healthcare sector to make the program sustainable, once it is established that there is a positive return on investment.

Expansion of Transit Access

Expand Access to Employment

1. Increase awareness of ridesharing options through Go Vermont
2. Engage employers in helping to fund job access transportation
3. Create the "late bus" for shift workers
4. Create partnerships with TNCs where available

Expand Local Connections by exploring the feasibility of expanding local connections such as bike share, scooters, microtransit and other types of feeder service where appropriate.

Expansion of Transit Access

Expand Access to Available Seats in Transit Vehicles by working with transit providers to develop a policy that if a non-eligible rider has origin and destination locations within a short distance, say a tenth of mile, of where eligible riders on a van/volunteer trip are already scheduled to go, that non-eligible rider should be allowed to ride in the vehicle.

Expand Funding Pool Overall by increasing funding for public transit from federal, state, local, private and institutional partner sources.

Outreach and Raising Awareness

Continue Investment in Go Vermont

1. Increase marketing and promote links from others
2. Create interactive map of bus routes
3. Explore new program models and staffing structures for Go Vermont

Document Stories of the Value of Public Transit by producing a series of short videos in each of the regions of Vermont with current users of public transit explaining how it makes a difference in their lives. These videos could be incorporated into the Go Vermont website and shown at Town Meetings when local funding proposals are being discussed.

Encourage All Transit Providers to Establish an "Ambussadors" Program that would be an ongoing initiative for all transit providers.

Outreach and Raising Awareness

Continue and Expand Partnerships and Activities to Raise Awareness by targeting reciprocal relationships with partner organizations.

Create Informational Brochure: "How Transit Works in Vermont" to be available in print form and online, this would explain the basics of public transit, including the types of services available, the roles of VTrans and the public and private transit operators, as well as partnerships with human service agencies and other non-profits.

Engage with Public Media to Spur Discussion and Raise Awareness

Next Generation Ride Scheduling

Using Technology to Move to Next Generation of Ride Scheduling by exploring and piloting a demand response microtransit model that can be expanded to cover all modes of public transit and to handle all funding programs.

1. Multi-program integration (Medicaid, E&D, client-pay, etc.)
2. Multi-resource integration (vans, taxis, volunteer drivers, bus routes, TNCs)

Long-term Concepts

Work with State, Regional and Local Entities toward Transit-Supportive Land Use by continuing to support two objectives in the LRTP:

1. Maintain and strengthen the vitality of Vermont's villages and downtowns.
2. Make transportation investments that promote active transportation and reduce social isolation.

Invest in Workforce Development to Maintain Transit Provider Staffing through the establishment of programs to train drivers and mechanics. The Vermont legislature should also consider changes to the law so that people who acquire commercial driver's license (CDL) credentials while serving in the military can easily qualify for a passenger transportation endorsement with an appropriate level of training.

Support Electrification of the Transit Fleet through theprocurement of electric transit vehicles.

Thank you

- Draft Final report – November 2019
- Statewide presentations- late October-December 2019
- Public Comment period- November- December 2019
- Relevant reports, this presentation, and more, posted at: vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP
- Please forward comments and questions to Jackie Cassino at: jackie.cassino@Vermont.gov