



Public Transit Policy Plan

October 22, 2019

Central Vermont 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

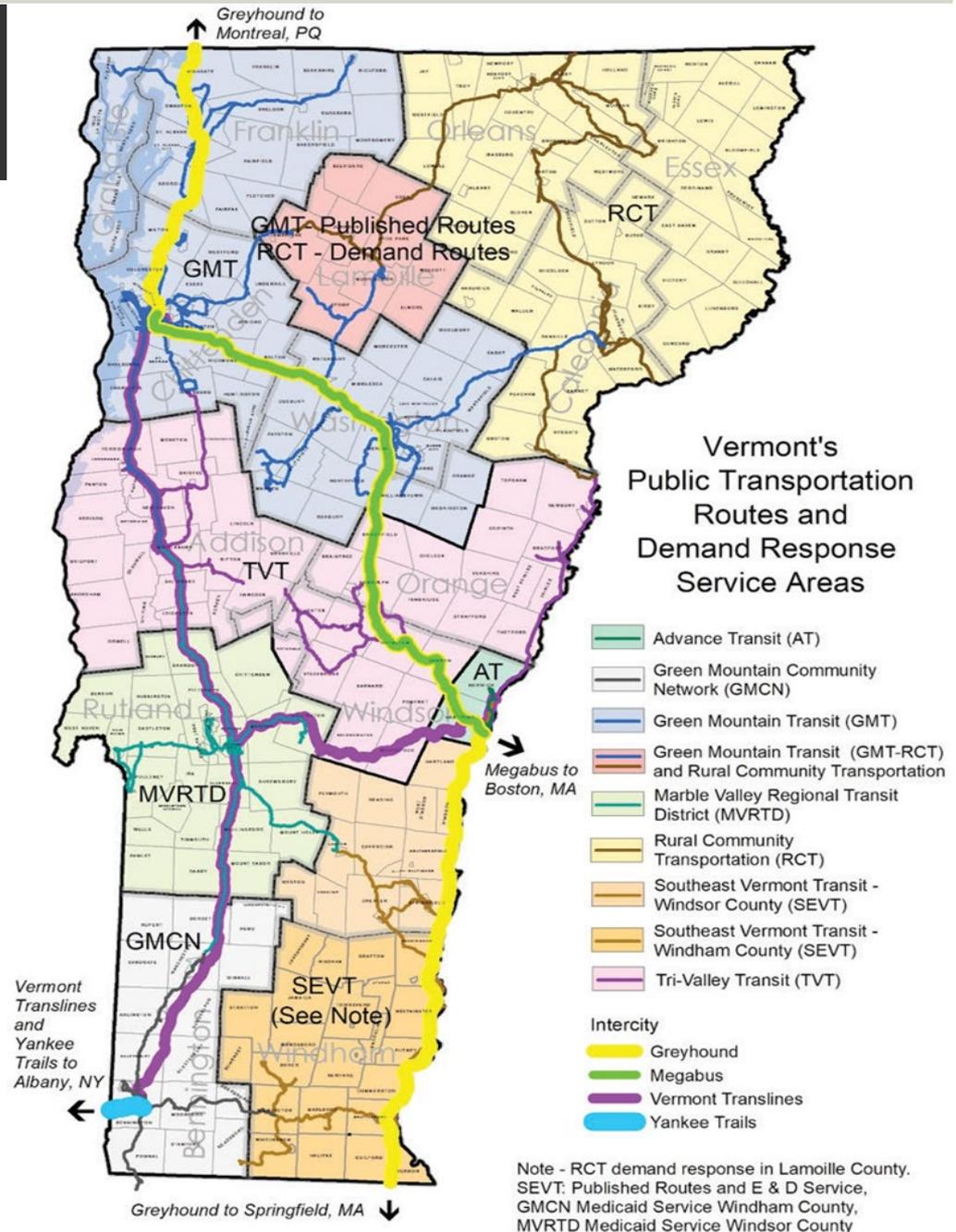


Outreach Activities

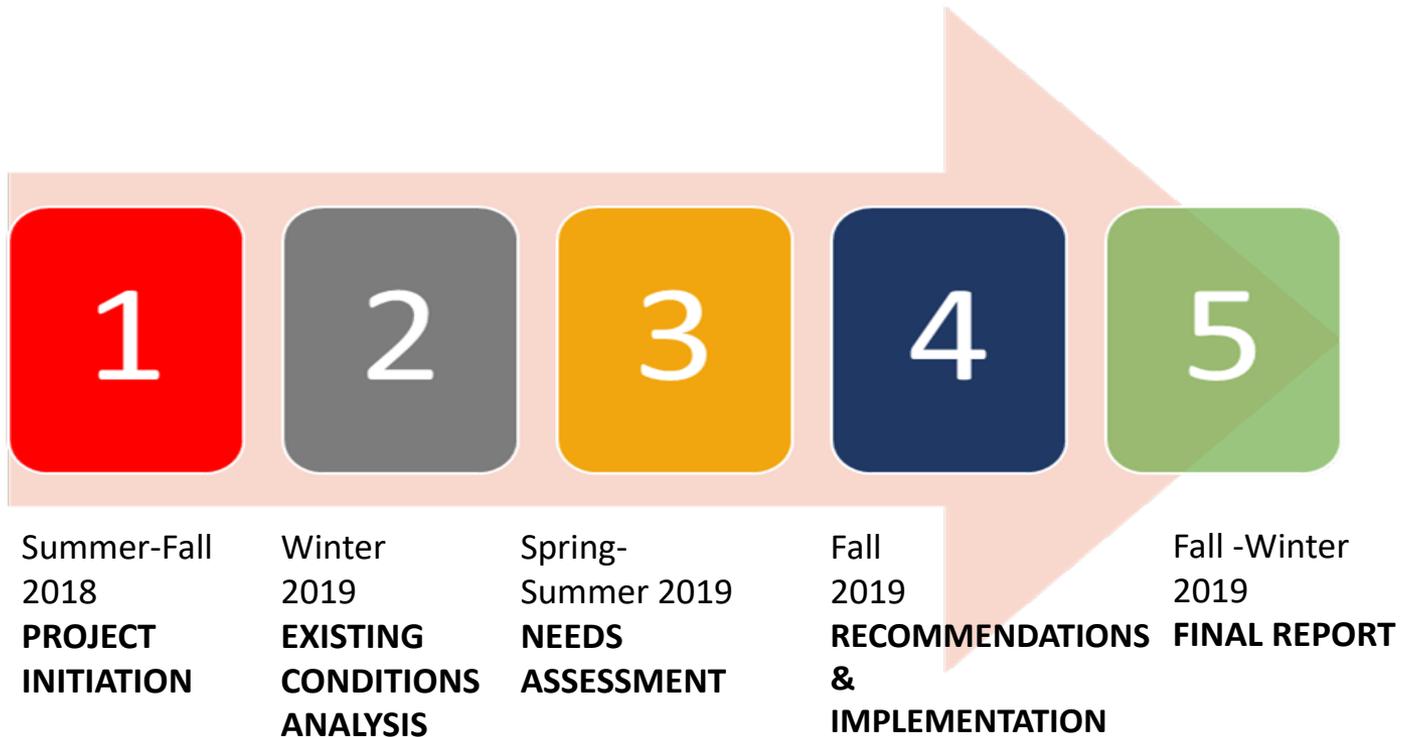
- 11 Regional Forums (Fall 2018)
- MetroQuest survey (Fall 2018) + (Summer 2019)
- 9 Stakeholder interviews (Winter 2019)
- 9 E&D Committee assessments (Spring 2019)
- 3 Study Advisory Committee meetings (Feb + April + October)
- Appearance on VPR's Vermont Edition (July 2019)
- TPI, PTAC, DAIL, VPTA 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



Project Tasks



PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH



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

Central Vermont Region

GMT

Local routes in Montpelier, Barre, Berlin

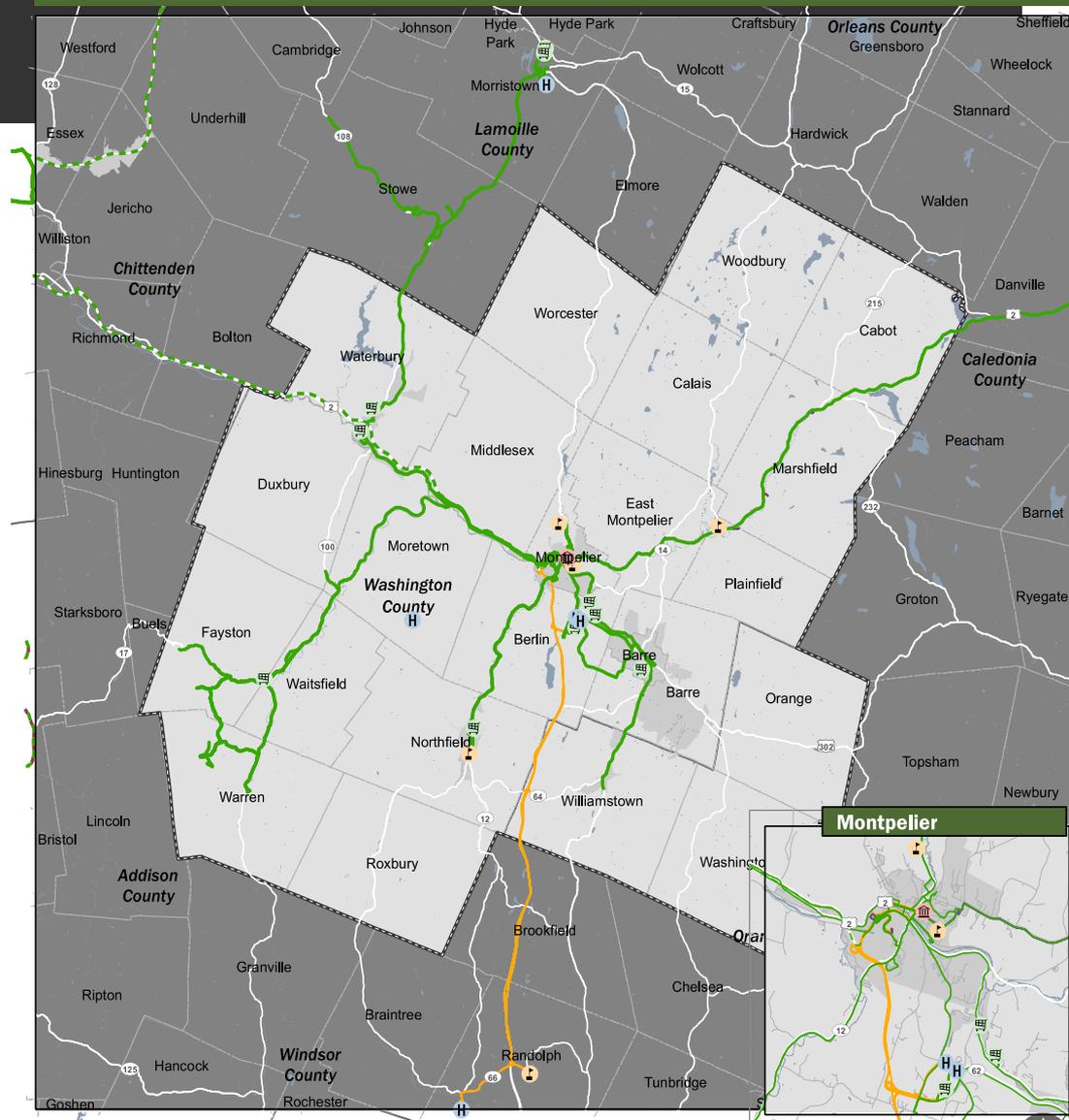
Rural commuters to Waterbury, Northfield and St. J., plus LINK Express to Burlington

Route 100 Commuter

Seasonal service in Mad River Valley

Stagecoach

89er North commuter



Existing Transit Services

- Green Mtn. Transit
- - - GMT Chittenden - Commuter
- Rural Community Transp.
- Stagecoach
- + Veterans Affairs Center
- Ⓜ Social Security Office
- H Hospital
- Ⓜ Higher Education
- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Areas

Transit Propensity

Components of Index

Youth

Older adults

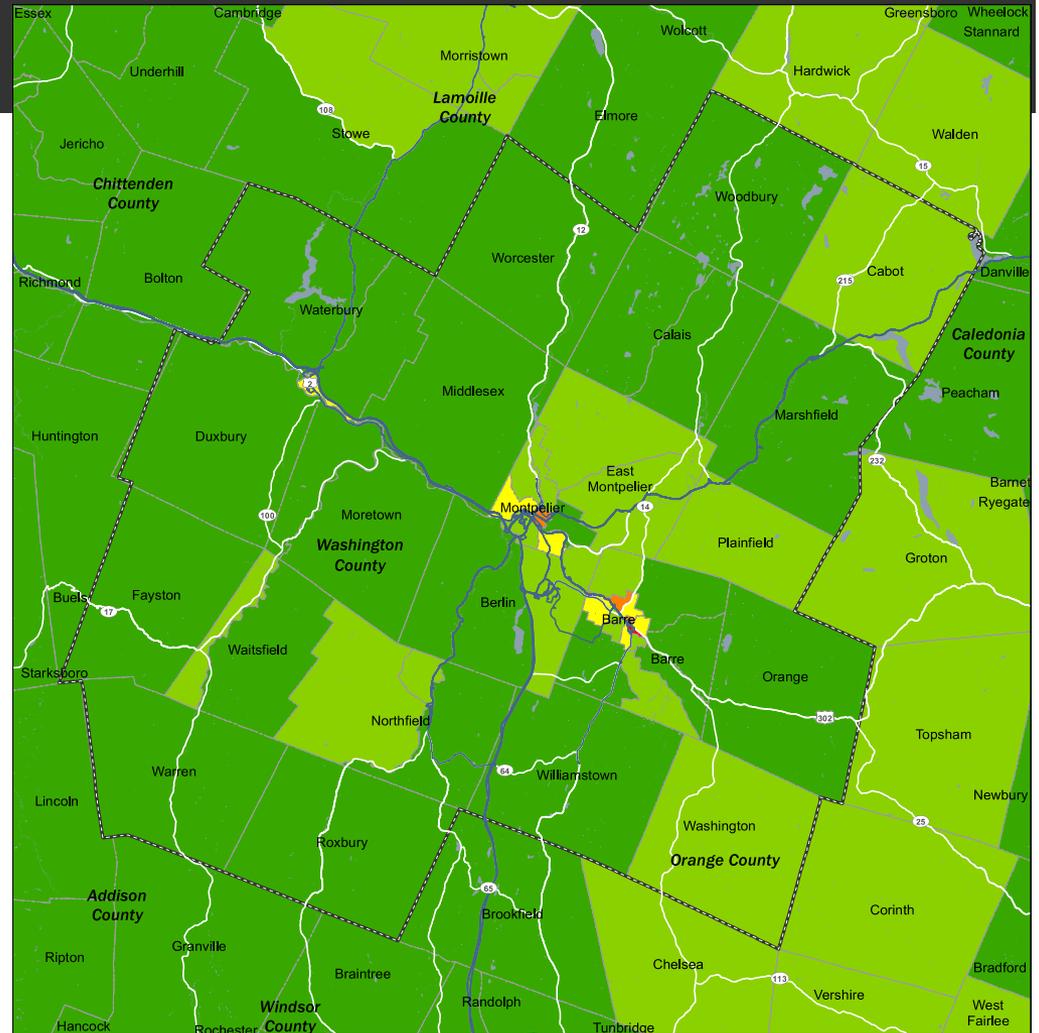
Persons with disabilities

Households with 0-1 cars

Low-income persons

High propensity seen in downtown Montpelier and Barre City

Much of the region has low propensity

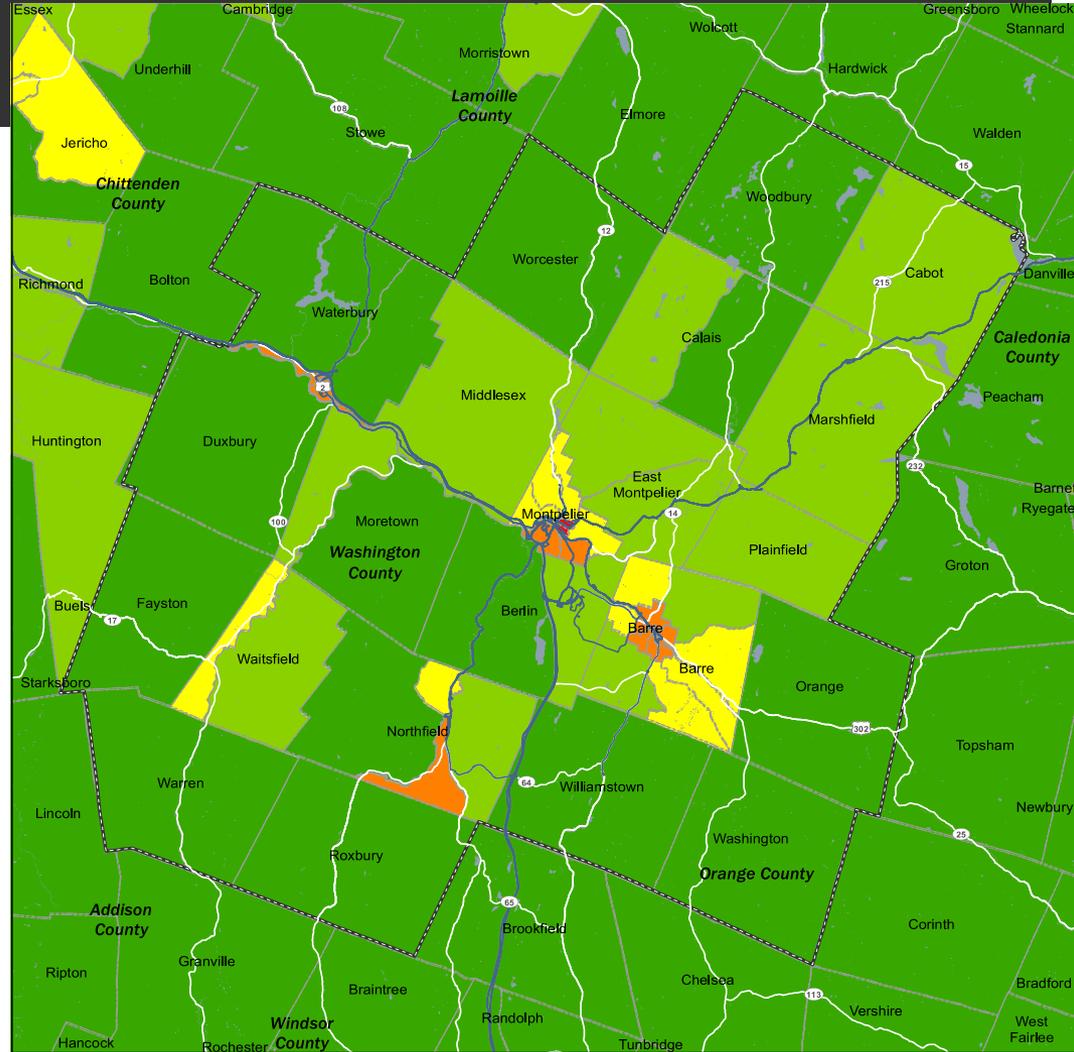


Population Density

High density in downtown Montpelier, Barre City and downtown Northfield

Moderate density in Barre Town, rest of Montpelier, Northfield Falls and Waitsfield

Rural density in rest of region



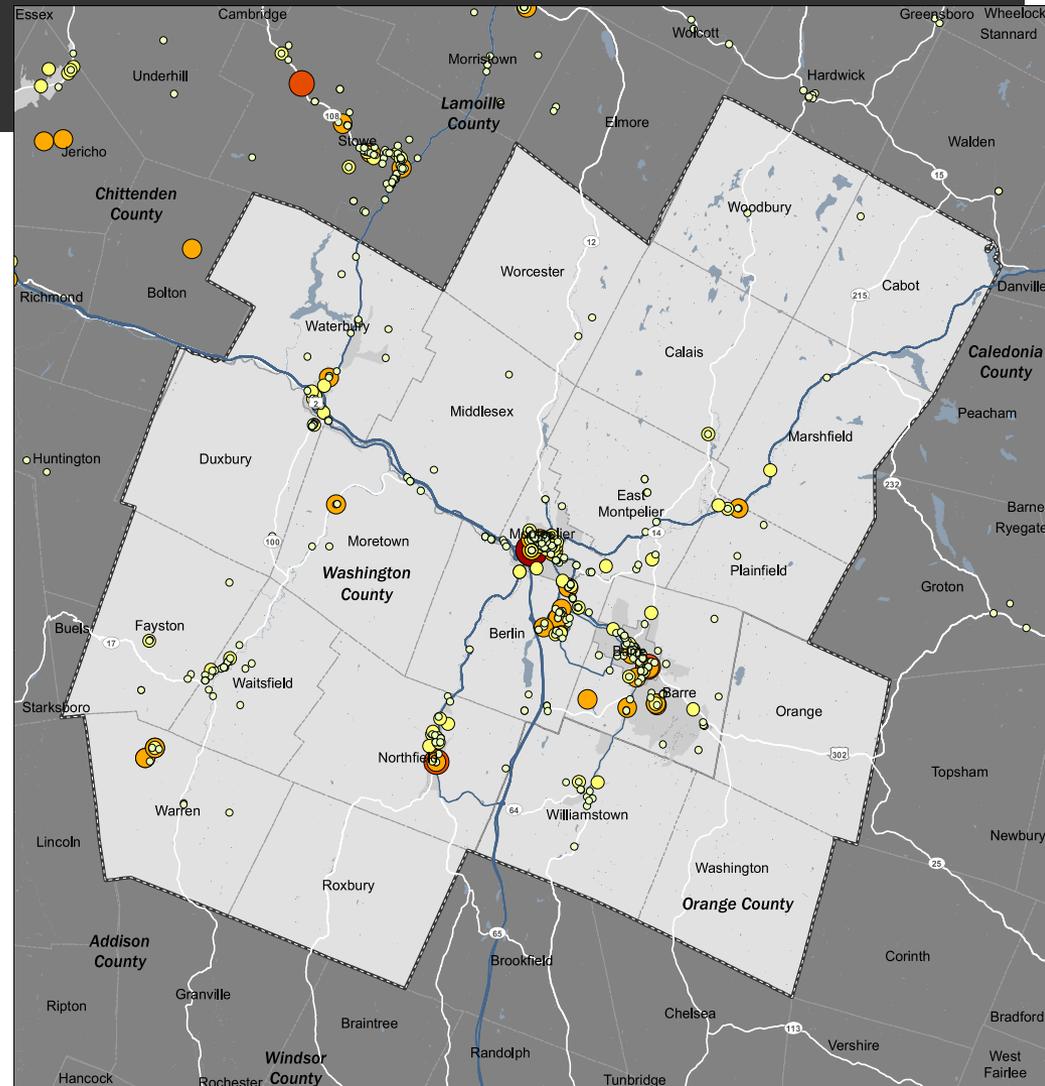
Block Group
Transit Routes

Employment

Greatest concentration in downtown Montpelier and Barre City

Significant clusters in Berlin, Northfield and Waterbury

Medium size employers in Plainfield, Warren, Moretown and Barre Town



Commuting

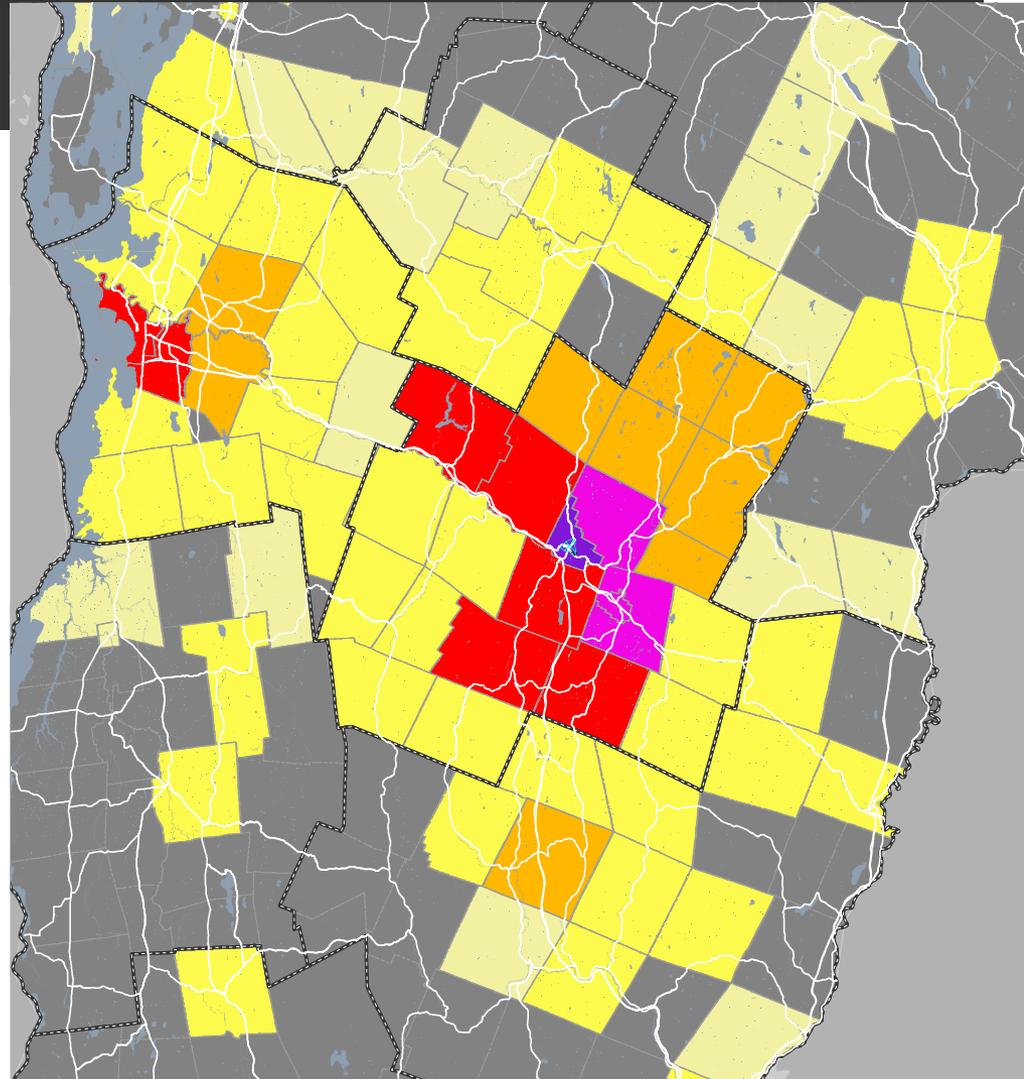
Downtown Montpelier draws from large radius and in every direction

Majority of commuters from neighboring towns

Distant communities send significant numbers:

Burlington – 164

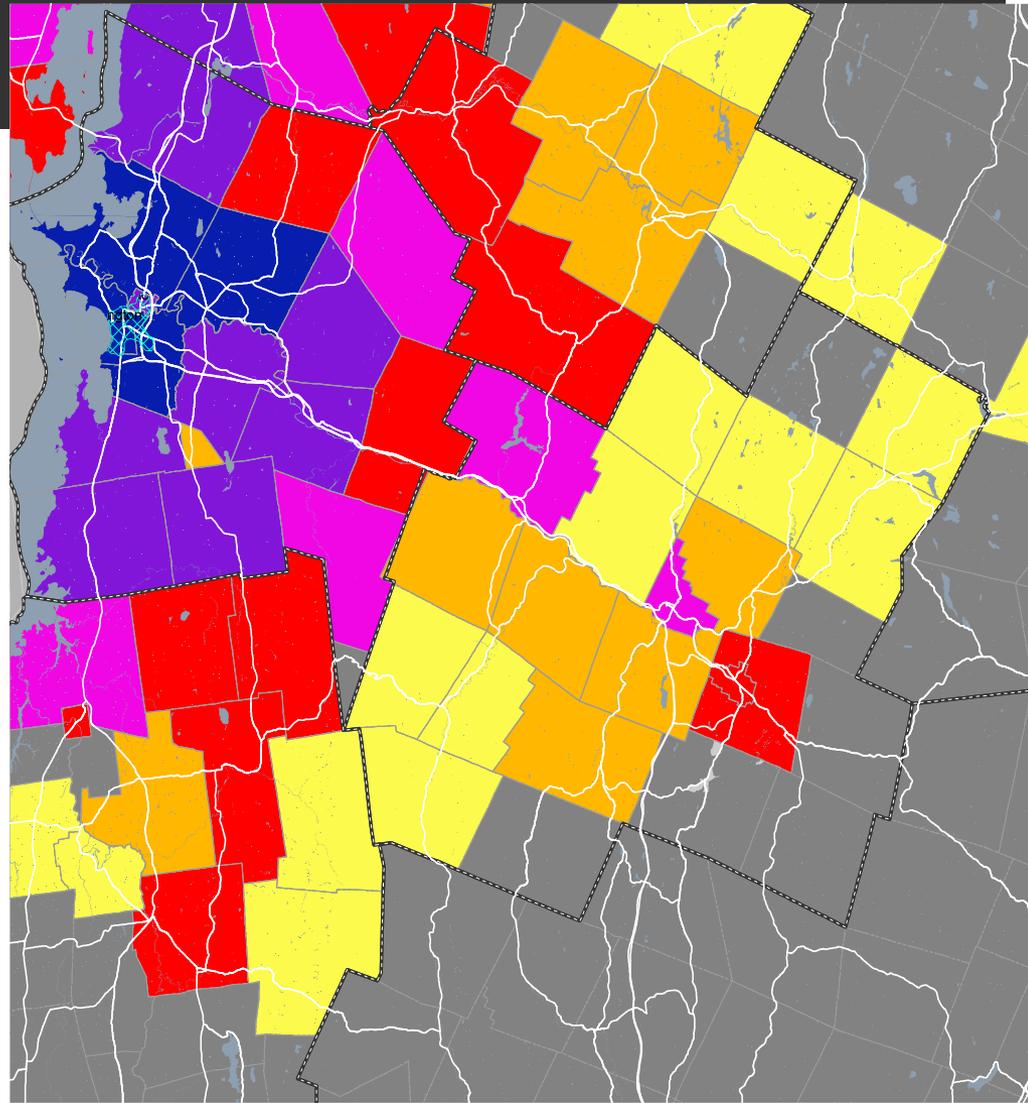
So. Burlington – 106



Commuting

Core of Chittenden County also a major draw from Central Vermont

Hundreds of commuters from Montpelier, Barre City, Barre Town and Waterbury travel to Chittenden Core daily



500 - 1,999

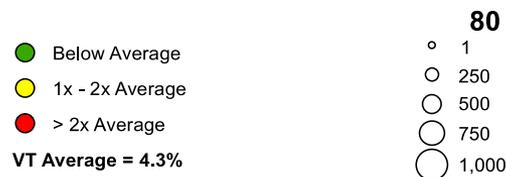
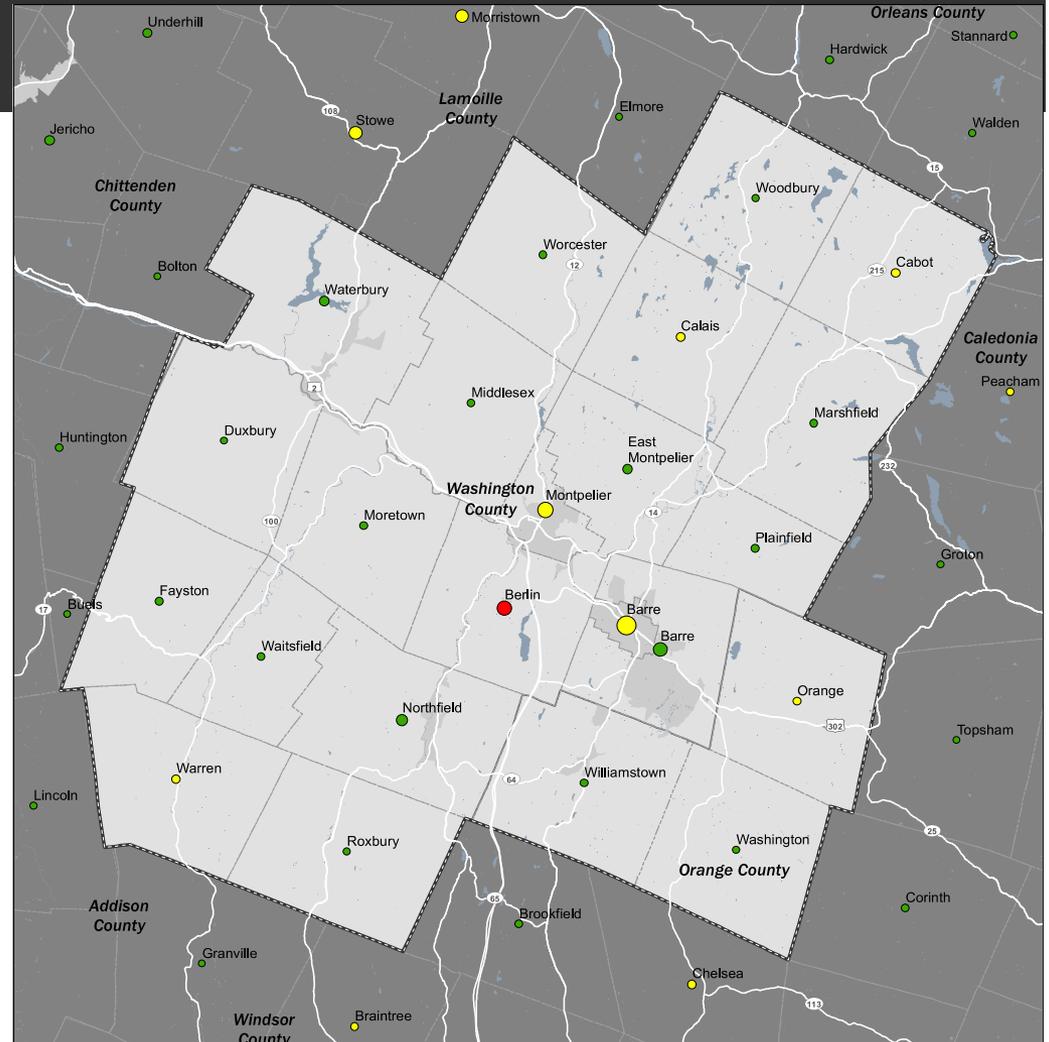
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Older Adults

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

High percentage in Berlin and above average in Montpelier and Barre City

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



People with Disabilities

Includes four types of disabilities

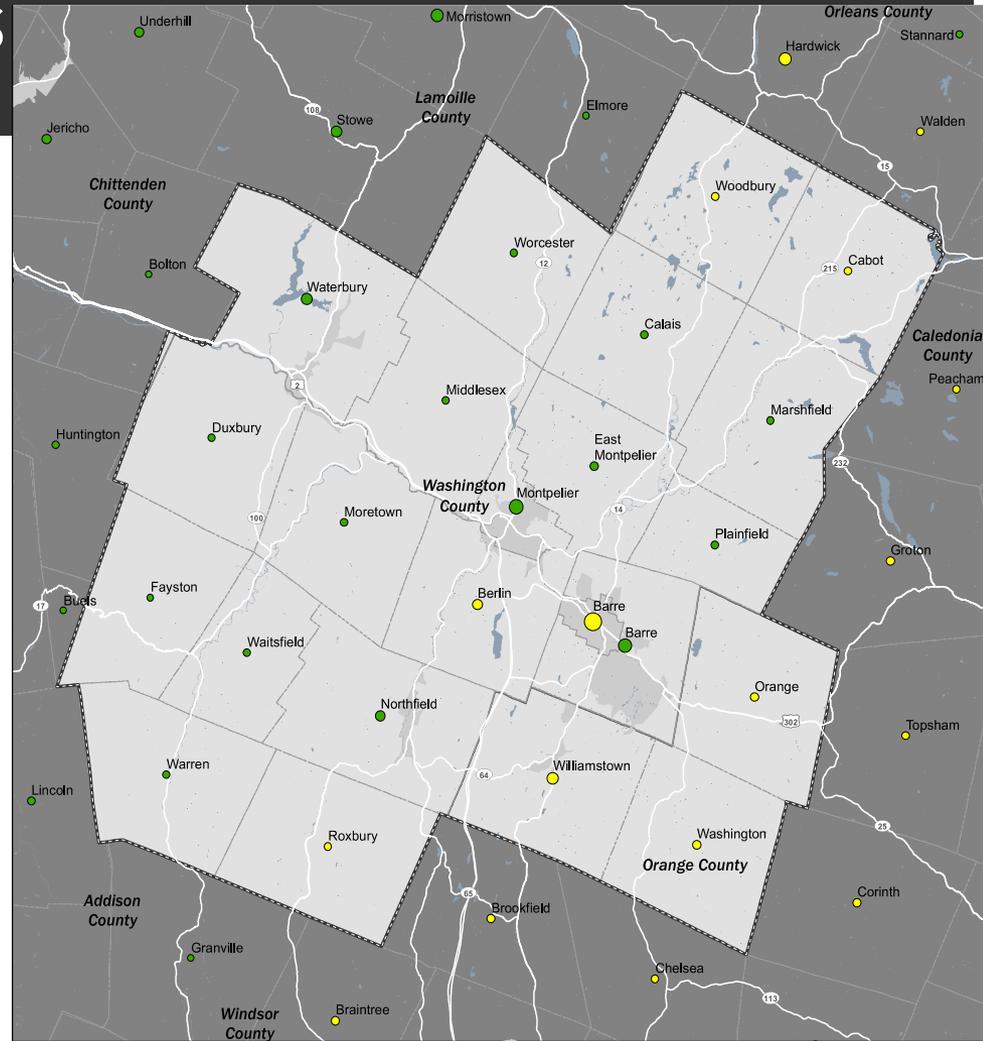
Hearing

Vision

Cognition

Walking

Barre City, Berlin and other small towns at south edge of region are above average

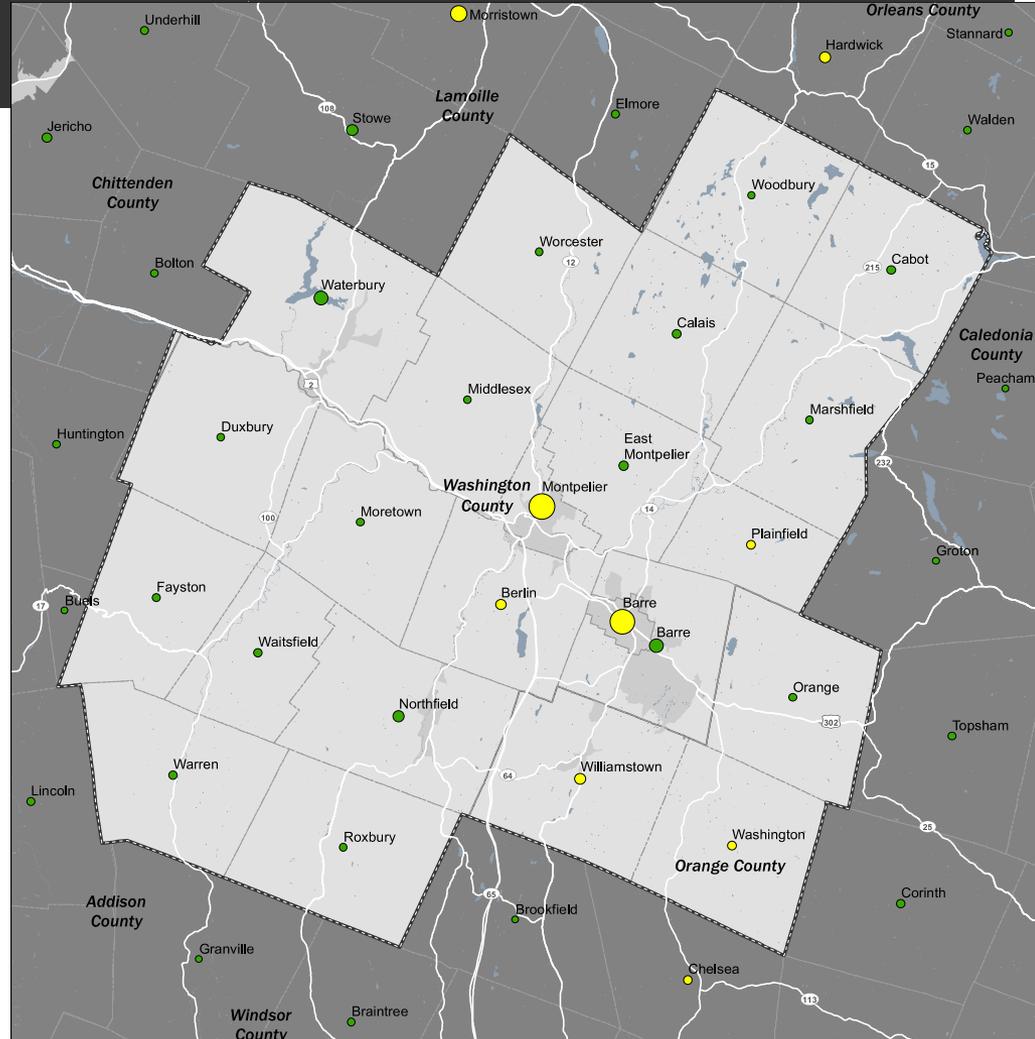


Auto Ownership

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

Significant numbers in Montpelier and Barre City

Most towns below state average

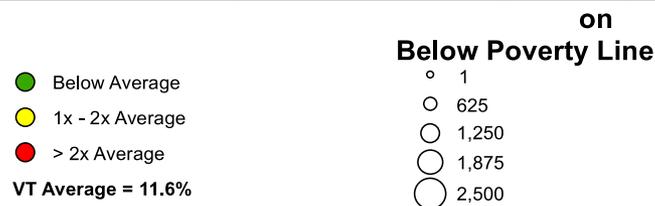
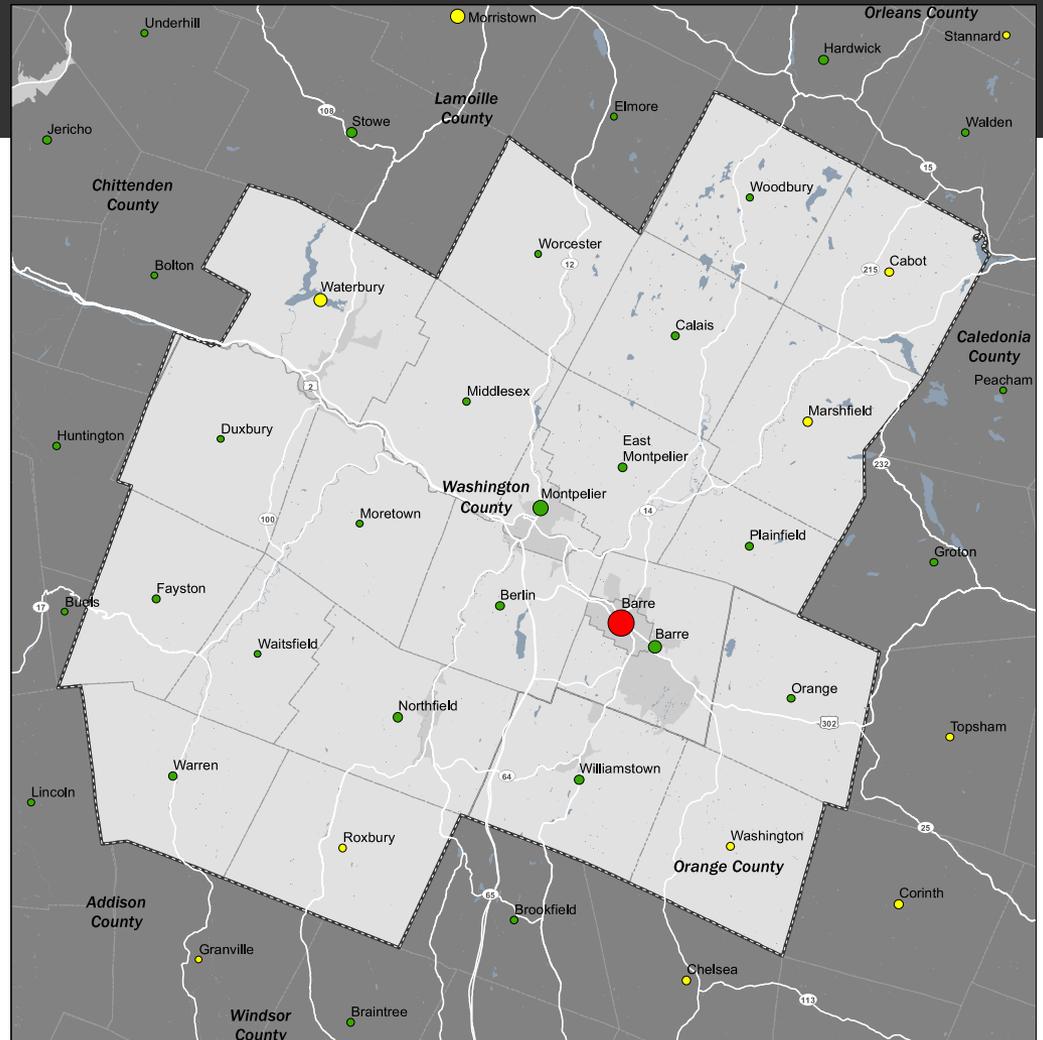


Poverty

Barre City more than double VT average

Moderate numbers in Montpelier and Barre Town, but percentage below state average

Cabot, Marshfield, Waterbury and Washington above average





Themes Across Regions

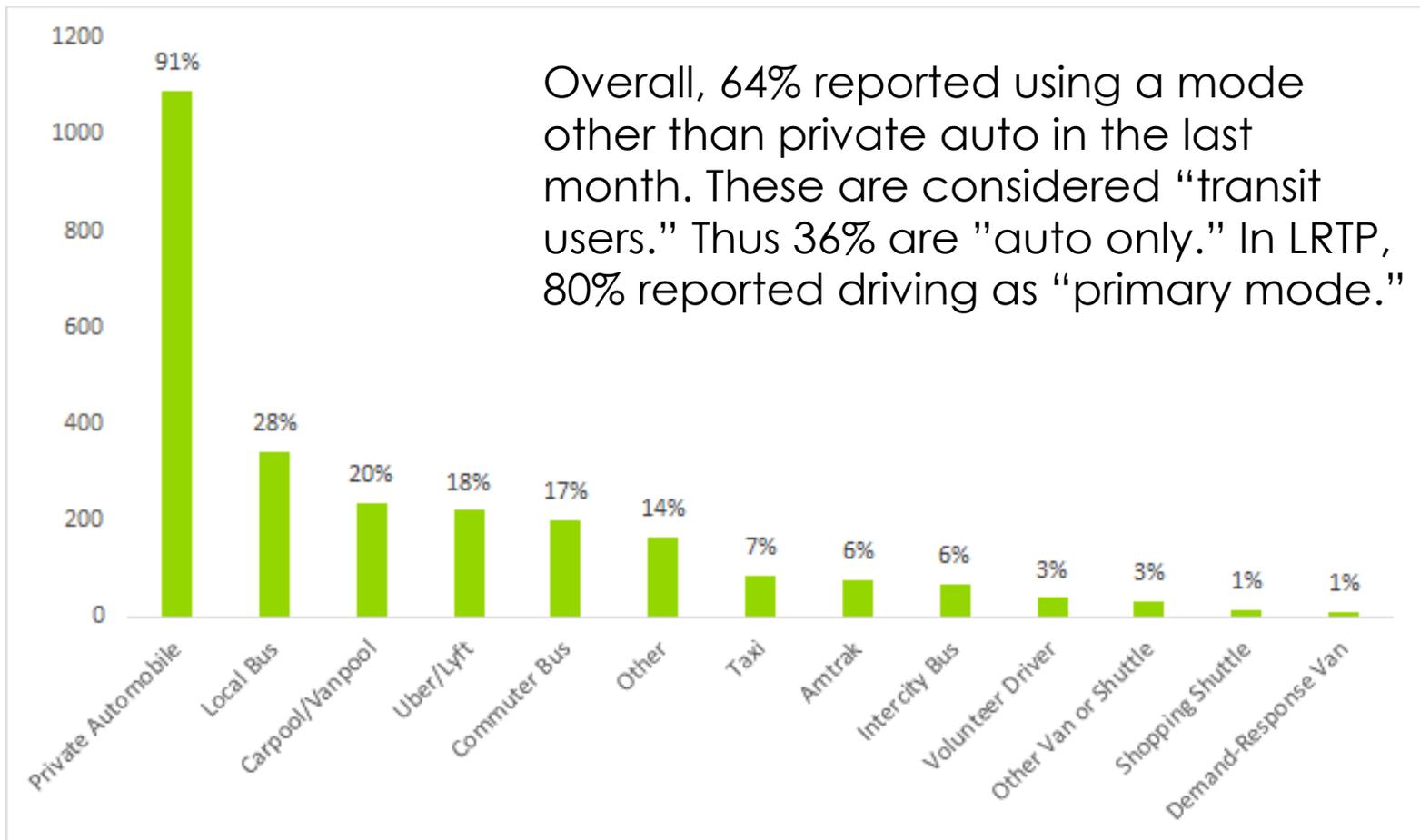
- ❑ Workforce development/access to jobs are transportation priorities
- ❑ Rural areas need options
- ❑ More integrated walk/bike/transit/driving networks would encourage transit use
- ❑ “First mile/last mile” needs
- ❑ Existing services and resources may not be well known
- ❑ Trip limits in some regions not compatible with needs (E&D Program specific)
- ❑ Financial resources to bring other human service partners into the program are not available (E&D Program specific)
- ❑ Volunteer driver programs are crucial and need strengthening (E&D Program specific)



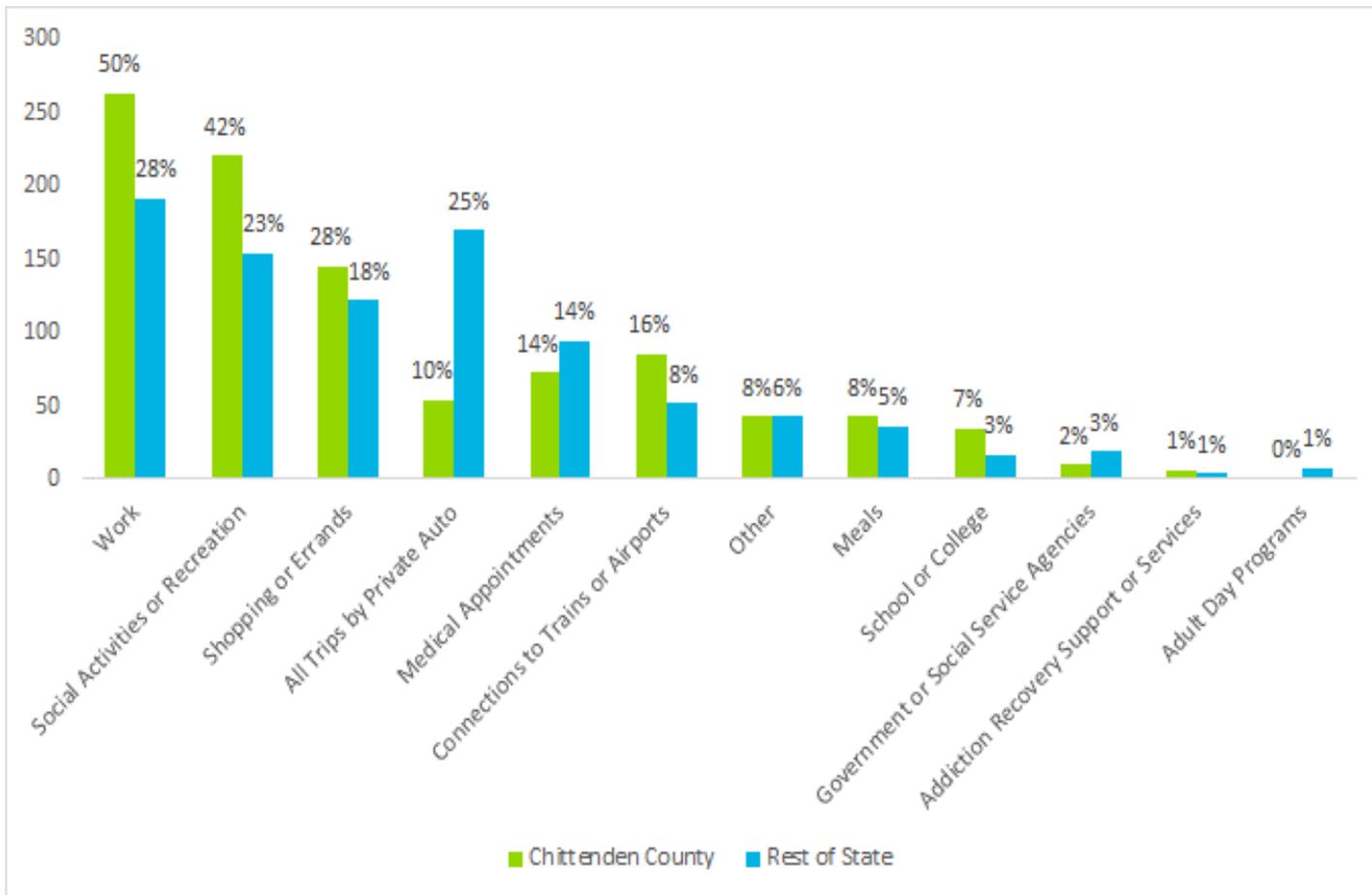
Survey Highlights

- Widely used online engagement tool
 - Complements regional meetings and interviews
 - Spread word through website, social media, emails
- Sought 500 responses, but over 1,200 (Survey 1) and 2,000 (Survey 2) responses obtained
- Not a statistically valid sample
 - Likely reflects people with an interest in public transit
 - Not weighted to reflect Vermont demography
- Comparisons to 2016 LRTP Survey
 - 2,496 responses, weighted by demographics
 - Based on random sample of addresses

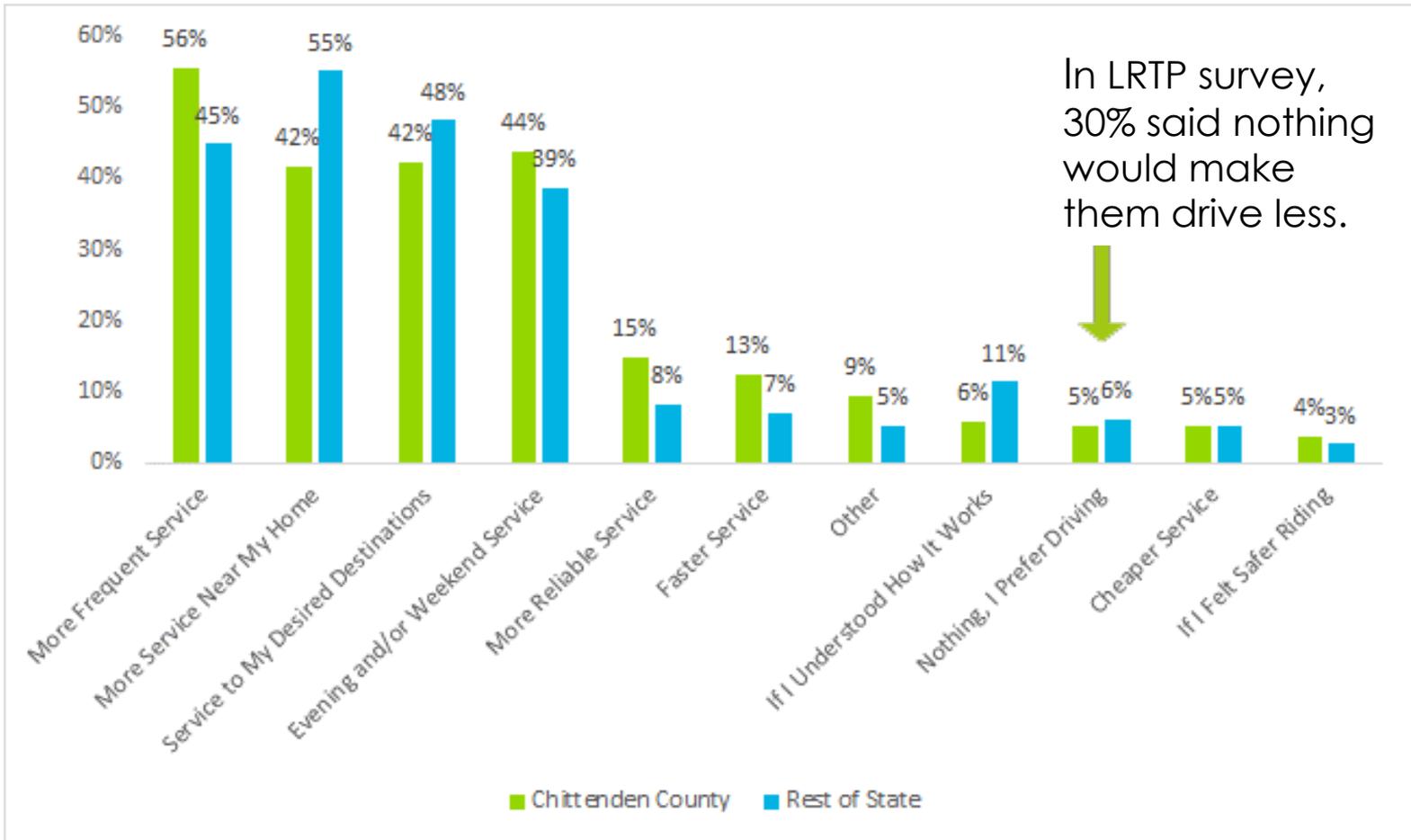
Modes of Transportation Used



Purposes of Transit Trips



What would encourage you to use transit more often?

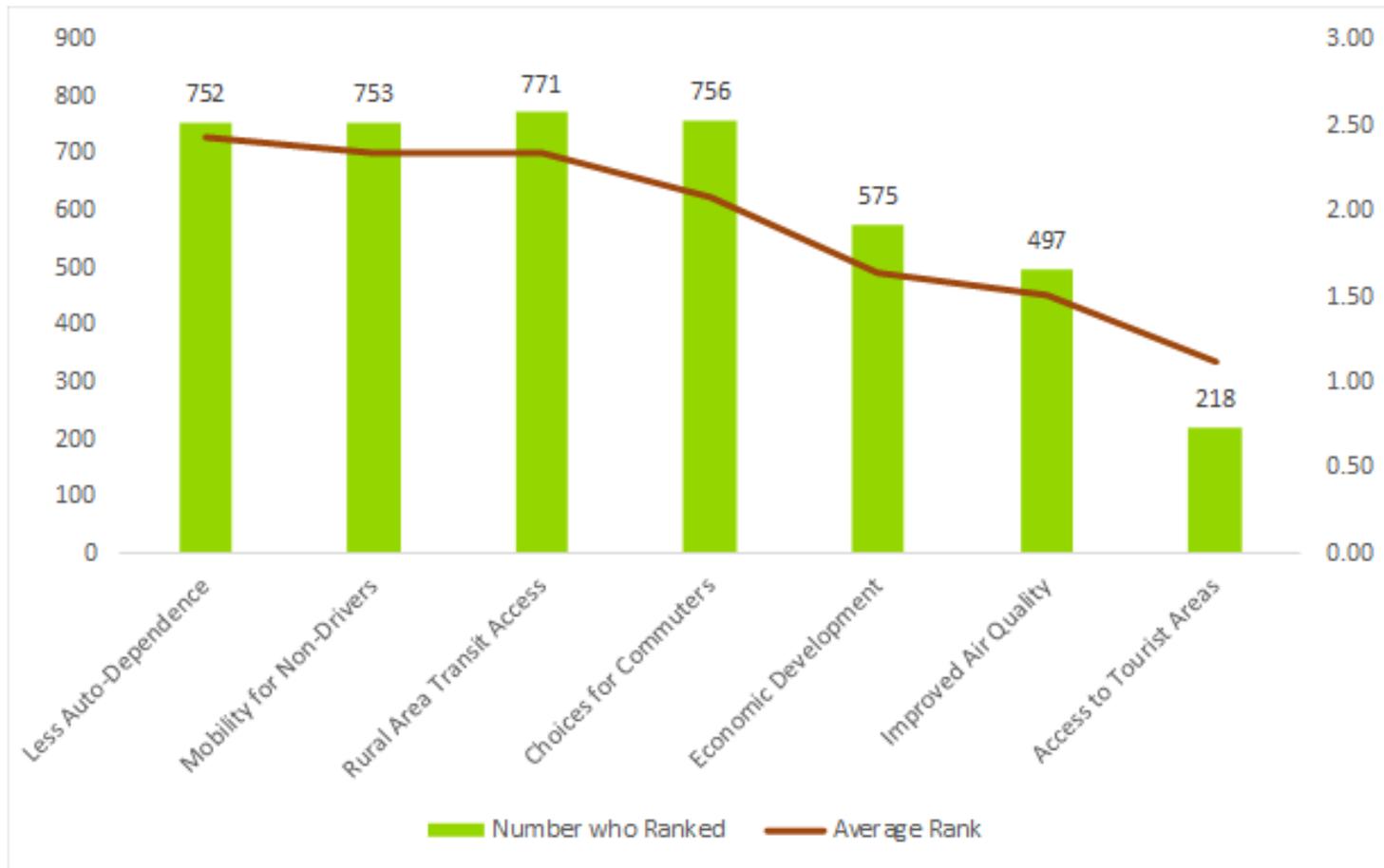




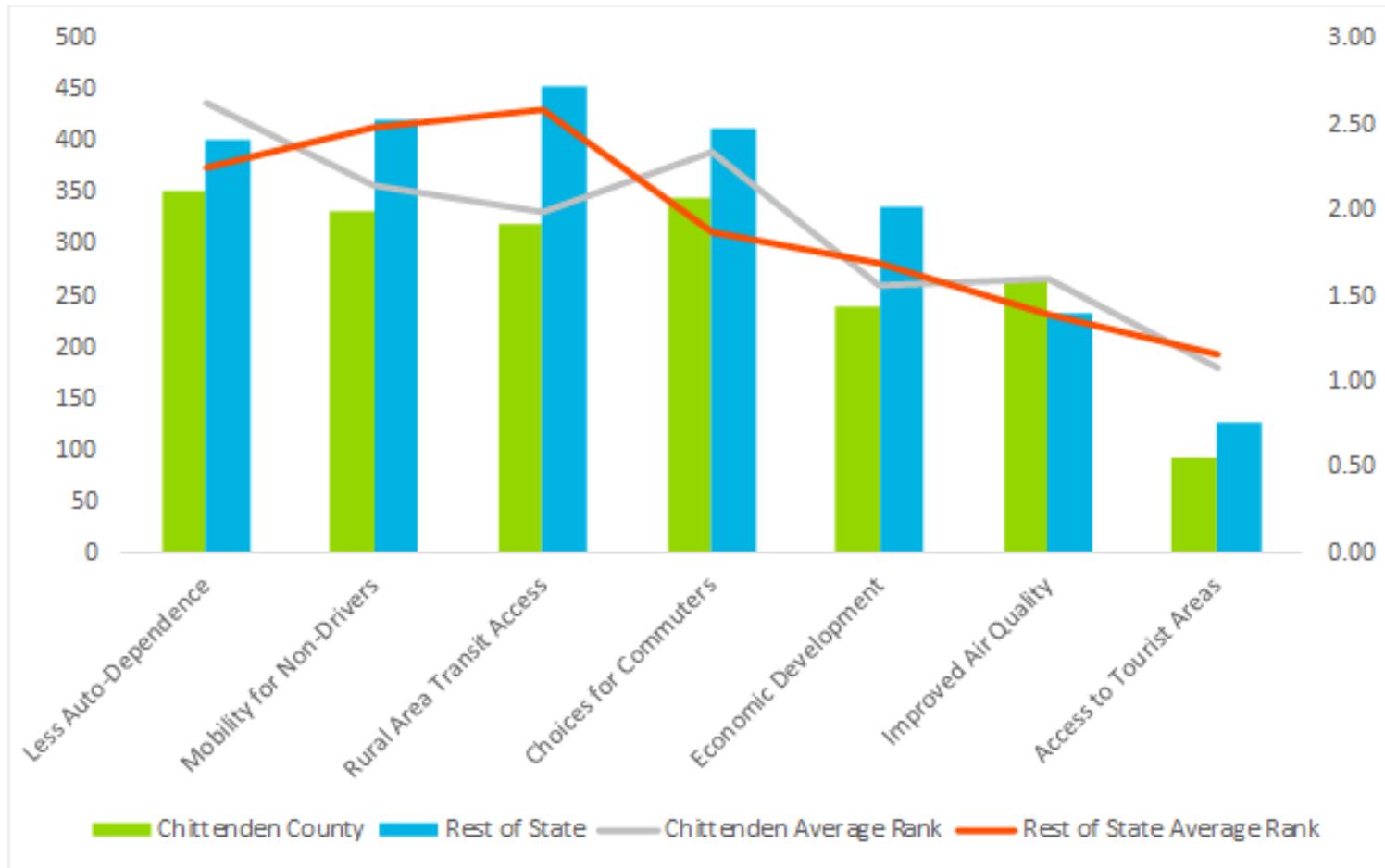
Existing Goals: 24 V.S.A. §5083

- (1) Provision for basic mobility for transit-dependent persons, as defined in the current public transit policy plan, including meeting the performance standards for urban, suburban, and rural areas...
- (2) Expanding public transit service in rural areas and increasing ridership statewide. (NEW IN 2019)
- (3) Access to employment, including creation of demand-response service.
- (4) Congestion mitigation to preserve air quality, decrease greenhouse gas emissions*, and sustain the highway network. (*NEW IN 2019)
- (5) Advancement of economic development objectives, including services for workers and visitors that support the travel and tourism industry...

Policy Ranking from MetroQuest



Chittenden Cty. vs. Rest of State





Needs Assessment

- ❑ 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 DAHL 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 “Ambassadors” 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 the procurement 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