



# Public Transit Policy Plan

November 12, 2019

Northeastern Vermont Development Association-TAC

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[vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP)



# Statutory Req't: 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

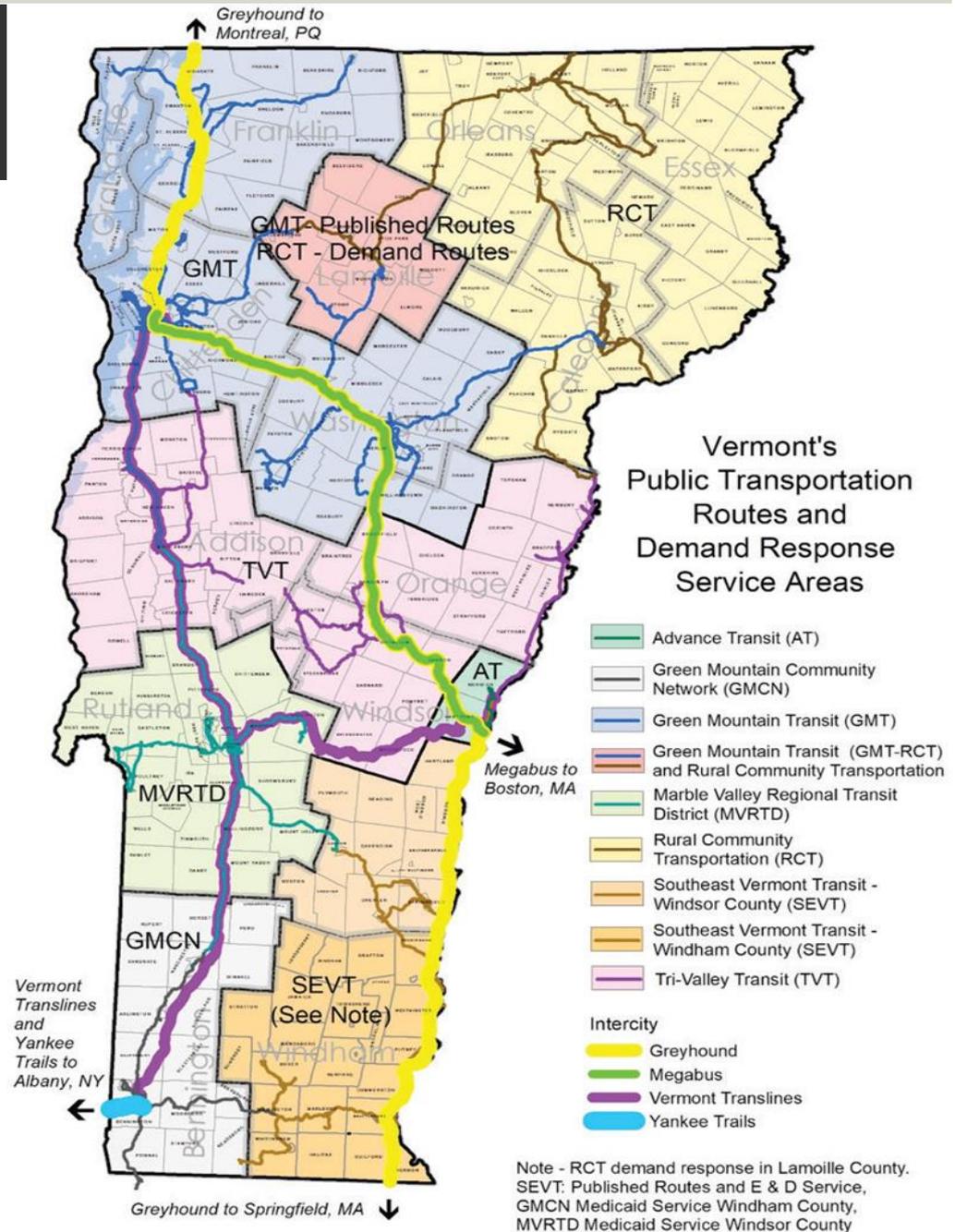


# Outreach Activities

- 11 Regional Forums (Fall 2018)
- MetroQuest surveys (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





# 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
  - ❑ Transit propensity (composite index)
  - ❑ Characteristics (age, disability, auto ownership, income)
  - ❑ Employment
  - ❑ Commuting to key job centers

# Existing Transit

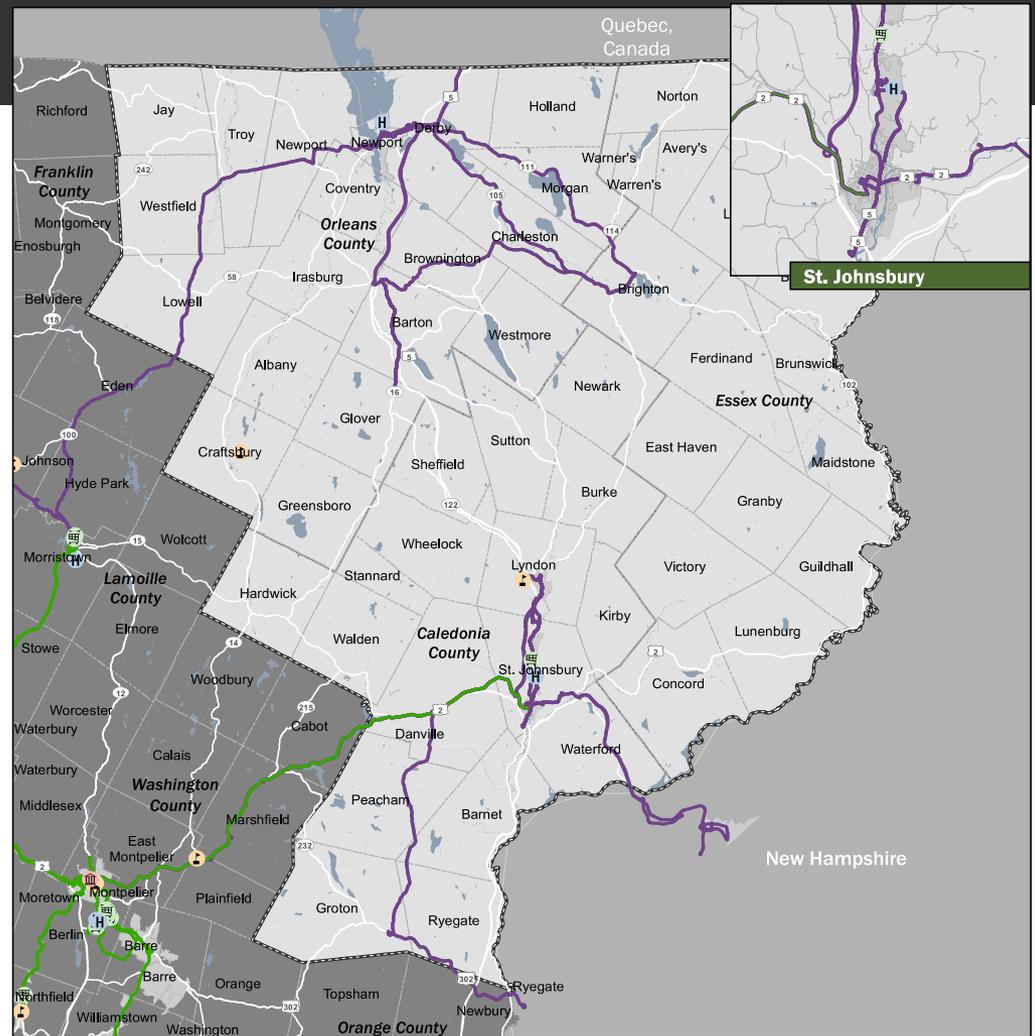
## RCT

- 2 local shuttles
- 2 commuter routes
- 5 shopping routes
- Demand response

## GMT

- Shared service in US 2
- Commuter

## Northeast Kingdom



### Existing Transit Services

- Green Mountain Transit
- Rural Community Transp.
- + Veterans Affairs Center
- + Social Security Office
- H Hospital
- + Higher Education
- + Retail Center
- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Areas



# Transit Propensity

## Components of Index

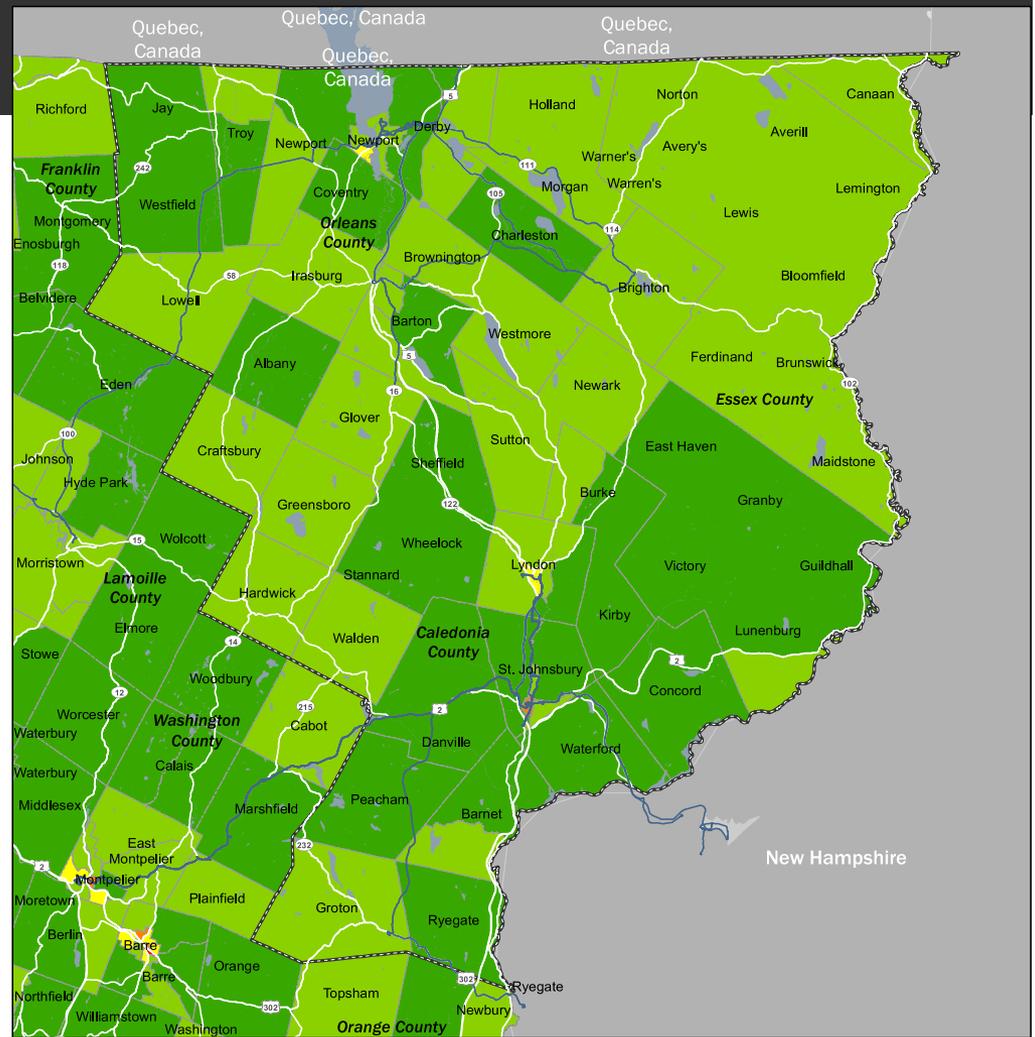
- Youth
- Older adults
- Persons with disabilities
- Households with 0-1 cars
- Low-income persons

High propensity seen in St. Johnsbury

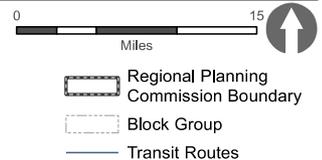
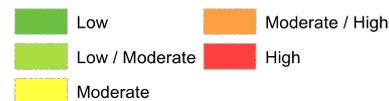
Moderate in Lyndonville and Newport

Much of region in Low/Moderate range

## Northeast Kingdom



### Transit Propensity



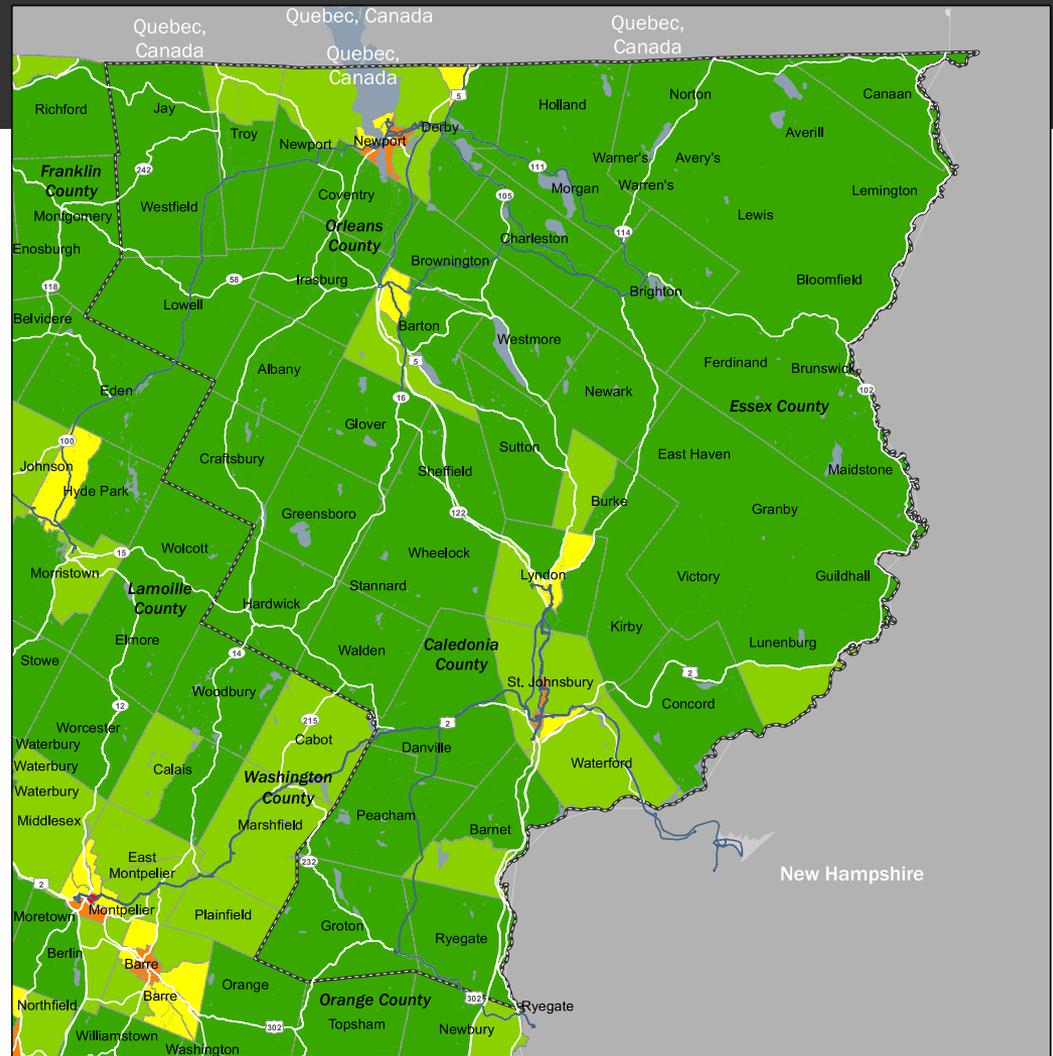
# Population Density

Moderate-high density in Newport and St. Johnsbury

Moderate density in Lyndonville, Orleans, Derby Line

Rural density in the rest of the region

## Northeast Kingdom



### Residents per Sq Mi



- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Block Group
- Transit Routes

# Employment

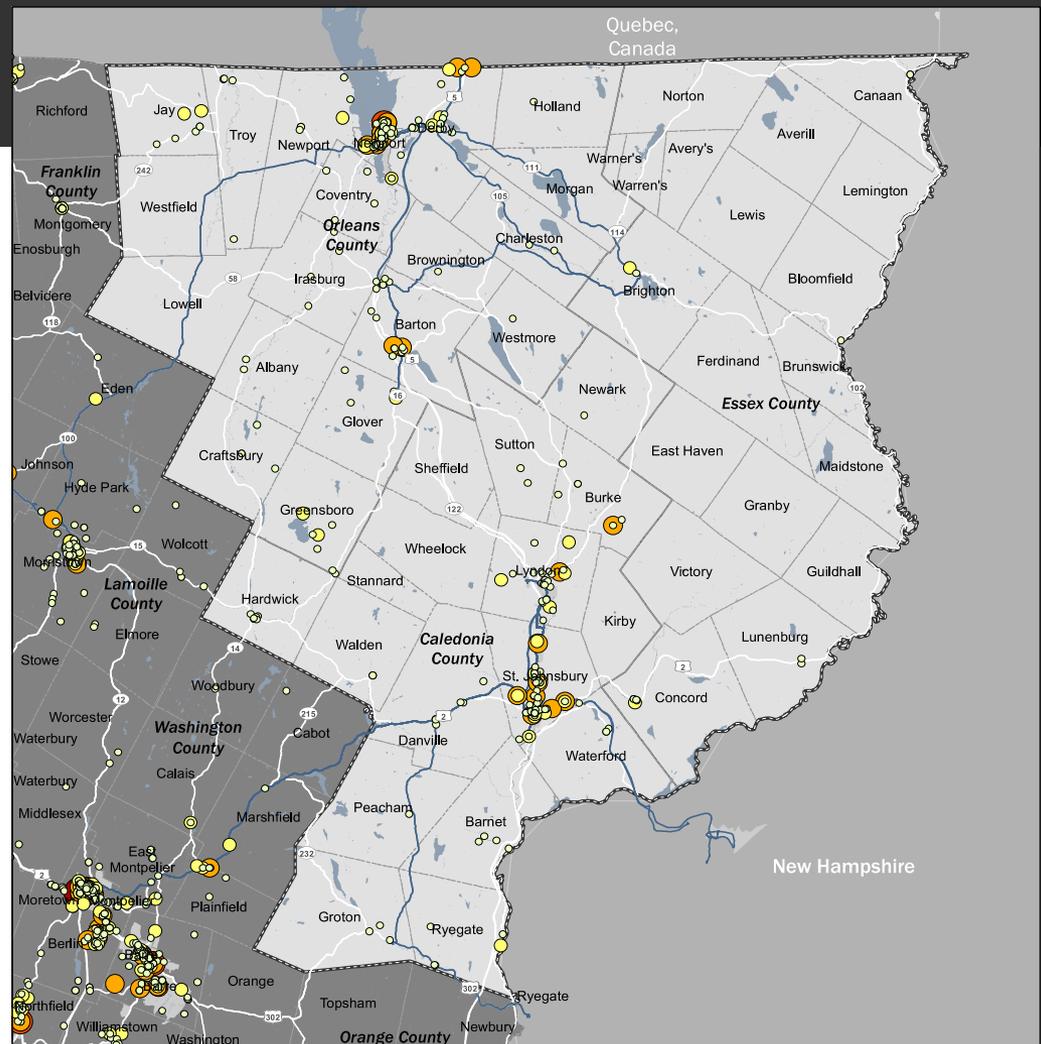
Highest concentration in St. Johnsbury and Newport

Moderate clusters in Lyndonville, Barton and Derby

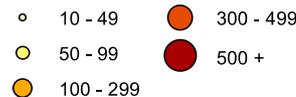
Very little employment in Essex County

Few small employers (<100 employees) scattered in rural towns

## Northeast Kingdom



### Employers by Number of Employees



Source: Dun & Bradstreet, 2017



- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Township Boundary
- Urban Areas
- Transit Routes

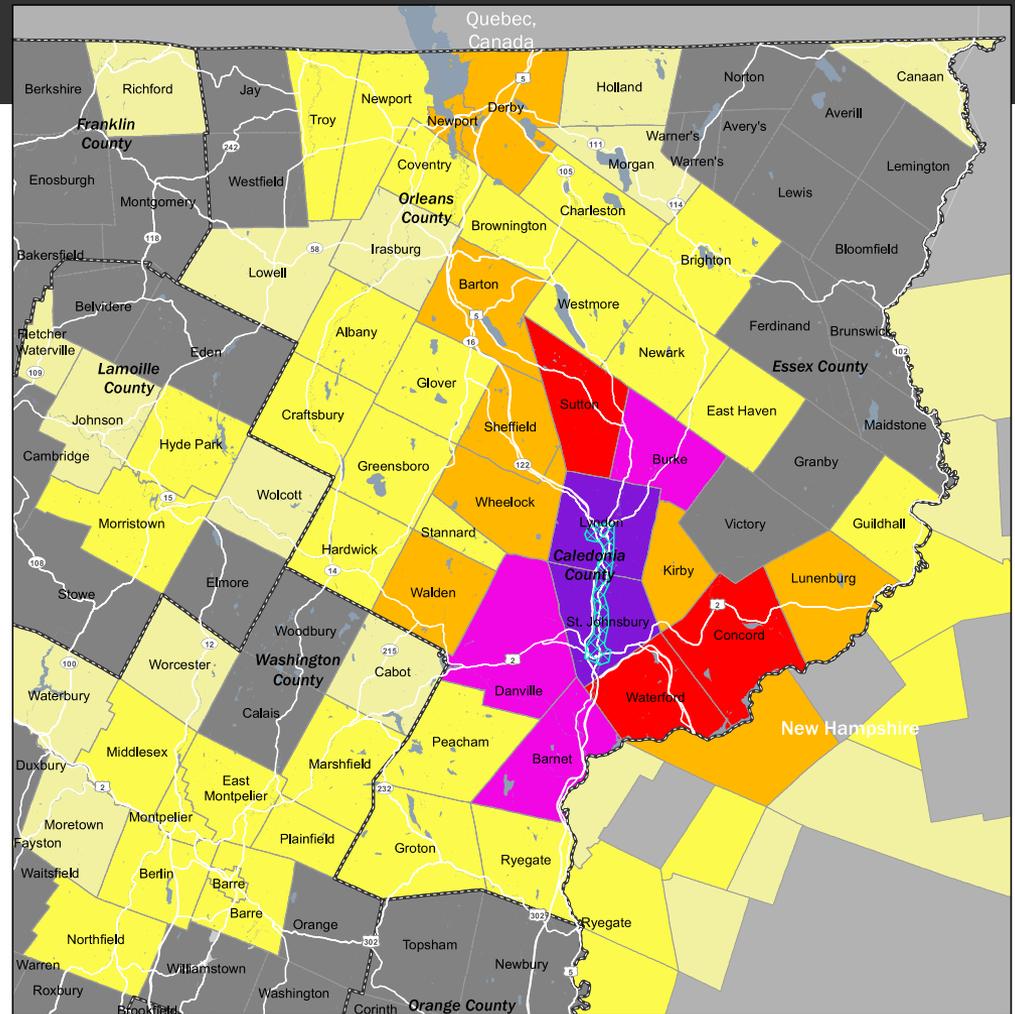
# Commuting

St. J/Lyndonville draws commuters from 40-mile radius

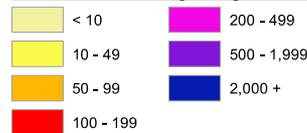
I-91 and US 2 corridors provide good access

US 5 through Burke and Sutton also important

## Northeast Kingdom



### Commuters to St. Johnsbury / Lyndon

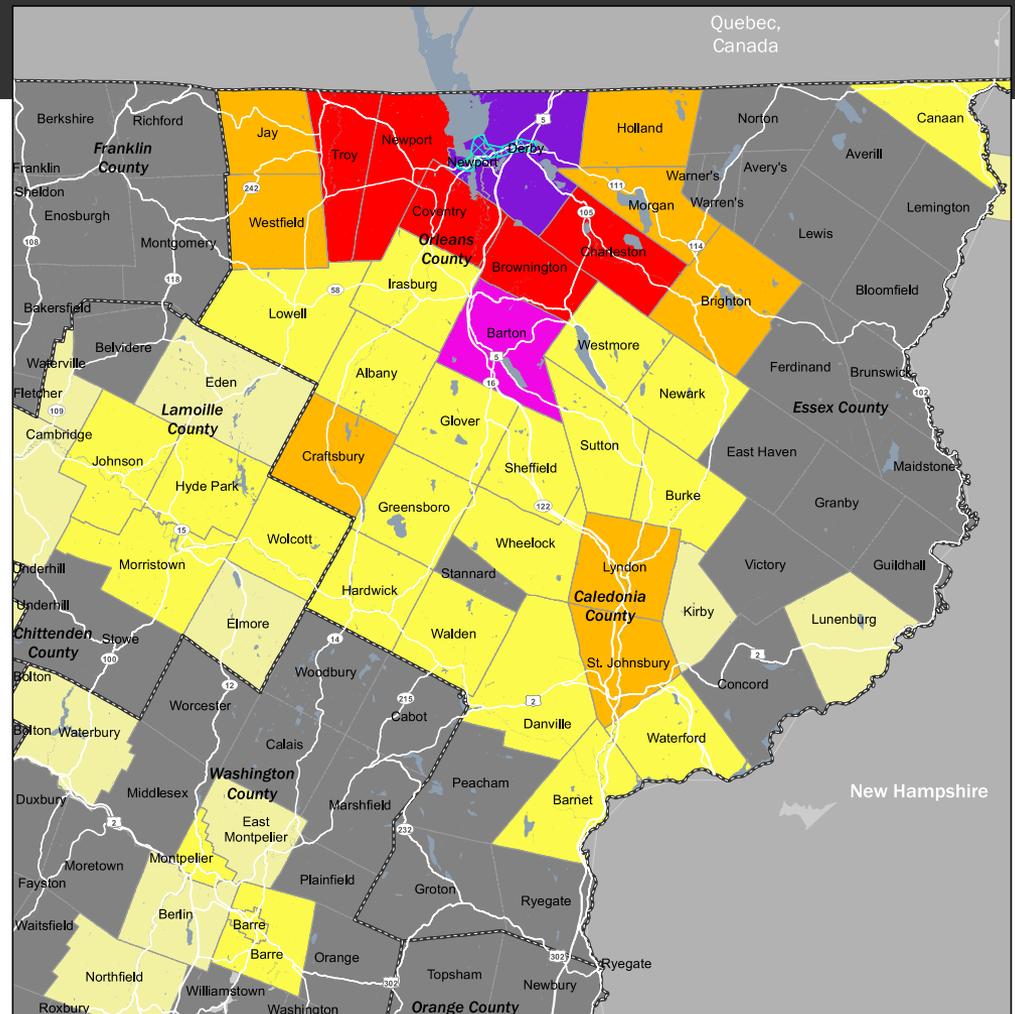


# Commuting

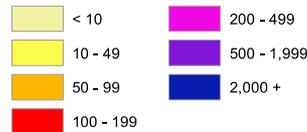
Most commuters to Newport/Derby come from northern Orleans County

St. J and Lyndon also contribute some via I-91

## Northeast Kingdom



### Commuters to Newport / Derby



- Destination Zone
- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Municipal Boundary

# Older Adults

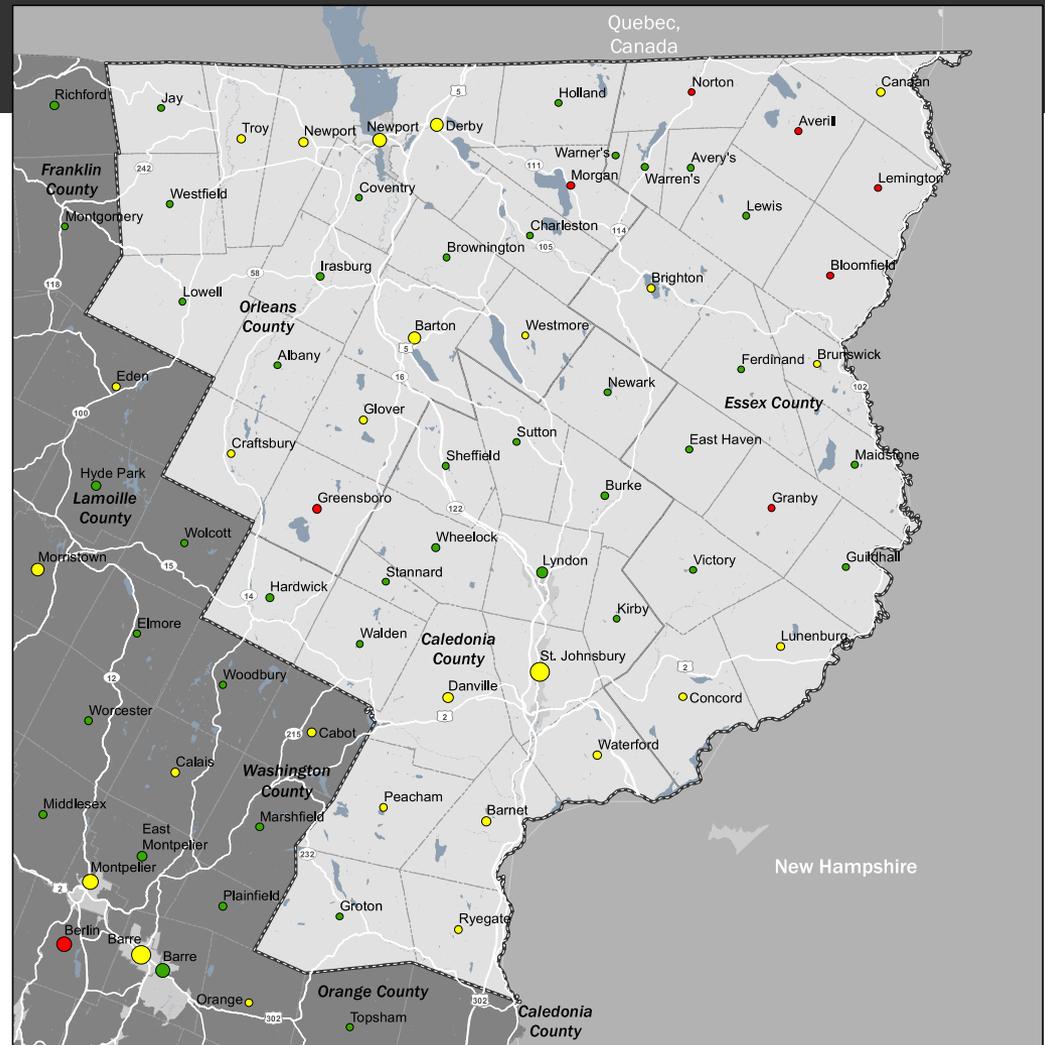
Focus on people over age 80 as younger seniors overwhelmingly continue to drive

Many small towns more than twice VT average

St. J, Newport, Barton and Derby are above VT average and have significant populations

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

## Northeast Kingdom



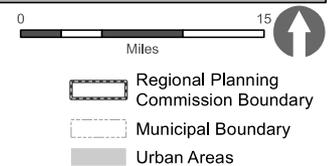
### % of Population Over 80

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

VT Average = 4.3%

### Total Population Over 80

- 1
- 250
- 500
- 750
- 1,000



# People with Disabilities

Includes four types of disabilities

Hearing

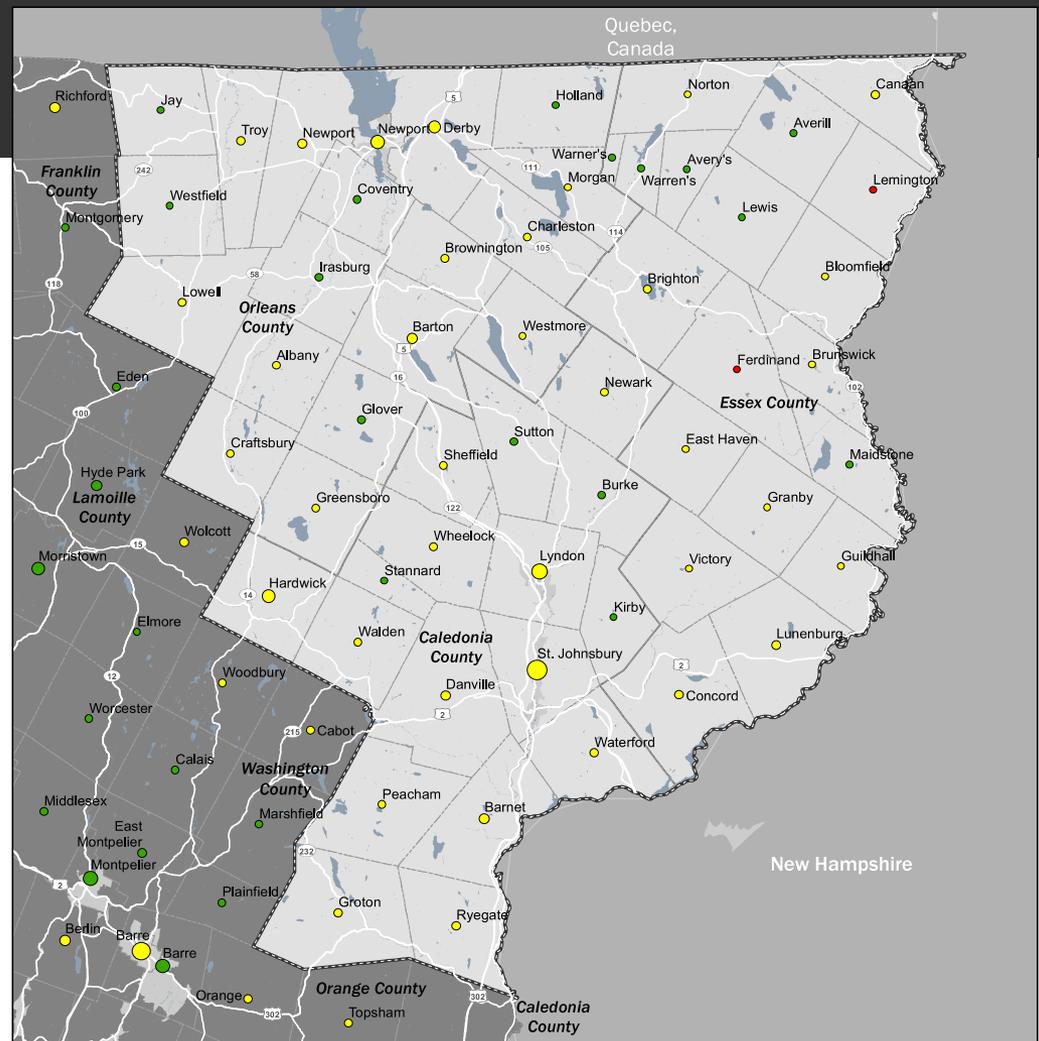
Vision

Cognition

Walking

Most towns are above the state average, including all of the large ones

## Northeast Kingdom



### % of Population with a Disability

- Below Average
- 1x - 2x Average
- 2x - 3x Average

VT Average = 14.0%

### Total Population with a Disability

- 1
- 750
- 1,500
- 2,250
- 3,000



- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Areas

# Auto Ownership

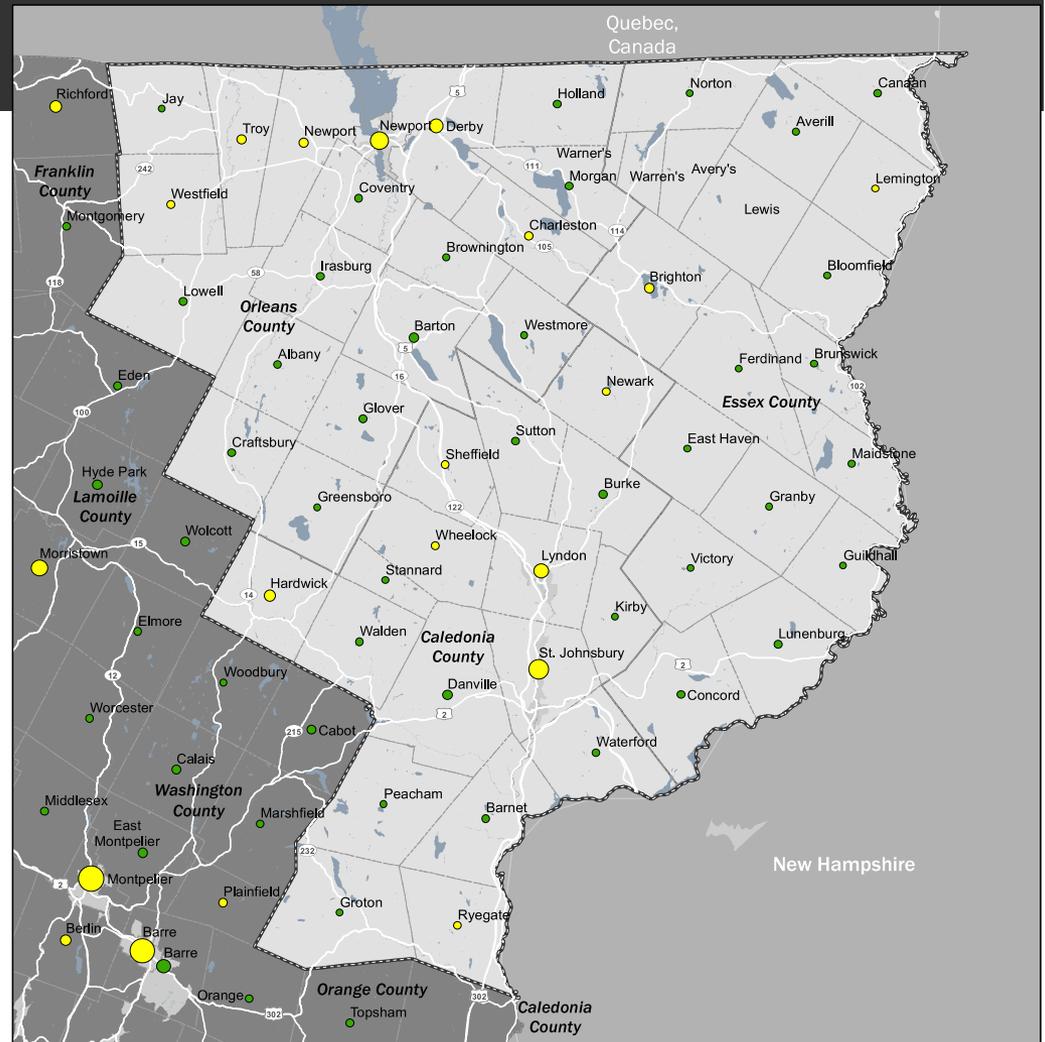
Considered households with no vehicles and those with two or more members with only one vehicle

## Concentrations

Most small towns below VT average

All larger towns above VT average, likely due to affordability

## Northeast Kingdom



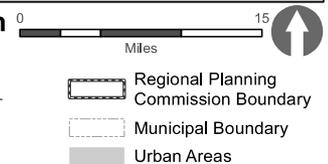
**% of Households with  
1 Person & 0 Cars or  
2+ People & 0-1 Cars**

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

VT Average = 20.6%

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

- 1
- 500
- 1,000
- 1,500
- 2,000

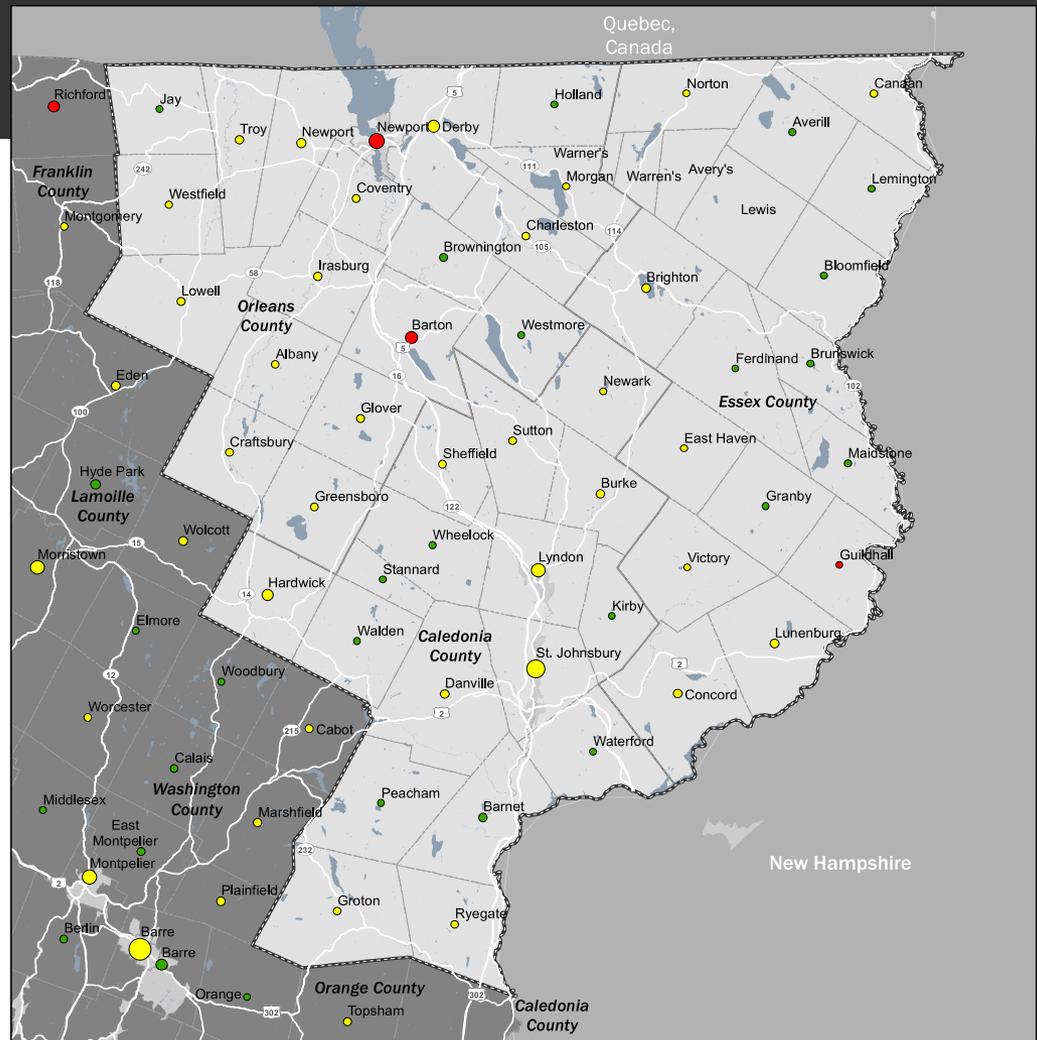


# Medicaid

Newport and Barton are above twice the VT average

St. Johnsbury, Lyndon, Derby, Hardwick and many small towns also above state average

## Northeast Kingdom



### % of Population Participating in Medicaid

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

VT Average = 27.2%

### Total Population Participating in Medicaid

- 1
- 1,750
- 3,500
- 5,250
- 7,000



- Regional Planning Commission Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Areas



# Themes Across Regions

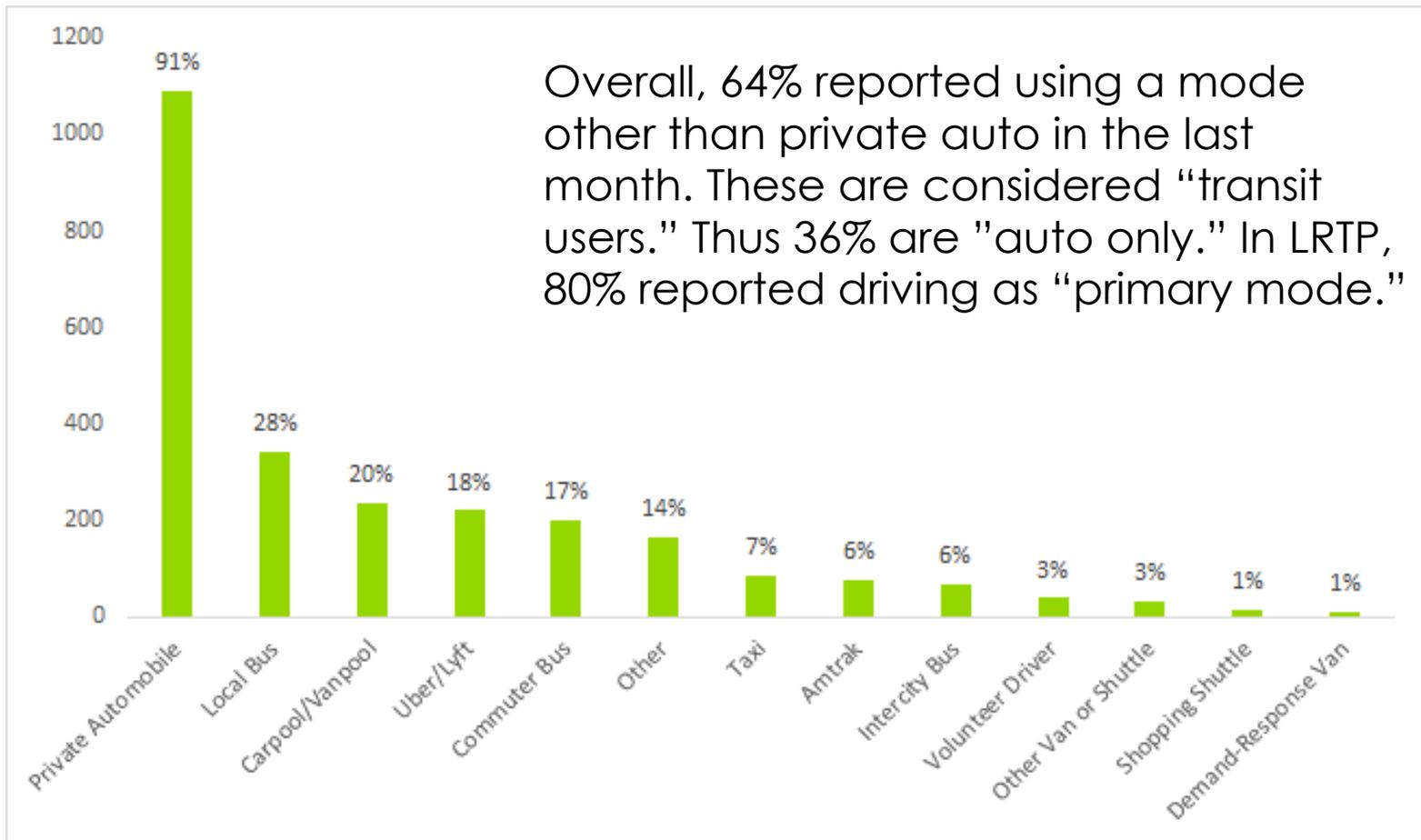
- ❑ Workforce development/access to jobs are transportation priorities
- ❑ Rural areas need options
- ❑ More integrated walk/bike/transit/driving networks would encourage transit use
- ❑ “First mile/last mile” needs
- ❑ Existing services and resources may not be well known
- ❑ Trip limits in some regions 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)



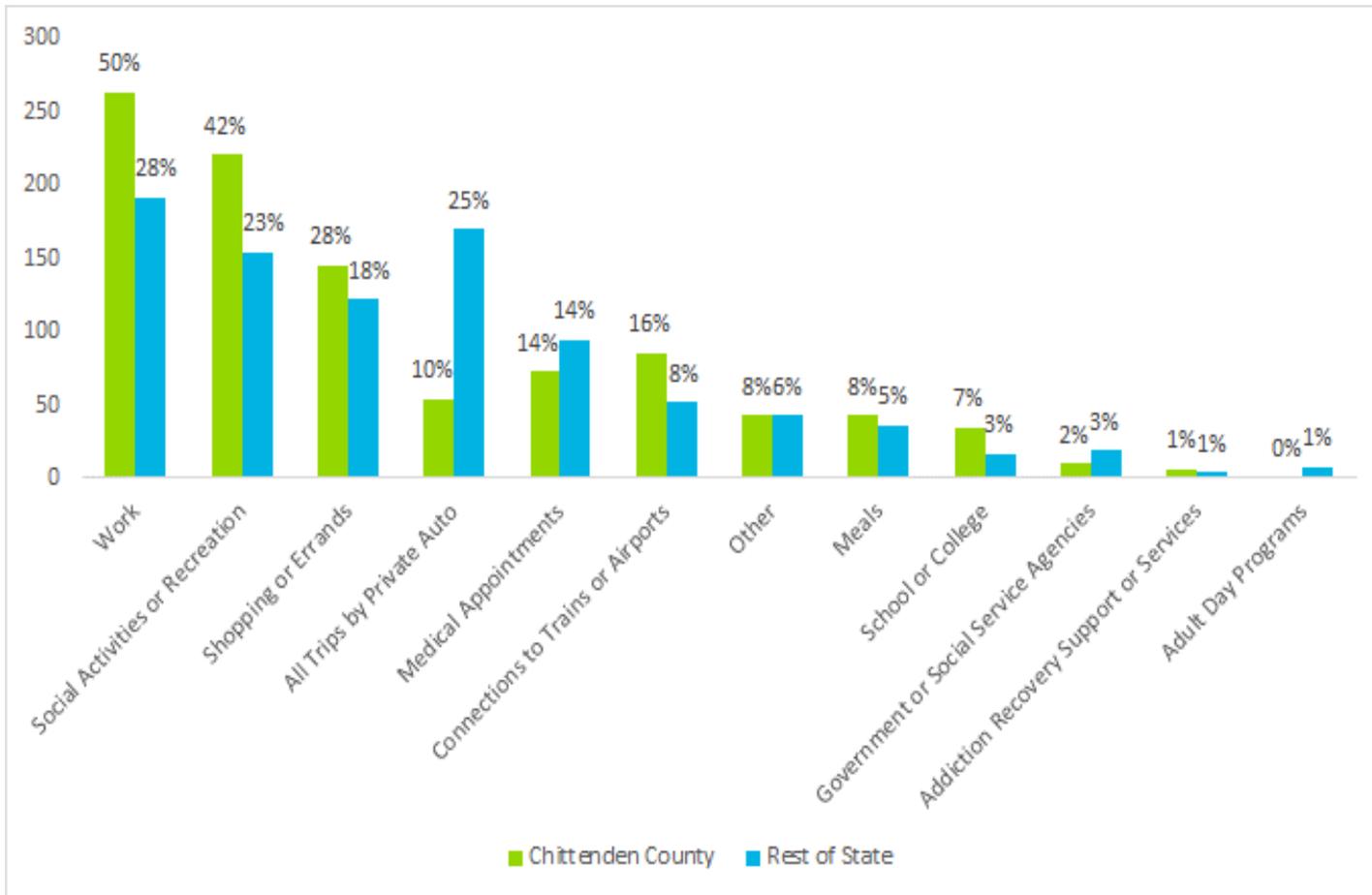
# Survey Highlights

- MetroQuest is widely used online engagement tool
  - Complements regional meetings and interviews
  - Spread word through website, social media, emails
- Sought 500 responses, but over 1,200 (Round 1) and 2,000 (Round 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

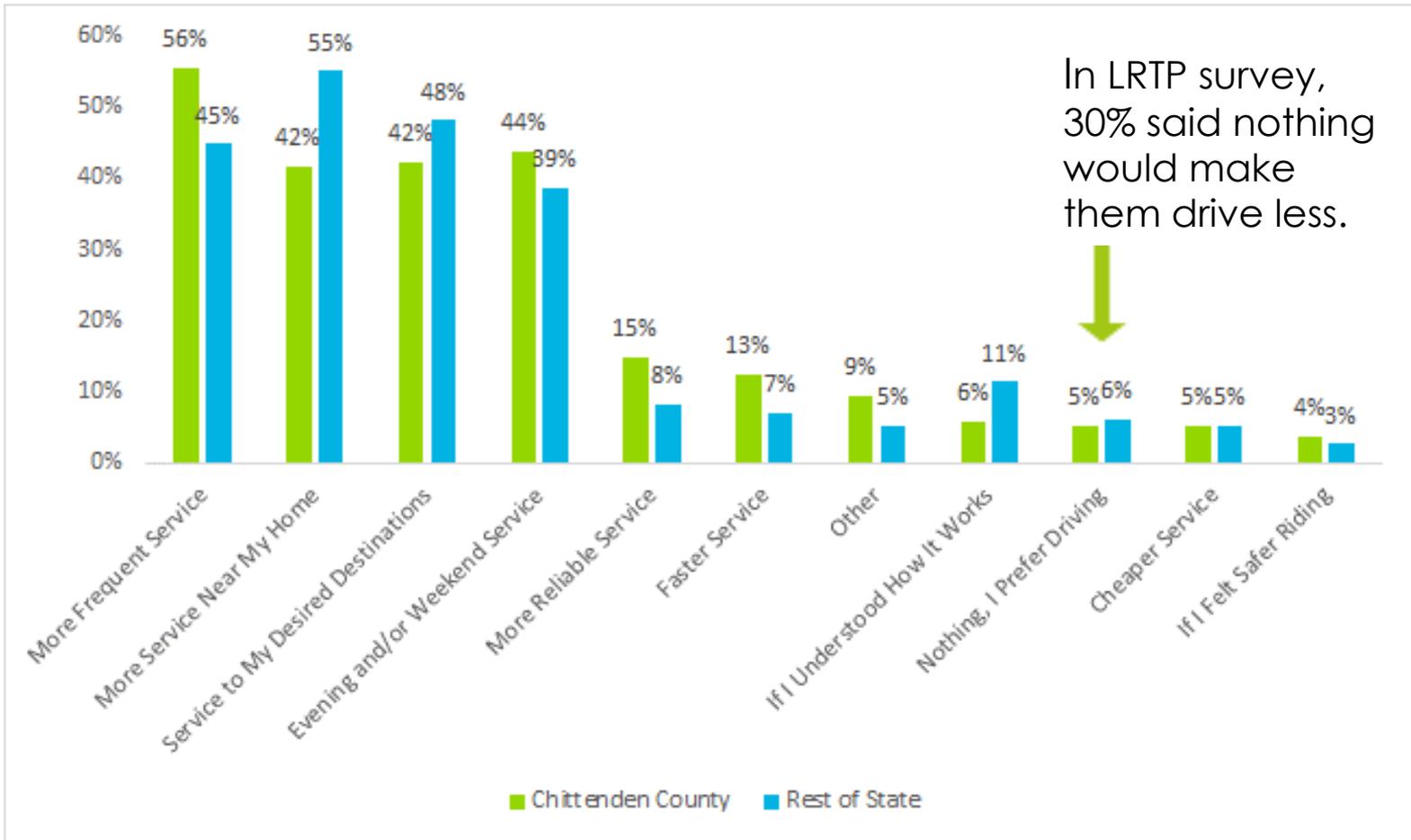
# Modes of Transportation Used



# Purposes of Transit Trips



# What would encourage you to use transit more often?





# Needs Assessment Methodology

- Identify service gaps and unmet needs
  - Location of transit services, key destinations, population and target groups
  - Commuting patterns
  - Input from regional forums
  - Comments from interviewed stakeholders
  - MetroQuest survey responses
  - Comments from regional E&D committees
- Estimate transit market segments by age, disability, income, and likely auto access
- Estimate number of trips to address need and associated resources
- Estimate impacts of possible scenarios



# Statewide Primary Needs Identified

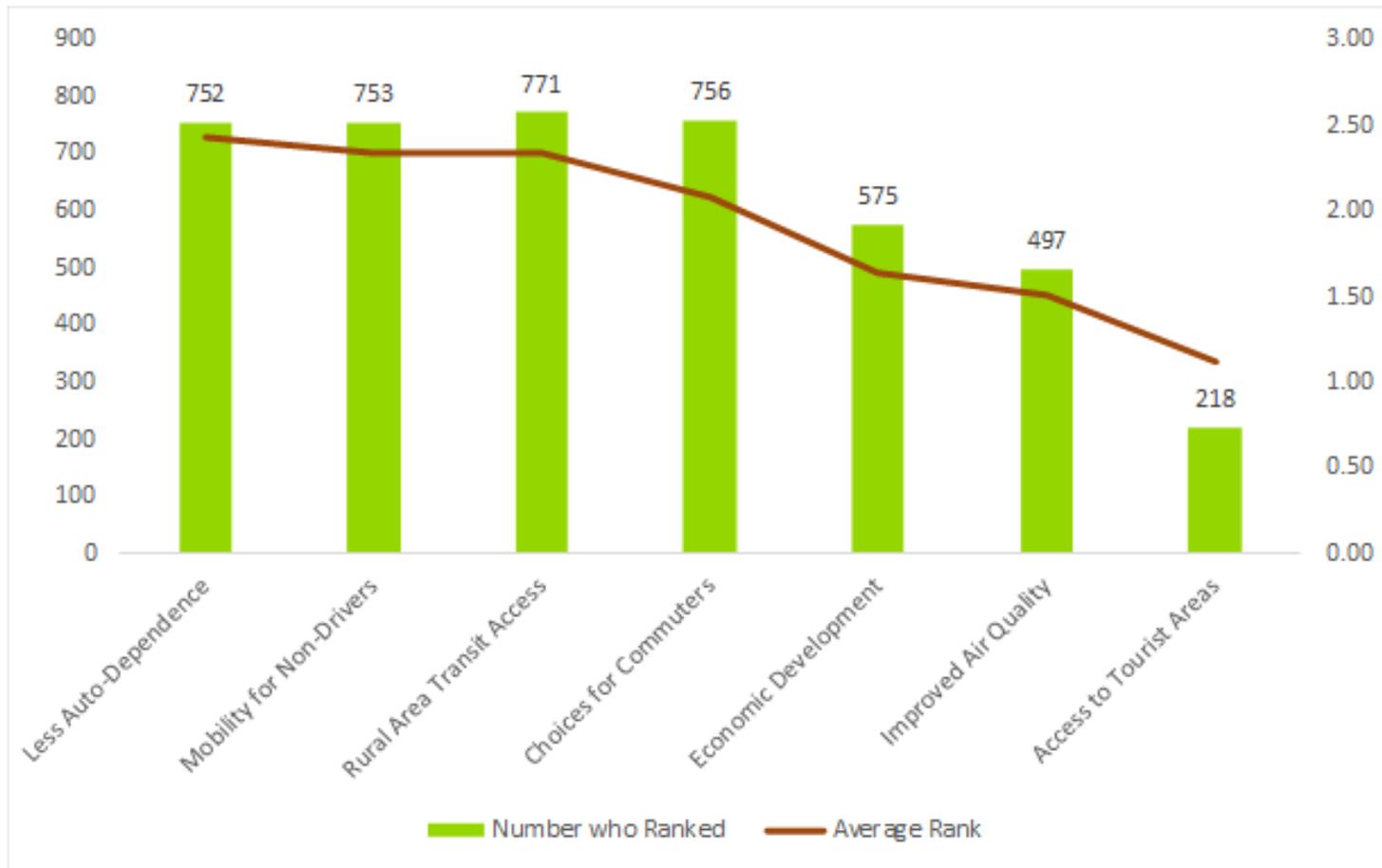
- ❑ Lack of transit access in rural areas
- ❑ Lack of resources to meet the needs of vulnerable populations both today and in the future
- ❑ Lack of transportation for access to jobs
- ❑ In areas that have bus routes, improved service levels and connections are needed



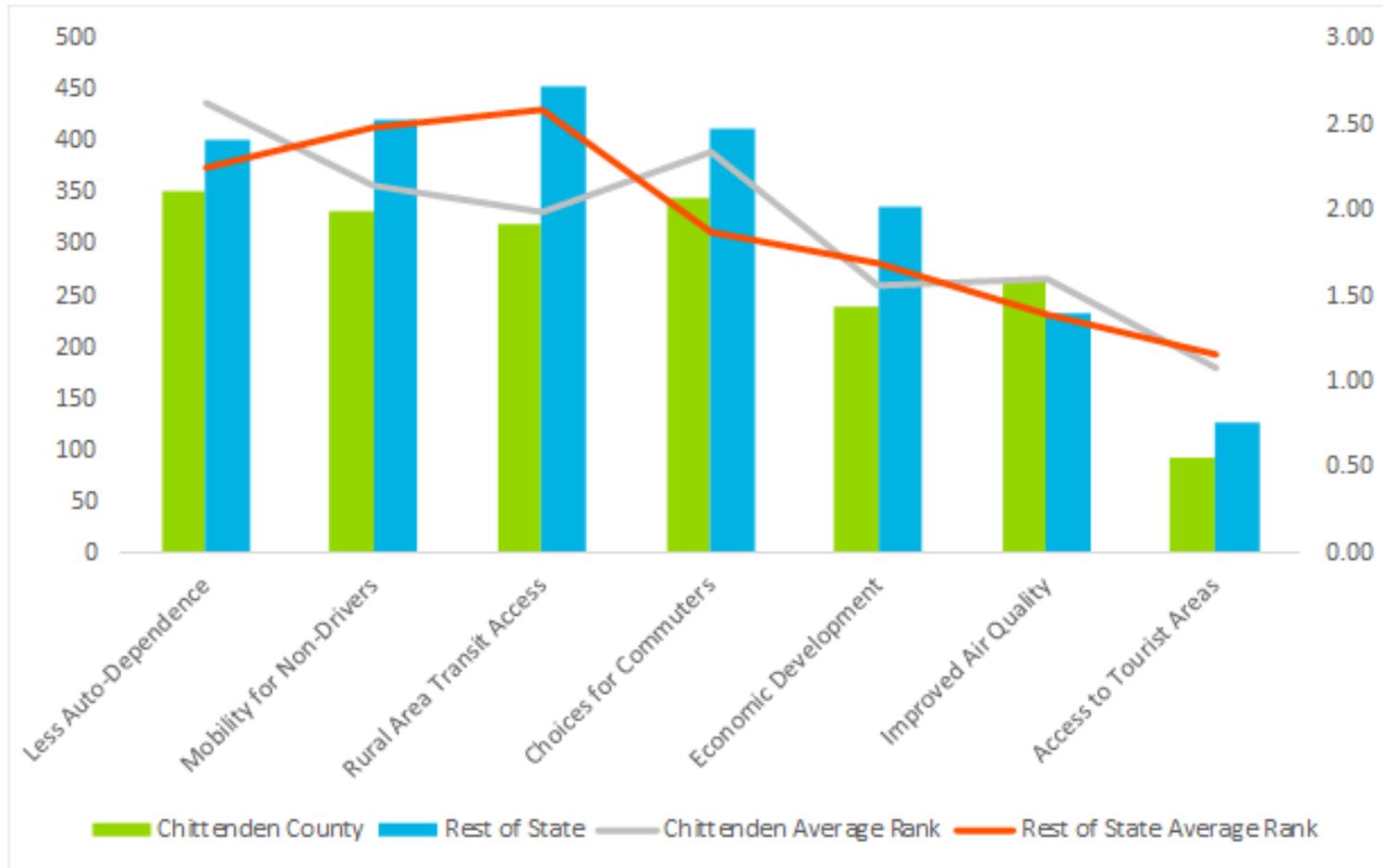
# Existing Goals: 24 V.S.A. §5083

- (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





# Proposed Goals

- (1) Providing basic mobility for transit-dependent people. Basic mobility allows for access to essential services including medical care (including mental health and dental services), food (grocery shopping and congregate meals), day care for children and older adults, and social and wellness resources.
- (2) Providing access to employment both for people who are not able to drive themselves and for people who choose to use transit vehicles and other shared-ride services to avoid congestion and the cost of automobile commuting
- (3) Expanding public transit service in rural areas for all trip purposes, making use of the most cost-effective means of serving low-density areas.
- (4) Providing convenient mobility choices to reduce the dependence on private automobiles, thereby reducing traffic congestion, preserving air quality, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and sustaining the viability of the highway network.
- (5) Supporting economic development in urban and rural areas, including services for workers and visitors that support the travel and tourism industry.



# 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

- Create working committee with AHS to address mobility issues for vulnerable Vermonters
- More comprehensive planning for E&D program
  - Work with E&D Committees to establish annual work plans
  - Implement statewide E&D riders satisfaction survey
  - Pilot additional performance monitoring methods such as determining and tracking unmet needs
  - Set up annual statewide meeting
  - Share best practices: coordination, low-cost trips, volunteer management
- Establish Personal Mobility Accounts
  - Expand Ticket To Ride statewide
  - Allow for deposits, gifts and possibly ride credits



# Expansion of Transit Access

- Spur growth of volunteer driver programs
  - Check box on VT vehicle registration form to register
  - Streamline background check process
  - Non-monetary incentives
  - Increase marketing budget
  - Support additional recruitment/retention efforts
  
- Expand access to healthcare
  - Expand Rides to Wellness statewide
  - Encourage financial participation from healthcare providers
  
- Expand access to employment
  - Increase awareness of carpool/vanpool (Go Vermont)
  - Enlist support of employers in new JobRides program
  - Create "late bus" for shift workers
  - Support additional partnerships with TNCs, volunteer groups, etc. where available



# Expansion of Transit Access cont.

- ❑ Expand local connections (first mile/last mile access)
  - ❑ Bike share and e-scooters where and when appropriate
  - ❑ Microtransit where appropriate
- ❑ Expand access to available seats in transit vehicles
- ❑ Expand funding pool overall – more service needed
  - ❑ Federal, state, local and private sector
  - ❑ To support improvements in
    - ❑ Geographic coverage
    - ❑ Span of service
    - ❑ More types (purposes) of trips



# Outreach and Raising Awareness

- Continue investment in Go Vermont
  - Increase marketing and awareness
  - Create interactive map of bus routes
  - Explore new program models and staffing
- VTrans-sponsored project to document stories of the value of public transit
- Establish statewide “ambassadors” program
- Create informational brochure: “How Transit Works in Vermont”
- Continue/expand partnerships and activities to raise awareness
  - Partners include AARP, State agencies, elected officials, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), Vermont Public Radio/Television



# Next Generation Ride Scheduling

- Work with microtransit companies to enhance software
  - Multi-program integration (Medicaid, E&D, client-pay, etc.)
  - Multi-resource integration (vans, taxis, volunteer drivers, bus routes, TNCs)
- Use expanded volunteer driver pool as a resource statewide
- Link to Personal Mobility Accounts



# Long-term Concepts

- Continue to work with state, regional and local agencies to integrate transit into land use planning
  - Continue to promote objectives from LRTP
    - Maintain and strengthen the vitality of Vermont's villages and downtowns.
    - Make transportation investments that promote active transportation and reduce social isolation.
- Invest in workforce development for transit provider staffing
- Support electrification of transit vehicle fleet



# 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](http://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/PTPP)
- ❑ Please forward comments and questions to Jackie Cassino at: [jackie.cassino@Vermont.gov](mailto:jackie.cassino@Vermont.gov)