

VERMONT WALK / BIKE SUMMIT

Bennington | Friday, May 8



Session Descriptions

May be subject to change

Bike Hub Open House

Walk, bike, or roll over to [the Bike Hub](#) and check out Bennington's nonprofit bike shop, offering sales, service, and education. In addition to its retail shop, the Bike Hub fosters a dynamic cycling community in Bennington by offering group rides, outreach and education, and free bikes and safety equipment to people in need through their Bikes for All program. 160 Benmont Avenue, Suite 36.

Session Block 1: 11:00am – 12:15pm

Twin State Rail Trail: Building the Network, Building the Vision

Bennington Free Library

This session will introduce the audience to the Twin State Rail Trail Vision, and how the rail trail networks of VT and New Hampshire can be tapped to connect communities, economies, and adventure through more than 1000 miles of Rail Trail. This big picture vision sets the stage to dive into the details of moving such an ambitious project forward. Presenters will highlight a recent rail trail feasibility study that holds significant potential to connect the twin states, and how Vermont precedent can inform New Hampshire practice. Presenters from Cross NH Adventure Trail, SE Group, and Stantec will present details of how a rail trail project can build support across numerous user groups and move big visions forward, one project at a time.

Speakers:

Marianne Borowski, Cross NH Adventure Trail

Dayton Crites, SE Group

Sean Neely Stantec

Elena Juodisius, SE Group

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration

Toole Design Housing & Transportation Study

Bennington Theater Green Room

Cost of living is a major concern across Vermont, driven largely by rising housing costs and closely linked household transportation expenses. Toole Design and Community Scale have completed several recent projects examining housing affordability through a transportation lens. A key finding is that the lowest-cost locations for new housing construction often impose hidden, long-term transportation costs on residents, undermining true affordability.

At the same time, recent years have seen significant progress in planning for more affordable, transportation-efficient housing. In Vermont, CCRPC and partner organizations have advanced multiple Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plans through a RAISE grant. While implementation will require substantial investment, these plans support more affordable living through expanded active transportation options and improved access to transit, yielding social and health benefits for future residents.

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Panelists have worked on several projects at the intersection of housing affordability and transportation, including the Vergennes–South Ferrisburgh Transportation-Oriented Development Master Plan, the GPMetro BRT Plan, and the CMRPC Housing and Transportation Study. They will discuss how to identify optimal locations for housing based on overall affordability, strategies for reducing vehicle dependence in existing communities, and lessons from planning housing that aligns with Smart Growth principles as defined by the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

Speakers:

Lucy Gibson, Toole Design Group

Jeff Sauser, Community Scale

Hugh Kelley, Toole Design Group

Topic Areas: Social Connection Through Active Transportation, Designing Streets for Everyone

Building Connection & Collaboration in the NEK: Roads for All and Village to Village Connections

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington

This session will highlight two initiatives to bolster active transportation and connection in the Northeast Kingdom: Village to Village Connections (V2V) and Ticket to Ride.

V2V was formed to promote health, well-being, and social connections in the Danville community by implementing and managing the Danville Village to Village Master Plan, with an emphasis on integrating the Vermont Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) to grow the recreation economy throughout Danville. The presentation will highlight the current projects and the partners, and provide specific examples of how public-private collaborations leveraged resources to create and improve active transportation opportunities and social connections in one rural Vermont town.

In the second presentation, Bevin Barber-Campbell will focus on lessons learned as a bicycle advocate in the NEK where there is little to no bicycle infrastructure. Bevin will focus on the concept of capitalizing on the notion of "Roads for All," which is the current and historical reality in the most rural corners of our state. With the funding challenges for bike-ped infrastructure, it is all the more imperative that we focus on helping people to be safe vehicular cyclists, while championing the notion that roads in Vermont have always been "for all." Specifically, Bevin will address how we can focus on education and encouragement initiatives, multi-modal transportation, and what this creative programming can look like. She will highlight the program she just launched called Ticket to Ride, and provide tips on how to build partnerships, including how to collaborate with transit services.

Speakers:

Laural Ruggles, Village to Village Connections, Inc.

Bevin Barber-Campbell, Ticket to Ride

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration, Social Connection Through Active Transportation

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Completing the Trip: Walking, Biking, and Transit as One System

Bennington Theater Auditorium

In much of Vermont, public transit will never deliver riders directly to the front door of their destination. Whether transit meaningfully expands access to opportunity depends on the quality of the walk and bike connections that complete the trip—often across busy roads, past large parking lots that separate front doors from the street, or along disjointed road networks that require circuitous and uncomfortable walking or biking. This session explores how safe, direct pedestrian and bicycle access to transit can unlock far greater benefits than improvements to any single mode in isolation.

Using Essex Junction's Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan and related Pearl Street corridor projects as case studies, the presentation examines how land use patterns and street design work together to support effective transit. It highlights key built-environment characteristics—density, walkability, linear corridors, proximity to destinations, and a mix of uses—and shows how targeted investments such as safer crossings, bike paths, and corridor-level design changes can dramatically expand the reach and usefulness of existing and future transit service.

Speakers:

Chris Yuen, City of Essex Junction

Briana O. Cronin, Hoyle Tanner

Alyssa Smith, Hoyle Tanner

Jacqueline LeBlanc, Stantec

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration, Designing Streets for Everyone

Complete Streets from Planning to Maintaining

324 Main St. Community Room

This session will explore the connection between planning, designing and maintaining complete street features. Following a brief overview of complete streets within the Vermont context this session will include two presentations and a panel discussion.

Presentations:

1. Speed Humps on Cochran Road– Byran Davis, CCRPC Transportation Planner
2. AOT managed Luce Hill Intersection Project– Presenter TBD
3. Panel: Three municipality roadcrew staff will engage in a panel discussion on the maintenance and operations of complete street elements.

Topic Areas: Designing Streets for Everyone

Mobile Session: Bennington Walk Audit with Mark Fenton

Meet in Bennington Theater Lobby

National public health, planning, and transportation consultant, [Mark Fenton](#) will lead an engaging walk audit of downtown Bennington. The walk audit will highlight existing biking/pedestrian infrastructure in the downtown and identify areas for improvement, and conclude with a participant debrief. Rain or shine!

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Session Block 2: 1:15pm – 2:30pm

From Data to Decisions: Translating Multimodal Safety Analysis into Actionable Outcomes in Bar Harbor, Maine

Bennington Free Library

Bar Harbor is a small coastal town on Mount Desert Island that serves as the primary gateway to Acadia National Park, which receives more than four million visits each year. This intense and highly seasonal influx places significant pressure on Bar Harbor's historic, constrained street network, creating multimodal safety risks—particularly for vulnerable users—that are not always captured through crash data alone. Bar Harbor's Vision Zero Plan, funded through a federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning grant, demonstrates how combining diverse data sources with community insight can produce a clear, defensible roadmap for safety investments without overburdening local capacity.

This session will walk through the Bar Harbor SS4A project's end-to-end data collection and analysis framework, highlighting how multiple complementary datasets were integrated to identify priority safety needs. The session will conclude by discussing how analytical findings were translated into actionable recommendations—including location specific concepts, operational improvements, and policy initiatives—rather than remaining abstract or aspirational.

By sharing lessons from Bar Harbor's SS4A process, this session will equip attendees with replicable approaches for turning complex safety data into clear, implementable decisions that advance Vision Zero goals in communities of any size.

Speakers:

Jessa Berna, Stantec

Evan Drew, Stantec

Jacqueline LeBlanc, Stantec

Topic Areas: Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety, Designing Streets for Everyone

TPI Program Overview

Bennington Theater Green Room

The Transportation Planning Initiative provides continuous funding to RPCs to conduct regional and municipal transportation planning. We will cover what work tasks are eligible and how RPC work weaves together with VTrans and Municipal work to move the network forward. We will also discuss the Better Connections Program and how it fits into the transportation planning landscape.

Speakers:

Abe Koffman, Vermont Agency of Transportation

Faith Dall, Vermont Agency of Transportation

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration, Designing Streets for Everyone

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Economic Impact of Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington

This session will report on the full results of a yearlong study of the economic impact of Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports. Vermont Adaptive works to make an active and healthy lifestyle available to everyBODY through inclusive outdoor sport programs and by championing accessible and adaptive trails in Vermont through initiatives such as the Vermont Trails Accessibility Hub. In order to do this work, organizations like Vermont Adaptive need equitable access to data that can communicate the value of adaptive recreation. However, in many states, there is very little or no economic impact data for people with disabilities and adaptive sports recreationists, placing them at a disadvantage when competing for funding and leaving decision-makers unaware of the significant economic impacts this group produces. This study combined insights from participant and volunteer spending surveys, economic impact modeling of the organization's operations, and an assessment of three large events. Presenters will share background information on the current state of economic impact data available with disabilities, the results from all three sections of the Vermont Adaptive study, and the ways that the emerging data from this study can be used to advocate for other adaptive programs and inspire more research on the impact of adaptive recreation. Presenters will also explain how this study contributes to the broader goals of the Vermont Trail Accessibility Hub – a comprehensive initiative focused on detailed assessments, enhancing Trail Finder, and equipping trail managers with vital resources to improve outdoor access.

Speakers:

Drew Pollak-Bruce, CRO Planning & Design

Abigail Johnson, CRO Planning & Design

Jeff Alexander, Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports

Topic Areas: Designing Streets for Everyone

Planning and Implementation of Active Transportation Projects

Bennington Theater Auditorium

This session will focus on how planning for active transportation projects take places at the regional level and what it takes to actually implement active transportation projects in Vermont municipalities. First, Nick Zaiac will give an overview of BCRC's integration of bike/ped planning with land use planning including Act 181 and the regional active transportation guide. Next, Rita Seto will discuss the Town of Royalton's Chelsea Business Block ADA upgrades project. She'll walk through the development of the project including NEPA, historic preservation and ROW (including dealing with railroad) and project cost management. Such a large impact bike ped project takes time and Rita will break down the various elements, challenges and how they're overcoming to keep the project momentum going.

Speakers:

Nick Zaiac, Bennington County Regional Commission

Rita Seto, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

Evan Detrick, VHB

Topic Areas: Designing Streets for Everyone

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Planned and Unplanned Movement: Small Shared-Use Paths and Unplanned Pedestrian Paths 324 Main St. Community Room

This session will examine small shared-use paths, both planned and unplanned, and their importance to communities. First, the session will explore the development history and impact of two local trails: the Bennington Rail Trail, and the Cambridge Greenway. Presenters will discuss the history and creation of the trails and their impact on movement in their communities. Next, Middlebury College student, Samuel West Robertson, will present his senior thesis, which focuses on unplanned pedestrian paths and movement in the town of Middlebury. Following an introduction to the project, the presentation will involve an in-depth and multifaceted look at the legal and physical conditions of various study locations. The presentation will discuss people's perceptions of unplanned pedestrian paths, how these paths can be improved, how they can be reconciled with local planning goals and how insights from the Middlebury study can be applied to other municipalities.

Speakers:

Laird MacDowell, Cambridge Trails Committee

Mark Anders, Bennington County Regional Commission

Samuel West Robertson, Middlebury College

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration, Social Connection Through Active Transportation

Mobile Session: Walking Tour of Planned Cemetery Connector Path in Bennington Meet in Putnam Block Courtyard

This walking tour will highlight the newest planned connection with the [Walloomsac Valley Pathway](#), a network of shared use paths in Bennington. The proposed path will connect to the Greenberg Headwaters Park via the Village Cemetery off of Morgan Street. The tour is approximately 2.5 miles long, mostly flat, with some uneven ground.

Tour leader:

Shannon Barsotti, Town of Bennington

Session Block 3: 2:45pm – 4:00pm

Chartered Territory: Cross-Border and Intra-Municipal Cycling Maps Bennington Free Library

This session will present two different cycling map projects from both a municipal and regional context. Michael Giguere will present on Essex Junction's cycling map, including development & design decisions, publication process, community impacts, and lessons learned & advice for replicability. Next, CRO Planning & Design will present on their joint project with Community Geographics and the Northern Forest Center to design a map for a cross-border gravel-bike-optimized cycling route that circumnavigates Lake Memphremagog and incorporates several towns in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Beginning in Newport, Vermont, this gravel route's map will provide descriptions for each of the suggested four days of riding, and

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will highlight key points of interest, such as camping/lodging and dining establishments, public restrooms, and scenic viewpoints.

The purpose of this project is to use bicycling and gravel road riding as a tool for economic development for Newport, VT, and the Eastern Townships (e.g., Magog, Sutton, Sherbrooke), just across the US-Canadian border. The project involves significant collaboration and coordination with northern Vermont communities as well as the Eastern Townships Tourism Association in the creation and promotion of this gravel route in hopes of extending more tourism dollars across our borders. The project is being funded as part of an overarching VOREC grant that Newport received to help boost the outdoor recreation economy in that community.

Speakers:

Michael Giguere, City of Essex Junction

Carolyn Lawrence, CRO Planning & Design

Drew Pollak-Bruce, CRO Planning & Design

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration, Social Connection Through Active Transportation

The Present and Future of Micro Mobility: Safety and Regulatory Considerations

Bennington Theater Green Room

Recent improvements in data collection methods for active transportation have identified important factors in cyclist and pedestrian safety that were difficult to consider before video analysis, and these data collection methods became readily available. CyclingSavvy instructor, Bruce Lierman, will summarize findings from "Data-driven planning for bicycling", a report by the Orlando Metropolitan Planning Commission, that improves our understanding of the impacts of cyclist facilities, land use, and speed. The analysis included People for Bikes Bicycle Network Score data from locations around the US. Jack Evans from Local Motion will then give an overview of the risks that micro mobility batteries are posing, and the major regulatory reactions in places like New York, San Francisco, London, Paris, and within Chittenden County. The presentation looks at the causes of these fires, how governments are responding, the costs those regulations are imposing on new housing, and what all of that looks like in the context of Chittenden County's housing goals.

Speakers:

Bruce Lierman, CyclingSavvy, the Bike Hub

Jack Evans, Local Motion

Topic Areas: Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety

The Ecopsychology of Transportation: How We Move on This Land and Why That Really Matters

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington

Transportation is often framed about getting from point A to point B. As walkers and cyclists, we know that there is more to it than that.

But how much do we really know? What might we be missing to truly inspire "the why" of active transportation? Taking a deep dive into the often-overlooked dynamics of our bodies and core capacities to sense and feel, we'll explore the magic that happens when moving through the human and more-than-human

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worlds fully and actively engaged. We will also investigate the language within the field we call “transportation” and consider new approaches to reframe and communicate about it with our greater embodied humanity in mind.

Furthermore, we'll probe into the largely unspoken implications of the indiscriminate application of the automobile and how it fundamentally disconnects our felt experience to the world, thereby profoundly constricting our ability to authentically respond to vital issues like livable communities and especially climate change. Along the way we will look into the micromobility revolution (e-bikes, e-cargo bikes) and its potential corrective implications for the losses incurred by our automotive culture, or what we will call "automobilism."

Speakers:

Dave Cohen, VBike

Topic Areas: Social Connection Through Active Transportation

From Auto-Oriented to Walkable: Advancing Active Mobility Through Partner Collaboration, Community Engagement & Walk Audits ***Bennington Theater Auditorium***

This session examines Williston Walks!, a multi-partner community initiative that advanced people-centered walkable neighborhood principles through coalition building and community engagement.

Focusing on Williston's Taft Corners growth area, presenters will share lessons from a year-long engagement process involving residents, seniors, businesses, property owners, public works staff, and regional and state planning and health partners. Despite decades of auto-oriented development and the influence of interstate and state highways, this project identifies practical, community-supported improvements to pedestrian safety, comfort, and connectivity.

Participants will gain a transferable framework for collaborating and organizing inclusive walk audits; strategies for engaging people where they are—both physically and ideologically; and tools to translate lived experience into actionable recommendations that inform planning, policy, and implementation.

Speakers:

Melinda Scott, Town of Williston

Deb Sachs, Net Zero Vermont

Peggy O'Neill-Vivanco, Vermont Clean Communities

Melissa Needham, Vermont Department of Health

Topic Areas: Social Connection Through Active Transportation, Designing Streets for Everyone

The Smart Growth Toolkit: Navigating Act 181 and Local Advocacy ***324 Main St. Community Room***

This session will provide individuals and local groups with the practical skills needed to advocate for smart growth within their communities by promoting active transportation connections that link new housing developments to town centers. The workshop will begin with a presentation overview of how state-level policies have successfully paved the way for active transportation between housing and town centers,

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highlighting Act 181 and the work of the Transportation for Vermonters Coalition (T4VT). To bring these concepts to the community level, we will examine two specific case studies: the ongoing advocacy for infrastructure linking a new housing development to Shelburne Village, and the effort to restore walkability in Waterbury Center through the Better Connections grant. The session will then transition into small-group discussions facilitated by Local Motion and VNRC staff. These breakout groups will cover specific tools, covering funding opportunities like CHIP and the Downtown Transportation Fund, strategies for starting local walk/bike advocacy groups, and effective ways to collaborate with town staff on connectivity projects.

Speakers:

Marcie Gallagher, Local Motion

Richard Amore, Local Motion

Evelyn Seidner, Vermont Natural Resources Council

Kati Gallagher, Vermont Natural Resources Council

Topic Areas: Cross-Border and Cross-Modal Collaboration

Mobile Session: Bike Tour of Bennington's Shared-Use Path Network

Meet in Putnam Block Courtyard

This bike tour will explore Bennington's emerging shared-use path network. We will follow the planned route of the Walloomsac Valley Pathway, which will connect existing and proposed bike and pedestrian projects including the Rail Trail, Riverwalk, and Ninja Path—into a continuous corridor through both natural and urban environments to link many of Bennington's trip generators including downtown Bennington, Headwaters Park, Bennington College, and the Village of North Bennington. The tour is approximately 8 miles long, mostly flat, and includes a few short dirt sections. Please bring your own bike!

Tour Leaders:

Mark Anders, Bennington County Regional Commission

Jim Sullivan, Bennington Select Board