



VTTrans Fall 2022 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant Application

Thoroughly read the ***Vermont Transportation Alternatives Fall 2022 Application Guide*** before you begin your application. It includes important program information and step-by-step instructions. Pay particular attention to the application process requirements. **Applications are due in hand or by e-mail by December 14, 2022.** Please e-mail the completed application to:
Scott.robertson@vermont.gov

Town of Sharon 2022 Scoping Study
(Project Name/Title)

Nicola Shipman
(Municipality contact person responsible
for the management of this project)

Sharon
(Town)

05065
(Zip Code)

PO Box 250 Sharon, VT 05065
(Mailing Address)

802.763.8268 ext. 4
(Phone)

selectboard@sharonvt.net
(e-mail address)

\$ 48,000
Amount of **Federal Funds requested** (no more
than 80% of the project cost estimate).

\$ 12,000
Amount of Local Match. Example:
Federal Award = \$300,000 (80% of total)
Local Match = \$75,000 (20% of total)
Total Project Cost = \$375,000 (100% of the total)

County: WINDSOR

Town/Village/City: SHARON

Specific location, street, or road: VT-14 and VT-132 in the Designated Village District

Regional Planning Commission: Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission

If a linear project, what is the length in feet? This is to be determined by the Scoping Study

Is the project on or intersecting to a State maintained highway? Yes ☒ No ☐

- *Note: If yes, be sure to include documentation that you have notified the VTrans District Transportation Administrator of the intent to apply for TA funding and have provided them with a brief (one paragraph) description of the proposed project.*

Project type being applied for: ☒ Scoping ☐ Design/Construction

The municipality understands that a typical construction project utilizing Transportation Alternatives Program funds will take roughly three years (min.) in the Design and ROW phases prior to going to construction (as pointed out in the TA Program Application Guide)? Yes ☒ No ☐

Does this project have a previously completed scoping or feasibility study? Yes ☐ No ☒

Note:

Attach a map(s) of the project area and clearly show the limits of the project as well as surrounding benefits from the proposed improvement. If the project is within or adjacent to a designated downtown, village or growth center, clearly indicate the relationship of the proposed project to the boundary of the designated area. Color photos of the area are also recommended.

Fiscal Information:

Accounting System Automated ☐ Manual ☐ Combination ☒

SAM Unique Identifier # PBZDV2KCHG93

Fiscal Year End Month June

Property Ownership:

If the proposed project is on private property that will need to be acquired by the Municipality through purchase, easement, or eminent domain (includes temporary construction rights) in accordance with the "Uniform Act", then the municipality is committed to exercising its right of **eminent domain** to acquire the rights to construct the project if necessary. Yes ☒ No ☐

Funding:

Does this project already have existing funding? If so, please describe.

Yes ☐

No ☒

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Will you accept an award less than you applied for?

Yes ☒

No ☐

- If yes, please indicate whether local funds will be used to make up the shortfall, or if the project scope will be reduced. If the project scope is to be reduced, describe what part of the project (please be specific) you would accept partial funding for.

If we were to receive less funding than applied for, we would exclude the exploration of a bike lane/advisory shoulder on Route 14 from the Designated Village to The Sharon Academy High School.

A support letter from the governing body of the applicant municipality or organization and an acknowledgement and source of the local match and commitment to future maintenance responsibility for construction projects is required (must be dated within 1 year of the application). Is a letter of support attached?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Regional Planning Commission Letter of Support:

In order to apply, the project must have a letter of support from the regional planning commission. Is a letter of support attached?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Application Scoring Criteria:

- 1. Please give a brief description of the project (be sure to indicate the primary facility type being applied for and be concise). (10 points max.)**

The Town of Sharon is looking to evaluate alternative transportation access and upgrade existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure within the Village Center Designation that is along VT14 and VT132. We are hoping to address issues including outdated drainage, inadequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure, lack of ADA-compliance for pedestrian access, increasing school-aged population, the bisection of our community by I-89, heavy traffic in the village during school pick up, poorly lit and unsafe crossings from the Park and Ride to the sidewalk, and the high volume of pass-through traffic in the village.

In 2001, at the request of TSA Middle School and the Town of Sharon, the State lowered the speed limit on the 0.227 mile section of VT-132 from 30mph to 25mph. Heading north from the junction of VT-132 and VT-14, the 0.349 mile section of Route 14 is posted at 35 mph. The speed limit increases to 40 mph until just before the I-89 overpass, at which point the speed limit increases to 50 mph. We would like to evaluate actual rate of travel versus posted speed limits, and determine whether the speeds are appropriate to the use and conditions.

In 2021, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for VT14 between the VT-132 intersection and the River Road intersection was calculated at 3555 vehicles a day. On Route 132, between I-89

and VT14, the AADT was tabulated at 1552. These are significant numbers for a small town to handle.

We will need the guidance of a strong and creative scoping study to find solutions to create a more vibrant, connected, livable and walkable village for our residents and visitors. If we do not work to resolve these challenges, we could inadvertently inhibit the sense of connected community and constrict the economic vitality and residential viability of our town.

- 2. What is the feasibility of this project? Feasibility (or Scoping) study applications will not be scored on this criterion. Also, please describe the extent of project development completed to date. (10 points max.)**

This proposal is a scoping study.

- 3. Does this project address a need identified in a local or regional planning document? If so, please describe. (5 points max.)**

The Sharon Town Plan specifically addresses the need for alternative transport in its goals and policies for Transportation outlined in Section XVI of the Town Plan addressing Energy.

Stated Town Plan Goals:

- To increase awareness and use of energy conservation practices through educational outreach to the public.
- To increase public transportation opportunities throughout the community, including park-and-ride access, bus service, biking paths, and sidewalks.
- To promote greater use of existing public transportation services by community members.

Stated Town Plan Policies

It is the policy of the Town to promote energy efficient travel by residents by encouraging walking, carpooling, increased use of public transportation, telecommuting, home businesses, and safe bike routes

- 4. Does this project benefit a State Designated Center per the link below (i.e., downtowns, villages, or neighborhood growth centers recognized by the Vermont Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development? (10 Points Max.)**
<http://maps.vermont.gov/ACCD/PlanningAtlas/index.html?viewer=PlanningAtlas>

Yes, the study area encompasses the designated Village in Sharon and is recognized by the Vermont Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development.

5. Provide a project cost estimate below (project costs below include both federal dollars and local dollars). Projects will be scored based on whether the cost appears realistic for the size and scope of the project. For scoping studies, use PE and Local Project Management lines only.

Note: If you are applying for additional funds for an existing project, show the amount being requested for this grant in the PE, ROW, Construction, Construction Engineering, and Municipal Project Management rows below. Also, be clear regarding total project cost and other funding amounts and sources in the additional funding comments box below. **(10 points max.)**

Preliminary Engineering (PE) (Engineering, Surveying, Permitting)	\$ 54,000
Right-of-way / Acquisition (ROW) (appraisals, land acquisition and legal fees)	\$ Click here to enter value
Construction (construction costs with reasonable contingency)	\$ Click here to enter value
Construction Engineering (cost to provide inspection during construction)	\$ Click here to enter value
Municipal Project Management Costs (minimum of 10% of total PE, ROW and Construction Phases).	\$ 6,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 60,000

Addition Funding Comments: (ex. Total and additional funding for existing projects)
[Click here to enter text.](#)

6. Select the eligibility category below (A, B, C or D) that best fits your project and answer the corresponding questions for that category (choose only one category). **10 bonus points will be awarded to projects that are primarily Bicycle or Pedestrian facilities.**

☒ **A. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (includes Safe Routes for Non-Drivers and Conversion of abandoned railroad corridors.**

- (i) Will the project contribute to a system of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities?
(10 points max.)

We believe a scoping study is the best way forward as it will help the Town find solutions to the many of the inhibitors of safe passage for pedestrians in our village and improve the quality of life for our residents and visitors alike.

We also know that amenities such as safe routes to school, access to cycle lanes, and traffic calming are all considered to be a benefit to residents and may in fact be a reason why they might choose to stay in our town or, in future, choose to move to our Town.

The Town is planning to install a Kiosk which will include wayfinding maps, local bike routes and a bike repair station at our Town Office located across Route 132 from the Exit 2 Park and Ride as an amenity to day trippers, hikers, nature enthusiasts and cyclists.

The Town has a strong relationship with Tri-Valley Transit and supports its mission of providing alternatives to single passenger commuter vehicles. We appreciate that Tri-Valley Transit allows for bike transportation on their buses, and we would like to encourage more riders to take advantage of this option.

In addition, the Exit 2 VTrans Park and Ride is slated for an upgrade with construction to begin sometime in 2025.

We believe this is an excellent time to create a more wholistic and comprehensive network for alternative travel. A scoping study will help us to envision improved bike and pedestrian access throughout the village area and be a more safe and vibrant community.

Finally, we believe that if we don't make some of these changes soon, Sharon risks becoming a "pass through" town and may become trapped, economically and geographically, by its own inability to move forward into the future.

(ii) Will the project provide access to likely generators of pedestrian and/or bicyclist activity? **(10 points max.)**

We see intrepid cyclists attempting to make the most of our scenic bike routes, children and teens walking to and from school without clearly delineated sidewalks, families walking their dogs and older residents navigating difficult traffic patterns all while drivers seem less cognizant of pedestrians and are traveling at higher rates of speed than the posted limits.

That said, we believe that if there were a safer, more comprehensively designed alternative transportation network, we would see certainly see even more people walking and biking in Town. It is exciting to envision a safe way for pedestrians and cyclists to commute to the Sharon Elementary School, The Sharon Academy Middle School, the post office, the library, to church, and the Town Offices. Along Route 14, they could connect to Sandy's Restaurant, The Sharon Health Center, the abundant river access points and The Sharon Academy High School.

(iii) Will the project address a known, documented safety concern? **(10 points max.)**

The Town of Sharon Bike and Pedestrian infrastructure is outdated, and it is not designed to accommodate today's traffic patterns. Our sidewalks are not ADA-compliant nor are they safe for our older pedestrians who struggle with the uneven sidewalks and narrow passageways that are created, particularly in winter. Cyclists are currently at a disadvantage as there is no delineated path for travel, and vehicular traffic is moving at higher rates of speed and with higher density than the roads were designed to handle. In Fiscal Year 2022, the Windsor County Sheriff's Department issued 68 tickets in the 35-mph speed zone on Route 14 alone.

In the Spring of 2022, a resident called the town regarding safety concerns when he witnessed a vehicle nearly collide with a student and the assisting crossing guard on Route 132. In our attempt to address his concerns, we found a litany of issues from the placement of crosswalks, ineffective signage, a lack of sidewalks, and poor driver awareness.

We reached out to VTrans and Tri-Valley Transit as possible partners in solving the safety issues. Tri-Valley Transit agreed that their drivers see the Route 132 crossing as dangerous. Tri-Valley Transit was also willing to investigate alternative bus stops for the Middle School students, but to date we have been unable to find a suitable alternative due to the complicated traffic patterns and near constant flow of traffic at the school during school drop off and pick up times.

Jon Kaplan at VTrans sent the Town a thoughtful and rapid response to our safety concerns including a map of ways the Town could make changes.

Mr. Kaplan included in his response the following:

- We would be open to approving the relocation of the existing mid-block crosswalk that leads to the Congregational church to a new location from the Park and Ride to the south side of School St. Just to be clear, we would not support keeping the existing crosswalk and adding a new crosswalk at the park and ride less than 200 feet away.
- To approve this relocation, the Town would be required to provide sidewalk from the Park and Ride to the Church.
- Additionally, modifications to the sidewalk on the School St. side of 132 would be needed to comply with accessibility requirements. This would include the addition of a compliant curb ramp with detectable warning surface.
- The existing ramp on the north side of 132 across from the church would need to be removed and the area returned to grass.
- There are numerous route and guide signs in this area that would likely need to be relocated to accommodate this request. VTrans would need to be actively involved in determining the best new location for these signs.
- I also want to note that you referenced the town green. If that is truly a destination, then the Town should consider extending the sidewalk past the church all the way to the green.
- Any work that is in state highway right of way will be required to have an 1111 permit (highway access permit) in place prior to any work being started. The Town would work through the VTrans Permitting section to obtain this permit.
- I will also note that a project of this scale might be eligible for funding through the VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian small scale grant program. This year's grants are opening up soon with applications due in June. You can find out details about the grant program at the first link below my signature.

Additionally, in 2016 VTrans presented the Town with plans for improvements to the Sharon Park and Ride. It is our understanding that these changes are slated for construction with an anticipated start date sometime in 2025. The Alternative 1A plan was accepted by the Town and shows VTrans adding a sidewalk along the Park and Ride side of Route 132 to the existing crosswalk.

It seems with multiple options and with no clear understanding on how best to move forward, a scoping study would be a vital tool for the Town. We believe both the Town and the State will benefit from a bird's eye view that aligns the Town's needs and the Alternative 1A Plan for construction, dovetailing the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian project plans with the improvements to the VTrans Park and Ride.

Given the planned updates to the Park and Ride, the thoughtful guidance from Mr. Kaplan and the feedback from Tri-Valley Transit, we felt the Town needed a plan for how best to move forward. After consulting with Rita Seto at the Regional Planning Commission, the Town has decided to apply for the TAP Grant for a Scoping Study with the eye towards applying for grant funding for the construction phase of the project since the kinds of changes suggested would be cost prohibitive for our small town.



Town of Sharon

15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065
(802) 763-8268

PO Box 250
Sharon VT 05065
www.sharonvt.net

December 5th, 2022

Mr. Scott Roberston, PE
VTrans Municipal Assistance Bureau

Dear Mr. Robertson:

The Town of Sharon Selectboard is in favor of the application for the TAP Grant program for funding a Scoping Study. The Board has chosen “planning for future sidewalk improvements and creation of bike paths” as one of its six primary goals, and we have demonstrated our commitment to creating a vibrant Town that embraces alternative transportation solutions.

The Town of Sharon has seen growth over the past few years. We are noticing upward population trends, including increased enrollment at the Sharon Elementary School. From a low of just 87 students in 2008, the school now has 156 students in 2022; this trend has been consistent for over fourteen years. We are also conveniently located near several of the largest Upper Valley employers, including Dartmouth College, the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and Gifford Medical Center, and we have a VTrans Park and Ride in our Town.

As we look at our town, we notice that our alternative transportation infrastructure is outdated and is not built to accommodate today’s traffic patterns. We see cyclists attempting to make the most of our scenic bike routes, children walking to school without clearly delineated sidewalks, and older residents navigating difficult traffic patterns while drivers have few visual cues to alert them to the presence of pedestrians and cyclists.

A scoping study is a vital tool and the first best step to providing safer passage and improved the quality of life for our residents and visitors alike.

The Town has committed the required matching funds to ensure this scoping study can move forward, and we believe we have the momentum to carry this project forward into the construction phase. We hope our Town’s grant application for a scoping study will be given serious consideration.

Signed,

DocuSigned by:

Kevin Gish

12/5/2022

A38B395915BE496...
Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair

DocuSigned by:

M. Gavin

12/6/2022

73BE9E097128415...
Mary Gavin, Selectboard Vice Chair

DocuSigned by:

Sarah Pfeiffer

12/6/2022

40C44184CA04488...
Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk

Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant
Town of Sharon
P.O. Box 250
Sharon, VT 05065

November 29, 2022

Dear Nicola,

I am pleased to provide a letter of support for the 2023 Vermont Transportation Alternatives Program application for a village sidewalk scoping study. This will be an excellent tool for the Town as they evaluate future economic development and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety through the VT14 and VT132 corridor.

The project is also in line with the Transportation Pedestrian and Bicycle goals in the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Plan which are to "expand opportunities for walking and bicycling in the region" and "promote walking and bicycling as a viable means of transportation in the region" (p.78).

I have reviewed the grant application and deemed it complete for submission.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rita Seto, AICP
Senior Planner

128 King Farm Rd.
Woodstock, VT 05091
802-457-3188
trorc.org

Gerald Fredrickson, Chair
Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director

From: [Bump, Chris](#)
To: [Sharon Selectboard](#)
Cc: [Rita Seto](#)
Subject: RE: TAP Grant Application - Scoping Study Town of Sharon
Date: Wednesday, November 9, 2022 11:27:13 AM

Received
Thank You

From: Sharon Selectboard <selectboard@sharonvt.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 11:21 AM
To: Bump, Chris <Chris.Bump@vermont.gov>
Cc: Rita Seto <rseto@trorc.org>
Subject: RE: TAP Grant Application - Scoping Study Town of Sharon

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Chris,

We have amended the Town of Sharon TAP Grant application to include the area encompassed by the Village Center Designation for our scoping study. This includes sections of Route 14 and Route 132, which falls under VTrans control.

I have included the map for your reference.

Thank you so much,
Nicola

Nicola Shipman
Selectboard Assistant
Town of Sharon
P.O. Box 250
Sharon, VT 05065
802-763-8268 x 4
selectboard@sharonvt.net
[Visit us on the web](#)

From: Sharon Selectboard
Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 3:10 PM
To: Chris Bump (chris.bump@vermont.gov) <chris.bump@vermont.gov>
Cc: Rita Seto <rseto@trorc.org>
Subject: TAP Grant Application - Scoping Study Town of Sharon

Dear Chris,

The Town of Sharon is looking to improve pedestrian access and safety for alternative transportation in the Town, and the Selectboard would like me to submit an application for the TAP Grant on the Town's behalf.

I know the section of Town that would be under consideration includes Route 14, and therefore I am reaching out to District 4 to give notice of the Town's intentions.

We are also wholly aware that there are complications with this particular stretch of Route 14, but we are hoping there are at least some new or creative solutions out there that could improve the alternative transportation access in our Town.

Thanks so much!

Nicola

Nicola Shipman
Selectboard Assistant
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