

Transportation

Objectives

The following objectives are the Town Plan's obtainable targets for applying the Maintain | Evolve | Transform vision.

- Direct the town's limited transportation funds towards projects that meet the greatest need and impact the most people.
- Invest in transportation projects that promote economic development.
- Strengthen land-use patterns that prioritize commercial and residential development in existing villages and hamlets over rural Rockingham.
- Use transportation infrastructure investments to support energy-efficient electric and vehicle automation technologies.
- Invest in transportation system improvements to mitigate environmental impact.
- Whenever feasible, accommodate bicycle and pedestrian facilities in all transportation infrastructure projects.
- Preserve the historic features that give character to our roads and bridges, including tree-lined streets, stone walls, and scenic views.

Maintain | Evolve | Transform

Transportation is divided into these three distinct categories. Community planners use a Maintain | Evolve | Transform vision to focus attention on planning priorities and define the degree of change

required.

Maintain: Transportation assets that must be maintained and preserved for future generations.

- Hall Covered Bridge and Bartonsville Covered Bridge
- Unique pedestrian connections, including BF Westminster-School Street stairs, BF Hapgood to Front Street stairs, BF School to Prospect Street walking path, and SR Main Street to River Street walking path.
- Parker Hill Road
- Pleasant Valley Road

Evolve: Transportation assets that should change to retain service levels and be adapted to promote economic or community development goals.

- VT Route 103
- Saxtons River Main Street
- Sidewalks in the Villages of Bellows Falls and Saxtons River
- Fixed-route transit that connects neighborhoods to major employers, shopping centers
- Flexible parking standards for residential housing
- Electric vehicle charging stations

Transform: Transportation assets that need improvement and have unrealized potential to support the community.

- Multi-modal transportation facilities for the Island
- Walking and bicycling along VT 121 from Bellows Falls to Saxtons River
- Downtown streets and sidewalks along The Square, Rockingham, and Westminster Streets and along SR Main Street and adjacent side streets.
- Walking and bicycling along Atkinson Street

- Roads and bridges that can be enhanced to reduce impacts to our waterways.

Recommendations

These recommendations are how planners expect to implement the Transportation Objectives and the Maintain | Evolve | Transform vision.

- Use Federal, State, Local, and Tax Increment Financing to invest in the Island transportation system. This includes:
 - Upgrade all Island bridges to support increased traffic volumes and weight.
 - Create a complete sidewalk network for Bridge, Depot, and Island Streets.
 - Support the new Depot Street bridge dedicated to bicyclists and pedestrians.
 - Update all municipal parking lots with landscaping, lighting, bicycle parking, and electric vehicle charging stations.
- Develop a comprehensive sidewalk maintenance plan for Bellows Falls and Saxtons River Villages that:
 - Eliminate sidewalk gaps and unevenness to create a safer pedestrian environment
 - Address deteriorating sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian bump-outs.
 - Utilize warnings and other safety features at high-traffic volume intersections
 - Practice strategic disinvestment to include the removal of sidewalks on neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes and speeds and where people are safe from motor vehicle conflict.
 - Maintain existing sidewalks and design sidewalks to fit the intensity of use. High-traffic volume corridors get wide concrete sidewalks with granite curbing. Low-traffic volume corridors receive less costly asphalt sidewalks with minimal curbing.
 - Create facilities for bicyclists accessing rural Rockingham.
- Maintain a road, sidewalk, culvert, and bridge management plan that evaluates transportation system conditions and approximate costs for future improvements.
 - Maintain a Road Surface Management System.
 - Maintain a culvert inventory and assessment.
 - Maintain a sidewalk inventory and rating assessment.
 - Inventory critical historic assets for long-term preservation
 - Develop a capital budget to schedule reconstruction projects.
 - Create capital reserve accounts for expensive road and bridge projects.
- Develop a plan for the Saxtons River Main Street that reduces road widths, improves parking, enhances landscaping, slows traffic speeds, and promotes walking and bicycling.
- Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to include electric vehicle charging stations in large-scale commercial and residential development projects.
- Restore/rehabilitate '44 Steps', ensuring a safe route connecting Westminster and School streets while maintaining their historical appearance.
- Revise minimum parking space requirements for residential housing in walkable neighborhoods or with access to public transit. Allow residential housing to use off-street parking spaces on adjacent properties or municipal lots.
- Invest and commit to stormwater-related road improvements to comply with Vermont's Municipal Roads General Permit requirements.
- Develop a community-based, fixed-route transit service that provides access to the major employers, shopping centers, and residential centers in Rockingham and nearby Walpole shopping centers.

Education

Objectives

The following objectives are the Town Plan's obtainable targets for applying the Maintain | Evolve | Transform vision.

- Promote school and town government collaborations.
- Support opportunities for alternative educational experiences.
- Encourage investments in school buildings and related infrastructure.
- Prioritize town infrastructure investments that support school facilities and operations.
- Improve the safety of walking and bicycling routes to schools.
- Promote improvements in housing and reduce the inventory of substandard housing.
- Reduce redundancies in municipal government, and seek improved service coordination.
- Improve transportation facilities for improved vehicle and school bus safety.

Maintain | Evolve | Transform

Education is divided into these three distinct categories. Community planners use a Maintain | Evolve | Transform vision to focus on planning priorities and define the degree of change required.

Maintain: Schools and educational institutions must be preserved for future generations.

- Schools in Saxtons River and Bellows Falls Villages

Evolve: Incremental changes that should take place to improve schools and educational opportunities.

- Housing policies to allow more young families with children to relocate to Rockingham
- Elementary school playgrounds used by the schools and increasingly by the general public.
- Town and WNESU administrative and program collaborations
- Zoning revisions to allow private childcare providers to operate in more zoning districts.
- Alternative educational opportunities for children who need a non-traditional educational experience (e.g., Career Centers, BF Trades)
- Educational partnerships with local businesses
- Vermont Academy collaborations with the town and area businesses

Transform: Fundamental changes must occur to improve schools and educational opportunities.

- WNESU Early Childhood Learning Center facility
- Bellows Falls Union High School buildings, general grounds, and sports fields
- Non-profit organizations that provide additional educational and training opportunities
- Opportunities for students to learn about personal finance, college, and career development, including educational experiences teaching practical skills
- Increase opportunities for experiential learning for all students.

Recommendations

These recommendations are how planners expect to implement the Education objectives and Maintain | Evolve | Transform vision.

- Provide municipal government job shadowing and internships for Rockingham students.
- Allow the schools to use town resources for special events and programs. Coordinate school functions and educational programs using the Bellows Falls Opera House and Rockingham Recreational Department.

- Provide financial and logistical support to nonprofit organizations focused on training and placing Bellows Falls Union High School, Compass School, and Vermont Academy students in local jobs.
- Advocate for Rockingham, Grafton, Athens, and Westminster to adopt and enforce rental housing codes.
- Develop academic and athletic partnerships with businesses to facilitate student learning outside the classroom.
- Partner with the Vermont Academy on campus upgrades to the buildings, grounds, and public water system. Work directly with school officials to secure grants to support campus modernization projects.
- Support the establishment of a freestanding facility for the WNESU early education center.
- Encourage WNESU to open its facilities and events for public use and benefit.
- Advocate for changes in Vermont funding formulas to avoid disincentivizing tuition students transferring from the high school to a career center.

Background

The education chapter examines school facilities and explores how the community impacts schools and vice versa. The Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU) is educating children and developing plans that document goals and outcomes. The town's business is different and focuses on the community's future development. The town plan will not recreate educational statistics unless there is a specific community development interest to advance. State law requires the town plan to address how the community's future development will impact the schools.

Post-secondary and higher education institutions do not get examined in the town plan. Adult learning is important, but these institutions reside outside Rockingham and are beyond the town's capacity to influence.

Public Schools

The Town of Rockingham is in the school district called the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU). WNESU operates two elementary schools that only serve Rockingham students. WNESU also runs an early education center, a middle school, and a high school that serves Rockingham, Grafton, Athens, and Westminster students.

Central Elementary School (CES)

This school educates Pre-K to 4th-grade students and operates an after-school program. The school is in Bellows Falls Village, a 4.2-acre campus with the main school building, ancillary storage buildings, minimal parking facilities, and a playground. In the 2021-2022 academic year, 152 students attended CES, with even numbers enrolled in each grade level. The school operates below its maximum capacity; administrators have estimated CES could enroll approximately 250 students.

The CES building (1954) and playground are well-maintained and meet the needs of students. The school underwent a renovation to add classrooms in 2006. CES's main challenge is transportation. Parent drop-offs and pick-ups occur along the school frontage on School Street Extension. School Street Extension is also where school bus drop-offs and pick-ups occur. School traffic gets routed through Oak Street, Church Place, and School Street Extension. School Street Extension was converted to a one-way road decades ago but is still not wide enough to accommodate all this activity. The adjacent Atkinson Street (US Route 5) and School Street Extension intersection is a significant safety concern, and the

inefficiencies create traffic congestion every morning and afternoon. Addressing traffic congestion and safety issues could increase walking and bicycling to school.

The Bellows Falls Union High School (BFUHS)

The union high school educates students from 9th to 12th grade. The school is in the Town of Westminster and is situated on a large 190-acre campus that includes the main school building, playing fields, and ancillary support buildings. There are 314 students enrolled.

The BFUHS building (1971) is an open-space concept that is a unique design for a high school. The building has reached a point in its life cycle where it requires increasing maintenance and upkeep. Playing fields are dated and need to be upgraded. The access road, a Class 3 public highway, and parking lots have deteriorated to a condition where full-depth reconstruction is required. The school has federal funding, but mainly locally raised taxes pay for school repairs and upgrades. School officials report the priority projects are:

- Full-depth reconstruction of the .28-mile access road and parking lots
- Building renovations:
 - Repair and upgrade of the HVAC system
 - Renovation of all Science Labs
 - Renovation and upgrade of equipment in the Wood Shop
 - Renovation of auditorium
 - Repair of Roof
 - Renovation of Tennis Court surface
 - Renovation of track located at the football field

Bellows Falls Middle School (BFMS)

The middle school educates students from 5th to 8th grade. The school is in Bellows Falls Village on two small parcels totaling 1.2 acres and includes the main school building and a small area for outdoor recess. BFMS has limited parking options, including on-street parking on Cherry Hill, School Street, and Church Street and some parking at the Hetty Green municipal parking lot and the former administrative offices parking lot (land owned by the St. Charles Catholic Church). In the 2021-2022 academic year, 231 students attended BFMS, with the highest enrollment numbers in the 7th and 8th grades. Administrators have estimated that BFMS could handle approximately 400 students.

The BFMS building (1926) was renovated in 2013, and the Cherry Hill Street outdoor recess space was created in 2016. Additional outdoor green space is still a need. The building and grounds are well-maintained and will meet student needs for the foreseeable future. The school is embedded in a thickly settled residential neighborhood, the transportation and parking options are limited, but there are few options for any significant improvements.

Saxtons River Elementary School (SRES)

The elementary school educates students from kindergarten to 4th grade and operates an after-school program. The school is in Saxtons River Village and is a 4.5-acre campus that includes the main school building, playing fields, and an unpaved parking lot. In the 2021-2022 academic year, 77 students attended SRES, with even numbers of students enrolled in each grade level. Administrators have estimated that SRES could handle approximately 110 students.

such as public transportation connections and park and ride transfers. Functional conflicts in villages between motor vehicles and pedestrians should be reduced through the use of appropriate traffic calming techniques and road standards. The scale and design of these areas should enhance the human and economic functions of the village, and not simply increase the efficiency with which a vehicle may pass through the village.

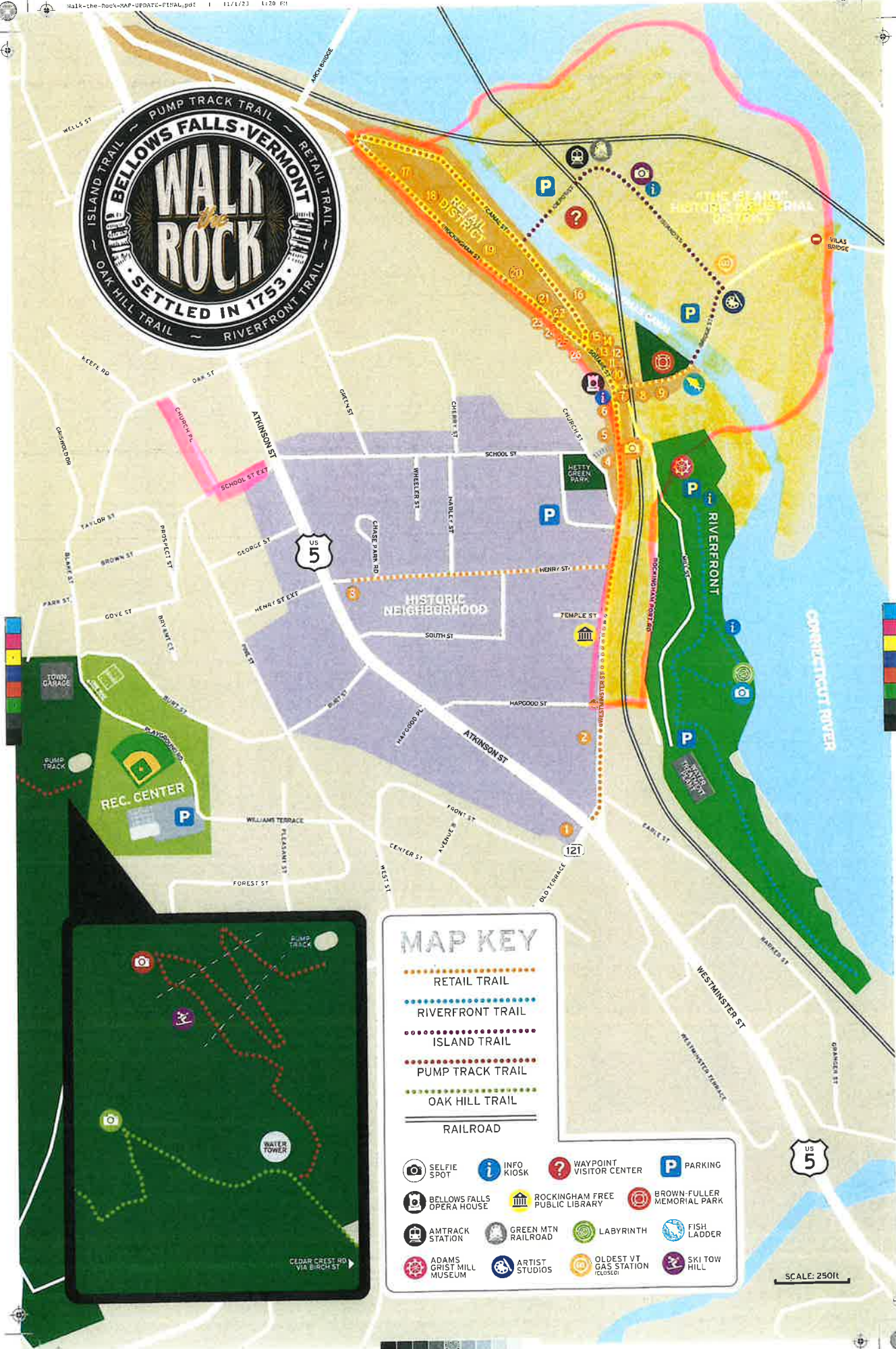
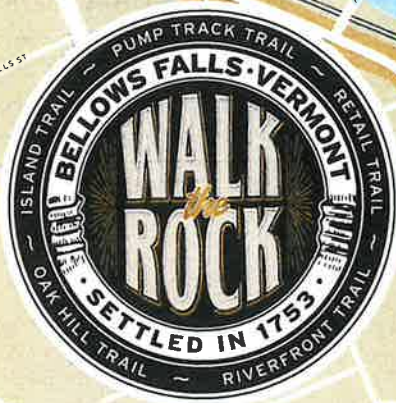
Resort centers are a unique entity in the Region, creating their own microcosms of commerce and connections. The Region has an interest in making the resort centers and their recreational facilities attractive and accessible to as many visitors as possible, while balancing the concerns of safety issues and functional conflicts that often arise as a result of the seasonal influxes of people. Resort centers should continue to develop better modal links and connection points to enable effective use of alternative transportation modes for accessing the areas. Efficient, reliable transportation systems for accessing the resort areas will reduce congestion and improve the seasonal experience of visiting these areas.

The transportation corridors of the rural lands in the Windham Region allow users to travel within the Region between downtowns, villages, and resort centers, while also accessing the broader New England Region. Care must be taken when reconstructing or redesigning roads and bridges to prevent the loss of rural character and the inducement of unnecessarily increased traffic volumes and speed. Because of the dispersed nature of development in these regions, alternative mode options must be located purposefully and with an understanding of the entire transportation system. Park and ride lots should be placed in convenient locations in rural lands, both to serve local uses and to enable more ride-sharing by residents. These locations will be used for people to meet and car pool as well as to park for recreational purposes, such as bicycling, swimming, walking, cross country skiing, etc. Bicycling facilities should be enhanced and consider not only roadway shoulders, but also connections to regional trail networks that combine separated paths, road shoulders, Class 4 Town Highways and Legal Town Trails.

Finally, the transportation system should also take into consideration the problems of the transit dependent populations of rural areas, who do not have access to a car, are elderly or disabled, are low income, are youth, or for some other reason, cannot drive. Lower population densities in the Region make full scale public transportation difficult, but some creative public transportation options have been developed and have potential for expansion in the future.

LEGAL TRAIL No.	LENGTH IN MILES LEGAL TRAIL
1	(0.05)
TOTAL	0.05

This map was funded in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. The representation of the authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U.S. Department of Transportation.



MAP KEY

- RETAIL TRAIL
- RIVERFRONT TRAIL
- ISLAND TRAIL
- PUMP TRACK TRAIL
- OAK HILL TRAIL

RAILROAD

- SELFIE SPOT
- INFO KIOSK
- WAYPOINT VISITOR CENTER
- PARKING
- BELLOWS FALLS OPERA HOUSE
- ROCKINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
- BROWN-FULLER MEMORIAL PARK
- AMTRAK STATION
- GREEN MTN RAILROAD
- LABYRINTH
- FISH LADDER
- ADAMS GRIST MILL MUSEUM
- ARTIST STUDIOS
- OLDEST VT GAS STATION (CLOSED)
- SKI TOW HILL

SCALE: 250ft



Town of Rockingham
Village of Bellows Falls
Office of the Municipal Manager

Town Hall, 7 Square
PO Box 370
Bellows Falls, VT 05101
Email: manager@rockbf.org

December 1, 2023

Re: Letter of Support for Transportation Alternatives Program
Grant Application for Sidewalk and Pedestrian Improvements

The Town of Rockingham and the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union have engaged in a joint project to improve pedestrian accessibility handicapped accessibility and pedestrian safety with an application to the Transportation Alternative Program.

This project area which also abuts a state Route through Rockingham is a critical access for the public as it serves as a gateway to the Central Elementary School, playgrounds, and social services agencies. Our appeal for additional federal funds will supplement our on-going local efforts to keep these community assets accessible to subsequent generations. The Town has committed to the local match of \$60,000 and future maintenance costs within the Highway Fund.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Scott D. Pickup
Municipal Manager
Town of Rockingham



December 1st, 2023

Mr. Scott Robertson
Transportation Alternatives Program Manager
Agency of Transportation
Highway Division
Municipal Assistance Bureau
219 North Main Street
Barre, VT 05641

Dear Scott:

On behalf of the Windham Regional Commission I am writing in support of the application by the Town of Rockingham for new crosswalks and intersection improvements to address ADA compliance at the Central Elementary School within the village of Bellows Falls through VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program. The Windham Regional Commission has conducted an inventory of all pedestrian infrastructure in the town of Rockingham. The intersection of School Street Extension and Church Place in the area of the Central Elementary School does not have ADA compliant ramps and there is no crosswalk in the immediate area of the school. This project will create a dedicated crossing on School Street Extension and bring the intersection into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, ensuring all students have safe and convenient pedestrian access to school each day consistent with State, local and regional goals.

The application is supported by the Windham Regional Plan, readopted June 2021 including the following provisions:

- To provide for safe, convenient, economical, and energy efficient transportation systems including options such as public transit and paths for pedestrians and bicyclists, where appropriate; (pg. 5)
- To plan development in order to maintain the region's land use and historic settlement pattern of compact villages and urban centers separated by rural countryside; (pg. 5)

[Type here]

- To promote the development and maintenance of an intermodal transportation system that is economically efficient and environmentally sound, and that enables the movement of people and goods in an energy efficient manner. (pg. 5)
- The WRC will continue to work with towns and VTTrans to reduce conflicts between traffic needs and everyday village functions through practices like shifting peak traffic volumes, traffic-calming measures, and pedestrian-safety improvements. (pg. 11)

Bellows Falls is the most populous incorporated village in the Windham Region with approximately 3,000 residents living within 1 square mile. Central Elementary School is an important local educational institution within the village and many students walk and roll to and from school each day. Furthermore, the school's playground is located across School Street Extension at the corner of Church Place. The lack of ADA compliant ramps and a dedicated crosswalk in the immediate area of the school create barriers for students who live in the village to safely walk or roll to school, as well as limits access for children to the important recreation facility across the street. This project will greatly improve pedestrian accessibility to the elementary school, improving walkability in one of the Windham Region's most important population centers in addition to promoting physical activity and social engagement for students. It is critical that all students in Rockingham feel safe walking and rolling to and from school as well as accessing the Central Elementary Playground. We strongly encourage the agency to fund this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CB', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Colin Bratton,
Transportation Planning Program Coordinator
Windham Regional Commission



December 5, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Improvement of Atkinson Street-School Street Extension Intersection

I am writing this letter in support the Village of Bellows Falls efforts to enhance and improve the intersection of Atkinson Street and School Street Extension. Central Elementary School is located on School Street Extension between Church Street and Atkinson Street. Many of our students access Central Elementary School by crossing Atkinson Street on a daily basis. In addition, our playground is located directly across School Street Extension on the corner of School Street Extension and Church Street. Our students must cross School Street Extension throughout the day.

We are looking forward to working with the Village of Bellows Falls on improvements to the area as they will have direct benefits for our students.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Haas', is positioned below the 'Thank you,' text.

Andrew Haas
Superintendent





5
MINUTE
PARKING

5 MINUTE
SCHOOL
PARKING
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

5
MINUTE
PARKING

A

5 MINUTE
SCHOOL
PARKING
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

CENTRAL
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

1

7
MINUTE
PARKING
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

RESERVED
PARKING





**Vermont Agency of Transportation
Municipal Assistance Bureau
Grant Recipient
Project Commitments Form (PCF) – Scoping Projects**

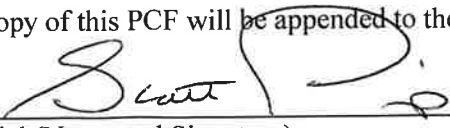
Grant Recipient (*Grantee*): Town of Rockingham
Project Name: Church Place and School St Ext ADA + PED
Project Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) available at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov): CZWVNDZE7D9

Note: The UEI is a new requirement that replaces the previous DUNS number requirement.

Name of full-time Municipal employee in *Responsible Charge* of this project regardless of any additional contracted management services: Gary Fox

By signing at the bottom of this document, the Grantee agrees to the following:

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible for providing the local share of the project funding and commit to doing so.
2. We are ready to move forward with this project and will sign the grant agreement within one month of receiving it from the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans).
3. Within 2 months of receiving a fully executed grant agreement from VTrans, we will begin the procurement process for contracted services (i.e. project management and/or engineering.) If both of these services will be procured, the RFP/RFQ for engineering services must be advertised within one month of the selection of the Local Project Manager (LPM).
4. The grantee shall obtain a detailed proposed schedule from the engineering consultant, which indicates the time duration for key steps which advance the project within 1 month of the engineering contract being executed. Municipal Assistance Bureau staff members will review and verify that adequate timeframes are included for VTrans reviews and required project milestones. We agree to work with VTrans to develop a mutually-agreeable initial baseline project schedule, against which project progress will be evaluated.
5. We will submit reports at least quarterly that detail project progress, as compared to the baseline schedule. We will notify the VTrans project supervisor of any proposed changes to the baseline schedule in a timely manner. These will be discussed and reviewed. Impacts to key milestones resulting from an approved schedule change will be identified and discussed.
6. Project invoices requesting reimbursement for eligible expenses will be submitted at least quarterly, but may be submitted monthly.
7. We understand that a copy of this PCF will be appended to the grant agreement.

SCOTT PICKUP 
Authorized municipal official (Name and Signature)

12/1/23
Date

Portion of Sidewalk Inventory Bellows Falls, Vermont

inventory by
Windham Regional Commission
Fall 2023

Sidewalk surface irregularities

- Smooth
- Few
- Moderate

Sidewalk Issues

- Large gap
- Significant displacement

Crosswalks

0 50 Feet

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
12/7/2023

No truncated domes.
Ramp on east end in
very poor condition

No truncated domes;
no ramp on school side.
Ramp on north end in poor
condition and not ADA compliant.

CHURCH PL

SCHOOL ST EXT

BELLOWS FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Development Assistant

From: Clifford, Shauna <Shauna.Clifford@vermont.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 9:28 AM
To: Development Assistant
Cc: RockBF Manager; Rockingham Development; Pickering, Marc
Subject: RE: Intent to apply for the VTrans TAP24

jExternal Sender!

Betsy,

Thank you for reaching out to notify the District of this project. I have included the District 2 Project Manager so that he is aware as well.

Shauna

Shauna Clifford | District Transportation Administrator
District Maintenance and Fleet Division |
Vermont Agency of Transportation
District 2 | 870 US Route 5 | Dummerston, Vermont 05301
District 4 | 223 Beswick Drive | White River Junction, Vermont 05001
(802)535-5317 (cell)
<http://vtrans.vermont.gov>



Help raise money for Vermonters impacted by flood damage and show your Vermont pride with *Vermont Strong* and *Tough Too* license plates and socks. [Click here to purchase your Vermont Strong gear](#) or visit [DMV.Vermont.gov/VermontStrong23](https://dmv.vermont.gov/VermontStrong23).

Impacted Vermonters can find resources and referrals by visiting Vermont.Gov/Flood.

From: Development Assistant <developmentassist@rockbf.org>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 1:31 PM
To: Clifford, Shauna <Shauna.Clifford@vermont.gov>
Cc: RockBF Manager <manager@rockbf.org>; Gary Fox <development@rockbf.org>
Subject: Intent to apply for the VTrans TAP24

You don't often get email from developmentassist@rockbf.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Hi Shauna,

The Town of Rockingham is applying for the VTrans TAP24 for the Church Place and School St. EXT ADA and Ped Improvements.

We are contacting you because this project is adjacent to the State ROW.

Our project description:

Construction includes 2,520 square foot of 5 ft wide concrete sidewalks, with curb ramps at all intersections and ADA compliant complete paving of Church Place and School St EXT. This public infrastructure is located within a heavily traveled neighborhood district adjacent to the Bellows Falls Central Elementary School. Current conditions involve deteriorated sidewalks, and non-compliant pedestrian entries at three intersections that must be upgraded as part of this Highway paving project.

Church Place and School ext. are one- way accessed by Oak St and intersect at Atkinson St./Route 5 connecting elementary and middle schools at this busy intersection.

The School/Atkinson St project is part of a current scoping study paid by Vtrans TAP 23 grants.

Thank you,

Betsy Thurston
Rockingham Development Assistant
7 The Square, PO Box 370, Bellows Falls, VT 05101
775-720-4474