The UNIVERSITY of VERMONT

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Current State of Park-and-Rides in Vermont and Other States

There are twenty-seven state operated Park-and-rides in the state of Vermont. All are open 24 hours a day 7 days a week.[1] There are also several municipal park-and-rides that are funded by towns and municipalities located throughout Vermont. The location of Vermont Park-and-rides can be seen in Figure 1.[2]

The Vermont park-and-ride lots are considered by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) "to be an effective method for reducing traffic congestion and decreasing the use of fossil fuels while minimizing air pollution emissions, providing connectivity between Park-and-Ride Facilities and inter-regional public transit routes and saving valuable urban land for more aesthetically appealing and productive uses."[3]

VTrans conducted a study in 2004 that observed the status of park-and-rides in Vermont. They conducted an inventory of the current park-and-rides, reviewed previous studies, observed the usage of the lots, and prioritized their various needs. VTrans counted the amount of cars in 26 park-and-ride lots. They found that two (Hartland and Randolph) had an overflow of cars but these park-and-rides were already scheduled for expansion. All park-and-ride lots except one had specifically designated parking spaces and 50% were paved with asphalt. Only 35 percent of park-and-ride lots had lighting. At the end of the study, VTrans laid out 17 projects and proposals regarding park-and-ride improvements. Some of these included adding lighting to existing park-and-rides as well as plans to create park-and-rides in certain areas.[4]

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[1] Vermont Agency of Transportation, "General Information on Vermont State Park-and-Ride Facilities," accessed March 7, 2011, http://www.aot.state.vt.us/parknride/Documents/GeneralInformatonForParknRideFacilities032808.pdf

[2] Vermont Agency of Transportation, "Statewide Lots – Quick Find Map," accessed March 7, 2011, http://www.aot.state.vt.us/parknride/StatewideLots.htm

[3] Vermont Agency of Transportation, "Vermont Long range Transportation Business Plan," March, 2009, accessed March 10, 2011, http://www.aot.state.vt.us/planning/Documents/Planning/LRTBPfinalMarch2009.pdf

[4] David Scott, "Legislative Report Park-and-ride Study," Vermont Agency of Transportation, Pursuant to Act 56 of 2003, Section 19, accessed March 16, 2011, http://www.aot.state.vt.us/parknride/Documents/FinalP&RStudy.pdf.

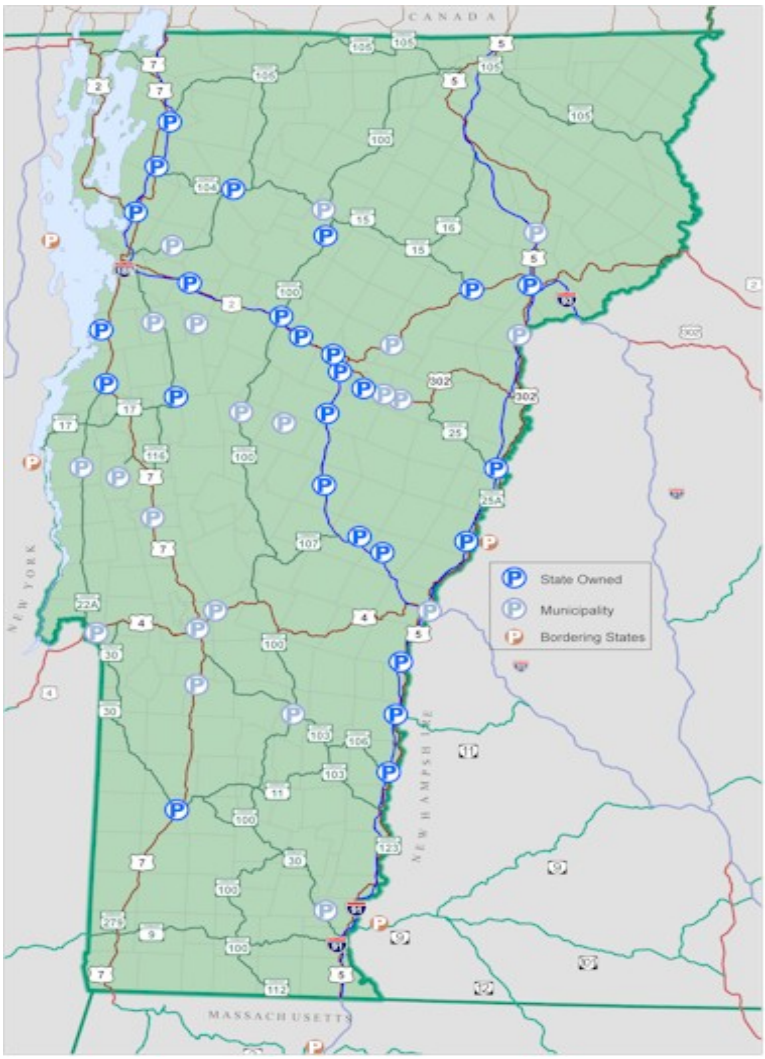

Figure 1: Vermont Park-and-ride locations.

Source: Vermont Agency of Transportation.

Other States

The status of park-and-rides in other US states vary greatly. New Hampshire, a similarly located and populated state to Vermont has twenty-five state run park-and-rides,[5] two less than

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[5] New Hampshire Rideshare, "Park-and-rides," accessed March 10, 2011, http://www.nh.gov/dot/nhrideshare/parkandride.htm.

Vermont. Maine has fifty-four state run park-and-rides.[6] Urban states tend to have more park-and-rides than rural states. For instance, Connecticut has over 180.[7]

Like Vermont, many states monitor their park-and-ride facilities and develop programs for expanding and improving them. These programs usually involve evaluating the current state of park-and-rides and creating effective methods for expansion. For example, Florida has been developing their park-and-ride system through a program that has been in place since 1982. This program, unlike Vermont's plan, aims to build park-and-rides by leasing and/or purchasing new land specified for park-and-rides.[8]

California also has an extensive park-and-ride resource guide which outlines the process by which new park-and-ride facilities are installed and maintained. This program is funded by the California Transportation Agency. Its goals include safety, mobility, delivery, stewardship, and service. Thus, its method of analysis includes social and technological data. The resource guide is associated with state funded grants to expand California park-and-rides. It also provides cost benefit analysis of the effectiveness of park-and-rides within the state.[9]

Additional states expand their park-and-ride systems according to the availability of mass transit. The New Mexico park-and-ride system has developed along commonly used rail and bus routes. This integrated system provides commuters with a cost effective alternative to driving long distances.[10]

Expansion of Vermont Park-and-rides

Expansion of State Operated Park-and-rides

Demand for park-and-ride expansion in Vermont has increased in recent years. A 2006 study, conducted for the Vermont Long Range Transportation Business Plan, showed that 22 percent of respondents used a park-and-ride in the last year, compared to 15 percent in 2000.[11]

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[6] Explore Maine, "Park-and-ride," accessed March 12, 2011 http://www.exploremaine.org/parkandride/index.htm.
[7] Connecticut Department of Transportation, "Your Guide to Connecticut Park-and-ride Locations," accessed March 10, 2011 http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?Q=259406&a=1390.
[8] Florida Department of Transportation, "Park-and-ride Lot Program," Effective May, 14, 2001, Accessed March 23, 2011, http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/proceduraldocuments/procedures/bin/725030002.pdf.
[9] California Department of Transportation, "Park-and-ride Program Resource Guide 2010," 2010, Accessed March 23, 2011, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/systemops/hov/Park_and_Ride/Park_and_Ride_Program_Resource_Guide.pdf.
[10] New Mexico Department of Transportation, "Park-and-ride," accessed March 22,2011, http://nmshtd.state.nm.us/main.asp?secid=14635.
[11] Vermont Agency of Transportation, "Vermont Long range Transportation Business Plan," March, 2009, accessed March 10, 2011, http://www.aot.state.vt.us/planning/Documents/Planning/LRTBPfinalMarch2009.pdf.

The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) produced a study in 2004, prioritizing the possible expansion of Chittenden County park-and-rides. Locations were prioritized based on three broad categories: demand, location, and readiness. Demand was given the most weight, making up 50 percent of the total score. Based on a raw score, possible park-and-rides locations were prioritized in two separate categories. The first category was "intercept/satellite facilities," or those intended to "serve as a transfer point from car to shuttle or transit." Intercept/satellite facilities are intended for urban settings and would likely be funded by allocated funds from the Vermont Legislature or by a public or private venture. The top scoring "intercept/satellite" sites can be seen in Table 1.

The second category was "park-and-ride facilities." This type of facility is intended for "car and van-pooling with potential for low frequency shuttle or transit service." "park-and-ride facilities" are intended for development in rural and suburban areas where public transit may be more limited; they typically are sponsored by public funds.[12]The top scoring park-and-ride facilities were all existing lots, which needed expansion or attention. The top scoring lots in this category can be seen in Table 2.

Table 1: Top scoring intercept/satellite sites

City/Town	Location
Burlington	Lakeside Avenue and Champlain Parkway
South Burlington	I-89 Exit 14
South Burlington	Route 7 and I-189
Colchester	Route 15 and Barnes Avenue

Table 2: Top scoring Park-and-ride Facilities for expansion

City/Town	Location
Burlington	North Avenue
Colchester	I-89 Exit 17
Richmond	I-89 Exit 11
Williston	I-89 Exit 11

[12] Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, "Chittenden County Park-and-ride Facility Prioritization," adopted February 18, 2004, accessed March 15, 2011, http://www.ccmpo.org/parknride/Parknride_prioritization_2-10-04.pdf

Other highly recommended locations from the study included: South Burlington, Rt. 116; Essex Rt. 2A/289; Jericho Rt. 15; Essex Rt. 15; Allen Martin Drive; Charlotte railroad station; and, Hinesburg Village.[13]

In addition, Windsor County performed a study, which was updated in 2010, identifying possible expansion of park-and-rides within its county. These locations were identified using traffic research, similar to the Chittenden County study. The top scoring potential locations were: Proctorsville at the intersection of VT 103 & VT 13; North Springfield at the intersection of VT 106 & VT 10; Gassetts at the intersection of VT 106 & VT 103; Weathersfield at the intersection of VT 106 & VT 131; and, Reading at the Intersection of VT 106 & VT 44.[14]

Expansion of Municipality Operated Park-and-rides

The Vermont Agency of Transportation provides a grant that encourages municipalities to create their own park-and-rides. This grant is funded by $250,000 designated for this purpose by the Vermont Legislature. In order for applicants to be eligible for this grant, the potential park-and-ride must be on municipal-owned land, near a state route, available year round, hold a minimum of ten vehicles, and be owned and maintained by the municipality. Any town may apply. Since 2005, 35 out of 52 of the grant recipients have used the funding to develop a park-and-ride that is now used by commuters. The 2010 and 2011 applicants have not yet developed functioning park-and-rides.[15]

Overnight Parking

In Vermont, it is more likely for municipalities to prohibit overnight parking than it is for the State in the larger park-and-rides. In several municipalities, the town office or the town constable regulates the parking lots; however, the park-and-rides are not always regulated to prevent overnight parking from occurring. In the Hyde Park park-and-ride there is a sign posted that prohibits overnight parking from November 15th through April 15th. Violators are towed at the owner's expense.[16] In Wallingford, there is also a sign prohibiting parking from "dusk to dawn" but this is not enforced as no one checks the parking lot nightly.[17] Additional park-and-rides that prohibit overnight parking are located in Huntington,[18] Essex,[19] Roxbury,[20] Cornwall,[21] Barnet,[22] Lyndon,[23] Leicester,[24] and Plainfield.[25]

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[13] Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, "Chittenden County Park-and-ride Facility Prioritization," adopted February 18, 2004, accessed March 15, 2011, http://www.ccmpo.org/parknride/Parknride_prioritization_2-10-04.pdf

[14] South Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, "Regional Park-and-ride Needs Assessment, July 2010," http://swcrpc.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Park-Ride-Assessment-Update-FINAL.pdf

[15] Wayne Davis, Vermont Agency of Transportation, "2011 Municipal Park-and-ride Grant Program," June 1, 2011, Accessed March 16, 2011, http://www.aot.state.vt.us/parknride/ParkAndRideGrantProgram/2011 municipal pnr letter_0001.pdf

[16] Kim Moulton, Hyde Park Town Clerk/Treasurer, email message to authors, March 21, 2011

[17] Wallingford Town Administrator, email message to authors, March 22, 2011

[18] Heidi Racht, Huntington Town Clerk, email message to authors, March 21, 2011

In the park-and-rides that are regulated by the State of Vermont, there are no restrictions regarding extended use of the lot. The Vermont Agency of Transportation does not restrict extended use of the park-and-rides in order to allow for the greatest flexibility for commuters who work out of state, for different shifts, or who travel multiple days at a time. Therefore, it is acceptable for commuters to park in the state operated park-and-rides for as long as they need to.[26]

Feasibility of Using Business Parking Lots as Park-and-rides

Many park-and-rides in other states are maintained by public transportation systems. In Portland, Oregon, the TriMet, the public transit system, utilizes 18 different church parking lots as park-and-rides, and urges drivers to remember that "[m]any Park & Ride lots have been generously donated by churches and businesses. These church and business lots are to be used on weekdays only."[27] Triangle Transit in Durham, North Carolina has a disclaimer on their website that says, "[s]ome lots are shared facilities with the businesses that own or lease the property. Triangle Transit requests that you be respectful of their property and encourages you to patronize their businesses."[28] Fairfax County, Virginia uses 500 parking spaces in the Macy's Parking Garage as a park-and-ride, as well as 30 to 100 spots at several churches.[29] Some of the spaces were donated and for some the Fairfax County Department of Transportation has a lease agreement.[30]

Wayne Davis, VTrans Project Supervisor, hypothesized that "informal commuter parking" occurs in private parking lots without formal approval from the businesses. He thinks, however, that most private lot owners are aware of this and accept the use of their lots as park-and-rides as long as it doesn't get out of hand or cause any issues.[31] Individual municipalities are not likely to use business or church parking lots for additional park-and-ride space. Through email Cornwall,[32], Barnet,[33] Lyndon,[34] Leicester,[35]and Wallingford[36] all stated that there was no use

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[19] Dennis Lutz, Essex Public Works Director/Town Engineer, email message to authors, March 23, 2011
[20] Tammy Legacy, Roxbury Town Clerk, email message to authors, March 21, 2011
[21] Sue Johnson, Cornwall Town Clerk, email message to authors, March 23, 2011
[22] Benjamin P. Heisholt, Barnet Town Clerk & Treasurer, email message to authors, March 24, 2011
[23] Dan Hill, Lyndon Municipal Administrator, email message to authors, March 24, 2011
[24] Julie Delphia, Leicester Town Clerk, email message to authors, March 24, 2011
[25] Wallingford Town Administrator, email message to authors, March 22, 2011
[26] Wayne Davis, VTrans Project Supervisor, email message to authors, March 21, 2011
[27] TriMet, "Park-and-ride Locations," accessed March 15, 2011, http://trimet.org/parkandride/index.htm
[28] Triangle Transit, "Park-and-ride," accessed march March 15, 2011, http://www.triangletransit.org/bus/park-and-ride/.
[29] Fairfax County, "Park-and-ride Facilities," accessed March 15, 2011, http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/parkride.htm.
[30] Information obtained in a phone conversation with a representative of the Fairfax Co. Department of Transportation on April 5, 2011, 703-324-2499.
[31] Wayne Davis, VTrans Project Supervisor, email message to author, March 21, 2011
[32] Sue Johnson, Cornwall Town Clerk, email message to author, March 23, 2011
[33] Benjamin P. Heisholt, Barnet Town Clerk & Treasurer, email message to author, March 24, 2011
[34] Dan Hill, Lyndon Municipal Administrator, email message to author, March 24, 2011

of private parking lots as park-and-rides in their town. The park-and-rides in these towns were either at the town offices, or at the town's recreational fields. In the Town of Essex, town zoning requirements designate a certain number of parking spaces to each type of property. This means that if a commercial property were to use a portion of their lot as a park-and-ride they would violate their conditions of approval. Businesses must also be careful to ensure that they have enough parking for their customers.[37]

Conclusion

Vermont has twenty-seven state operated park-and-rides and over twenty park-and-rides operated by towns/municipalities. Vermont can create new park-and-rides as well as improve existing lots based on available park-and-ride data. Vermont already has plans to do this both at the state and municipality level. It may also be feasible to use business parking lots for park-and-ride purposes.

Prepared by Leah Marvin-Riley and Dean LoRusso in response to a request from the Vermont House Transportation Committee, under the supervision of graduate student Kate Fournier and Professor Anthony Gierzynski on April 2, 2011.

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Disclaimer: This report has been compiled by undergraduate students at the University of Vermont under the supervision of Professor Anthony Gierzynski. The material contained in the report does not reflect the official policy of the University of Vermont.

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[35] Julie Delphia, Leicester Town Clerk, email message to author, March 24, 2011
[36] Wallingford Town Administrator, email message to author, March 22, 2011
[37] Dennis Lutz, Essex Public Works Director/Town Engineer, email message to author, March 23, 2011