KFH GROUP, INC.

2012 Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan

INTERCITY BUS NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND POLICY OPTIONS

White Paper

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Prepared for the:

State of Vermont
Agency of Transportation

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Chapter 1

Background and Policy Context

POLICY CONTEXT

Since 1998 when the Statewide Intercity Bus Study was conducted, intercity bus service availability in Vermont has changed considerably, as has the federal program that could be used to provide assistance.[1] Intercity bus services are particularly important to the mobility of Vermonters since a greater proportion of intercity riders are youth, elders, and persons with low income. Despite their importance, intercity bus services have declined significantly in Vermont over the past few years. Only limited service remains, and there are frequency of service issues. Currently there are only four daily round trips along I-89 serving Burlington, Montpelier, and White River Junction; one daily round trip along I-91 serving White River Junction, Bellows Falls and Brattleboro; and two weekday round trips from Bennington to Albany.

The FTA does support rural intercity services through the Section 5311(f) program, which sets aside a portion of the rural transit subsidies for such services, and states are obligated to spend 15% of the Section 5311 funds for intercity bus transportation unless they certify that needs are being met. Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has been certifying and using this funding for other rural transit needs. In 2003-4 VTrans did become involved in intercity bus services by purchasing a bus for Vermont Transit (at that time an autonomous subsidiary of Greyhound Lines); but, due to service cuts that eliminated the rural services the bus was intended to support, the state recovered its interest in the bus from Greyhound. VTrans has been more inclined to support commuter-type services linking towns/village centers such as Montpelier, St. Albans, and Middlebury with Burlington

[1] Intercity bus service was hard hit by the decline in travel after 9/11. A recent American Bus Association study shows that beginning in 2004, patronage began to increase again and is close to pre 9/11 levels. However, as with the airlines, the impact of 9/11 caused restructuring for scheduled intercity carriers like Greyhound.

and, recently, Brattleboro. Commuter services are not eligible for funding under the Section 5311(f) program.

Regional Connectivity, Transit, Rail Passenger Service, and Intercity Bus

The State's role in passenger rail and commuter rail has been the subject of much debate, with the State continuing to support Amtrak operation of service on two routes. In H.527 of the 2007 session, the Vermont legislature directed VTrans to "examine the feasibility of making public transportation in Vermont seamless, efficient, and user-friendly, with usable connections among in-state and out-of-state points." In this process, the agency shall develop a single overall method of marketing Amtrak, in coordination with all other public transit services.

A Study Regarding the Regional Connectivity of Vermont's Public Transportation System addressed the options for changing the rail passenger support, intercity bus, coordinating services with regional transit, and marketing a coordinated system. Since then, the State's budget problems have provided more focus on the costs of the rail passenger program, and the study did not include intercity bus recommendations.

One recommendation of the 2007 PTPP and recent studies on connectivity was to provide easily accessible and reliable information about routes and services. Accordingly, the State implemented a new initiative called, "Go Vermont." The Go Vermont Program (rideshare and ride match) was upgraded from a manual system to a web-based system in 2010. As a result, there are now 1,000 matches versus 30-40 per month. Resources have been freed up for outreach, marketing, and education. YouTube, television, and radio ads and loco-motion educational programs are being conducted. Vermont also has 49 park-and-rides lots (27 State-owned and 22 municipally owned) located throughout the State, making it easier to carpool or vanpool. For more information see the legislative report, *A Study Regarding the Regional Connectivity of Vermont's Public Transportation System January 2008* that can be found at **http://www.aot.state.vt.us/ops/PublicTransit/documents/AOT-OPS-PT_Section45.pdf**.

Overall Vermont Public Transit Policy in Vermont as It Relates to Intercity Bus

The 2000 PTPP and 2007 PTPP Update both recommended a series of related policies to guide the VTrans public transit program. Overall, it is Vermont Public Transit Policy to:

- Preserve and enhance existing public transit services that are well used by the traveling public.

- Monitor the performance of transit services by VTrans and the boards of the transit providers to ensure the maximum value from available resources.

- Use any additional public transit funds to support and promote the four goals in 24 V.S.A Chapter 126, S.5083:
  - Provide basic mobility for transit-dependent persons to critical services,
  - Provide transit services to jobs,
  - Mitigate congestion, and
  - Support economic development

Intercity bus services would address these goals by providing a means for long-distance trips by persons who do not have a vehicle available (or one considered reliable enough for a long trip) or cannot drive themselves, which would fall under basic mobility. Data on intercity bus rider characteristics and trip purposes suggests that a substantial percentage of intercity bus riders are transit dependent, at least for that type of trip.

In the past the largest percentage of intercity bus trips were made for the purpose of visiting family and friends, attending school or military service, and for personal business (such as job-hunting, etc.) rather than employer-paid business travel or daily commuting to work. Given the limited frequency of existing services (and the lack of congestion in Vermont) it is unlikely that intercity bus service would mitigate congestion. However, if the unspoken subtext of that goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it should be noted that regular-route, scheduled intercity bus service is the most energy efficient passenger travel mode, and so intercity bus service does address other state goals concerning energy and the environment.

The goal of supporting economic development is likely addressed only in a peripheral way by intercity bus service, in that maintaining access by intercity bus can allow students or seasonal employees without autos to reach campuses or seasonal resorts. These potential users are a critical part of supporting the education industry and tourism.

Intercity Bus and Regional Connectivity Policy

The current State policy addressing intercity bus transportation and regional connectivity calls for the State to improve the connectivity between public and private carriers to serve the intercity bus and commuter markets and to provide easy access to information about those services. It is State policy to support the intercity bus network in Vermont, for both intra-state and inter-state travel, by providing attractive and accessible features at convenient locations along major travel corridors (e.g., park and ride lots) and to funding connections to Amtrak services and commercial aviation when feasible. Projects and service improvements to enhance regional connectivity receive greater consideration for funding in the New Service program, which funds new services with federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. State

policy limits funding for intercity bus carriers to capital and operating assistance for routes that have not demonstrated economic viability, though in fact the State is not providing any such assistance at this time.

Potential Funding Source: Section 5311(f) Rural Intercity Bus Assistance Program

The likely source of funding (and program requirements) if Vermont were to provide assistance to intercity bus carriers would be the FTA Section 5311(f) program. As described above, this program allows states to subsidize rural intercity bus needs using their Section 5311 formula grant funds. The state must use 15% of its annual apportionment to support intercity bus service, unless the Governor certifies, after consultation with affected intercity bus providers that the needs of the state are adequately met. However, recent changes in the program have included the requirement for a consultation process that includes participation from the intercity carriers and other stakeholders to be conducted by the state prior to certification; and the option of using the existing unsubsidized intercity bus service as in-kind match for operating assistance.

This white paper is intended to be the initial step in the consultation process that VTrans will conduct prior to issuing its grant solicitation for FY 2013 Section 5311 funding. It will serve to document the current state of the intercity bus service in Vermont, changes in that network over the last decade, the relationship of that network to potential need based on demographics and the location of potential intercity bus destinations, the identification of gaps in the network, potential services that could address such gaps, and the likely costs and potential funding requirements. It is intended to serve as the basis for a process that will invite comment on the need for rural intercity bus service assistance from current and potential intercity service providers, public transit operators, other stakeholders, and the public.

Chapter 2

Inventory of Existing Intercity Passenger Services

INTERCITY BUS

Intercity bus service is fixed-route, fixed-schedule bus service open to the general public, generally operated with over-the-road coaches with the capability of carrying baggage or package express. Scheduled intercity bus service within Vermont is currently provided by two carriers, Greyhound Lines and Yankee Trails, but there is also scheduled intercity bus service provided to points just outside the state that is potentially usable by Vermont residents. These include services provided by Peter Pan Bus Lines, Dartmouth Coach, and Concord Coach. Figure 2-1 presents a map of these routes.

The Greyhound Lines service in Vermont is provided on two routes. On the Montreal to Boston route, Greyhound has Vermont stops in Burlington, Montpelier, and White River Junction. There are four round-trips per day on this corridor, which is operated seven days per week. Exhibit 2-1 presents a schedule for this route, and Table 2-1 provides the stop locations (in Vermont). The Burlington stop is now located at the Burlington International Airport (BTV), which is served by all trips, but the earliest bus of the day (both directions) also stops in downtown. In Burlington all trips have a 15-minute layover at the airport, and in White River Junction the buses make an initial stop at the White River Junction depot, travel to Hanover, NH, and then return to the White River depot before continuing. In Boston, two of the inbound trips make stops at Logan Airport (but not any northbound trips). Three of the schedules in each direction make a stop at the Manchester, NH Airport. To use intercity bus between Burlington and New York, it is necessary to transfer either in Boston or Montreal.

Figure 2-1: Existing Intercity Bus Service in Vermont

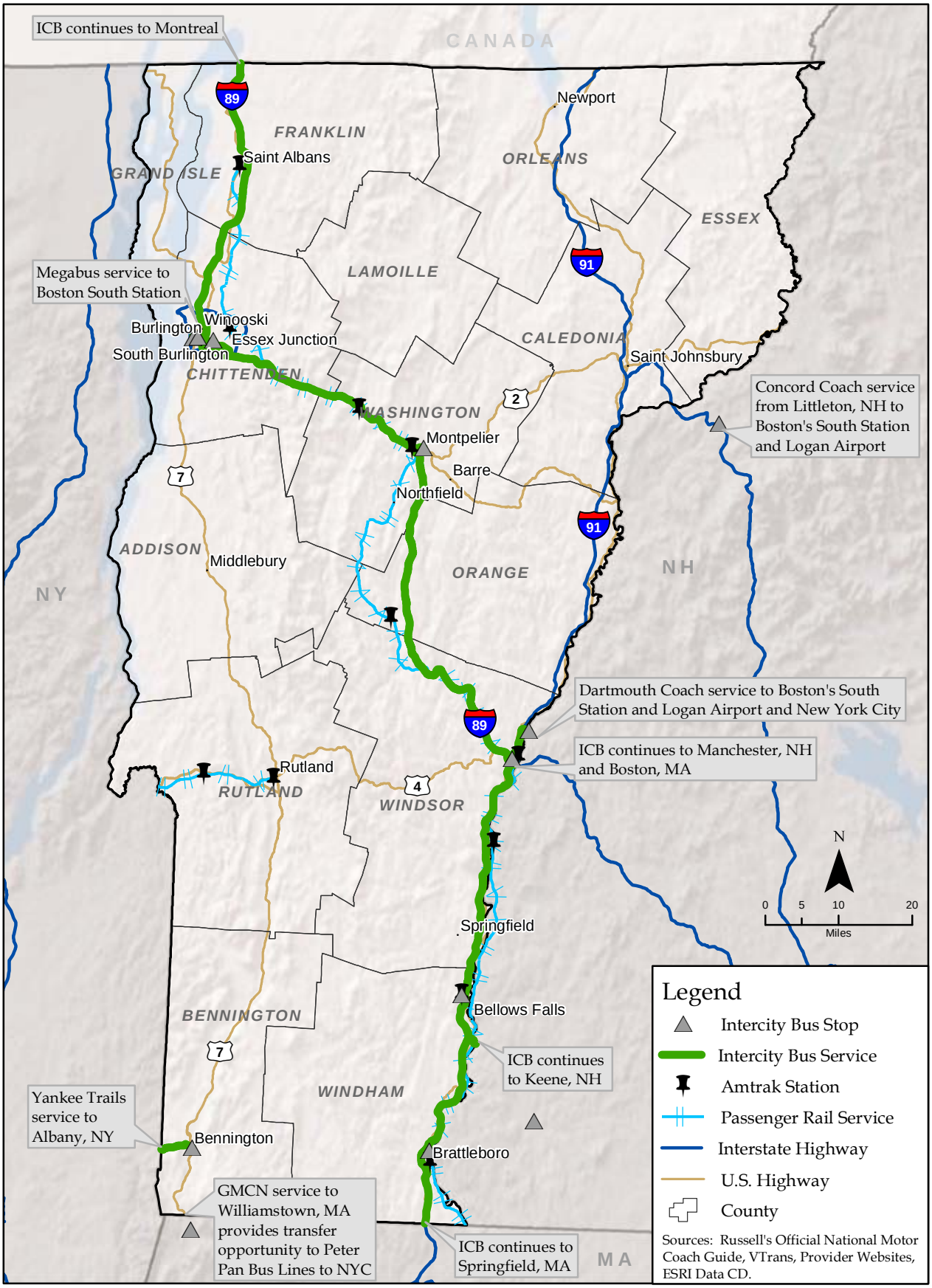


Exhibit 2-1

BOSTON - BURLINGTON - MONTREAL
TABLE 62

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER		9122	9124	126	9120	9128
	1-11-11						
	FREQUENCY						
GL	**Montreal, PQ**	LV	23:30	08:15	10:45		15:45
	St. Jean, PQ						
	Burlington, VT (*Airport)*	AR	02:00	10:45	13:15		18:15
	Burlington, VT (*Airport)*	LV	02:15	11:15	13:45		18:30
	Burlington, VT *(Downtown)*		02:25				
	Montpelier, VT		03:10	12:00	14:30		19:15
	White River Jct., VT	AR	04:05	12:55	15:25		20:10
	Hanover, NH					19:45	
	White River Jct., VT	AR				20:00	
	White River Jct., VT	LV	04:20	13:30	16:00		20:30
	Hanover, NH		04:35	13:45			
	Concord, NH			14:55			
	Manchester, NH			15:25			21:55
	Manchester Arpt, NH		06:05	15:40	17:30		
	Boston Logan Arpt, MA						
	Boston, MA	AR	07:05	16:40	18:30		22:55
GL	Boston Logan Arpt, MA		D 07:25		D 18:50		

BOSTON - BURLINGTON - MONTREAL
TABLE 62

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER		9127	9125	145	9143
	1-11-11					
	FREQUENCY					
GL	Boston Logan Arpt, MA	LV				
	Boston, MA	LV	23:35	07:15	10:00	13:45
	Boston Logan Arpt, MA					
	Manchester Arpt, NH				11:05	14:45
	Manchester NH		00:40	08:20		15:00
	Concord, NH					15:30
	Hanover, NH		D 01:55		D 12:30	D 16:40
	White River Jct., VT	AR	02:05	09:35	B 12:40	B 16:50
	Hanover, NH					
	White River Jct., VT	LV	02:20	10:05	13:10	17:15
	Montpelier, VT		03:15	11:00	14:05	18:10
	Burlington, VT *(Downtown)*		04:00			
	Burlington, VT *(Airport)*	AR	04:10	11:45	14:50	18:55
	Burlington, VT *(Airport)*	LV	04:15	12:00	15:05	19:00
	St. Jean, PQ				17:20	
GL	**Montreal, PQ**	AR	06:45	14:30	17:35	21:30

Table 2-1: Points in Vermont Served by Greyhound - 2011

Towns Served	Location
Bellows Falls	54 Depot Street Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
Brattleboro	Shell Gas Station 429 Canal Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05302
Burlington	Burlington Airport 1200 Airport Drive #1 Burlington, Vermont 05401
Burlington Winooski Main	Burlington Downtown 219 S. Winooski Ave. Burlington Winooski Main Vermont 05401
Montpelier	Bafitos 23 Main Street Montpelier, Vermont 05602
White River Junction	Summit Dist-Greyhound Station 44 Sykes Mountain Ave. White River Jct., Vermont 05001

The other Greyhound route operates a single daily round-trip from White River Junction to Springfield, MA. The schedule for this route is presented in Exhibit 2-2. It has additional Vermont stops at Vermont at Bellows Falls and Brattleboro (also shown in Table 2-1). The southbound bus serving this corridor leaves White River Junction well after the arrival of the bus from Burlington, but the northbound arrives in time to allow a rider to connect to either Burlington- or Boston-bound buses with minimal delay. New York can also be accessed on this route once a day with a layover/transfer in Springfield, MA. Efforts are under way to move the Bellows Falls stop to the Connecticut River Transit facility just off I-91, where there would be parking as well staff for ticket sales.

Exhibit 2-2

SPRINGFIELD - WHITE RIVER JCT
TABLE 67

Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER				122
	1-11-11				NYD WRJ
	FREQUENCY				
GL	**Springfield, MA**	ET	LV		9:40
	Northampton, MA				10:05
	Greenfield, MA				10:35
	Brattleboro, VT				11:05
	Keene, NH				11:35
	Bellows Falls, VT				12:10
	White River Jct., VT		AR		12:50
	White River Jct., VT		LV		
GL	**Hanover, NH**	ET	AR		

WHITE RIVER JCT - SPRINGFIELD
TABLE 67

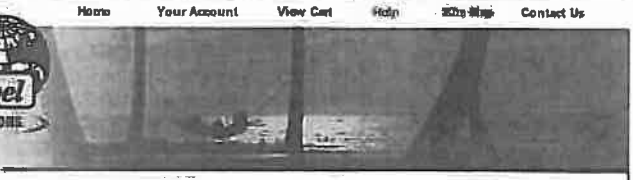
Carrier	SCHEDULE NUMBER				123
	8-17-10				BUR NYD
	FREQUENCY				
GL	**Burlington, VT**	ET	LV		
	Montpelier, VT				
	Hanover, NH		LV		
	White River Jct., VT		AR		
	White River Jct., VT		LV		8:25
	Bellows Falls, VT		AR		9:05
	Bellows Falls, VT		LV		9:10
	Keene, NH				9:45
	Brattleboro, VT				10:15
	Brattleboro, VT				10:15
	Greenfield, MA				10:50
	Northampton, MA				11:20
GL	**Springfield, MA**	ET	AR		11:45

Vermont's only other remaining scheduled intercity bus service is provided by Yankee Trails, which offers two round-trips per day from Bennington to Albany, New York. This service is provided Monday to Friday only, as can be seen in Exhibit 2-3. The Yankee Trails scheduled service is not interlined with Greyhound, so a Vermont resident cannot buy a bus ticket in Bennington for travel beyond the Albany terminus. Yankee Trails offers only separate cash fares. The fare from Bennington to Albany is $4.00. As a result of the lack of an interline agreement with Greyhound, the stop in Albany is on the street in front of the Greyhound terminal. Also, Greyhound's website and telephone information service does not have information on the Yankee Trails service.

Many Vermont residents are also able to make intercity bus connections in relatively close proximity to their communities by traveling to intercity bus stops in adjacent states. Vermonters in the GMCN service area can take Peter Pan Bus Lines from Williamstown, MA to New York City (two round trips per day). Dartmouth Coach operates between Hanover/Lebanon, New Hampshire and both South Station (connections to MBTA, Amtrak and numerous other bus lines) and Logan International Airport in Boston (with a stop at the park and ride lot in New London, NH) with eight round trips per day. Dartmouth Coach also operates between Hanover/Lebanon, NH and New York City once a day. This service operates express, with no stops, and utilizes the curb in front of the Yale Club (near Grand Central Station) as its New York City terminal. Dartmouth Coach is owned by Concord Coach of New Hampshire, and Concord Coach also operates a daily service between Littleton, New Hampshire and Boston, with numerous stops. Vermonters living in the St. Johnsbury area can use this service to reach New Hampshire points and Boston.

All of these firms, including those serving Vermont directly (Greyhound Lines and Yankee Trails) are private, for-profit entities. All operating and capital costs of the Vermont services are paid from the farebox, as Vermont does not currently provide any type of financial assistance. In 2003-4 VTrans provided Vermont Transit with Federal Section 5309 capital for an accessible over-the-road-bus (OTRB), ostensibly in return for continued service on rural routes. Vermont Transit Lines, which was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Greyhound Lines, has been completely merged into Greyhound, and the route coverage substantially reduced with the national restructuring of Greyhound routes. In 2005-6 the rural services ended and the remaining state/federal interest in the OTRB was purchased by Greyhound. Since that time there has been no funding provided for rural intercity bus service, though it should be noted that annual applications are sent to the identified intercity carriers. Also, in-state commuter bus services are operated by various transit providers in the State and serve some travel needs between towns.

Exhibit 2-3



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HOOSICK FALLS LINE RUN SCHEDULE

Hoosick Falls/Bennington, VT Line Run Schedule
PLEASE NOTE: OPERATING MONDAY-FRIDAY ONLY
(Does NOT run on Saturday, Sunday OR State Holidays)
MAIN POINTS OF DEPARTURE
Bennington, VT: School Street & Route 9 (Northwest Corner of Intersection)
Hoosick Falls: Woods Memorial Park in front of the Police Station
Troy Terminal: Corner of Third & Ferry Street
Albany Terminal: Greyhound Bus Terminal, Corner of Dallius & Hamilton
(NOT inside Greyhound Bus Terminal)

Click HERE for prices.
(times/prices as of September 2, 2010)

Departure Time	Leaving From	Departure Time	Leaving From
6:45am	Hoosick Falls	5:15pm	Albany Greyhound
7:00am	Potter Hill	5:25pm	Albany State Plaza
7:02am	Boyntonville	5:35pm	Menands
7:05am	Pittstown	5:40pm	Watervliet
7:15am	Raymertown	5:50pm	Troy Terminal
7:20am	Haynerville	6:00pm	Sycaway
7:25am	Center Brunswick	6:05pm	Center Brunswick
7:30am	Sycaway	6:15pm	Haynersville
7:40am	Troy Terminal	6:20pm	Raymertown
7:45am	Watervliet	6:25pm	Pittstown
7:50am	Menands	6:30pm	Boyntonville
8:05am	Albany-State Plaza	6:35pm	Potter Hill
8:10am	Albany Greyhound	6:40pm	Hoosick Falls
		6:55pm	Hoosick
		7:15pm	Old Bennington
		7:20pm	Bennington, VT
9:10am	Albany Greyhound	7:25pm	Bennington, VT
9:20am	Menands	7:27pm	Old Bennington
9:25am	Watervliet	7:40pm	Hoosick
9:30am	Troy Terminal	7:50pm	Hoosick Falls
9:35am	Sycaway	8:00pm	Potter Hill
9:40am	Center Brunswick	8:05pm	Boyntonville
9:45am	Haynersville	8:10pm	Pittstown
9:50am	Raymertown	8:15pm	Raymertown
9:55am	Pittstown	8:20pm	Haynersville
10:00am	Boyntonville	8:25pm	Center Brunswick
10:05am	Potter Hill	8:30pm	Sycaway
10:10am	Hoosick Falls	8:40pm	Troy Terminal
10:40am	Hoosick	8:45pm	Watervliet
10:45am	Old Bennington	8:50pm	Menands
10:50am	Bennington, VT	9:05pm	Albany Greyhound
11:05am	Bennington, VT		
11:10am	Old Bennington		
11:20am	Hoosick		
11:30am	Hoosick Falls		
11:45am	Potter Hill		
11:50am	Boyntonville		
11:55am	Pittstown		
12:00pm	Raymertown		
12:05pm	Haynerville		
12:10pm	Center Brunswick		
12:15pm	Sycaway		
12:25pm	Troy Terminal		
12:30pm	Watervliet		
12:35pm	Menands		
12:50pm	Albany Greyhound		

Top

Prices

Line Run	Bennington	Hoosick	Hoosick Falls	Potter Hill	Boyntonville	Pittstown	Raymertown	Haynerville	Center Brunswick	Sycaway
Bennington	-	$0.75	$1.10	$1.50	$1.50	$2.50	$2.50	$2.50	$2.85	$2.85
Hoosick	$0.75	-	$0.75	$1.10	$1.10	$1.50	$1.50	$1.50	$2.50	$2.50
Hoosick Falls	$1.10	$0.75	-	$0.75	$1.10	$1.50	$1.50	$1.50	$2.50	$2.50
Potter Hill	$1.50	$1.10	$0.75	-	$0.75	$1.10	$1.10	$1.10	$1.50	$1.50
Boyntonville	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10	$0.75	-	$0.75	$1.10	$1.10	$1.50	$1.50
Pittstown	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$0.75	-	$0.75	$0.75	$1.10	$1.10
Raymertown	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10	$0.75	-	$0.75	$1.10	$1.10
Haynersville	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10	$0.75	$0.75	-	$0.75	$1.10
Center Brunswick	$2.85	$2.50	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10	$0.75	-	$0.75
Sycaway	$2.85	$2.50	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10	$1.10	$0.75	-
Troy	$2.85	$2.50	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10	$1.10	$0.75	-
Watervliet	$4.00	$2.85	$2.85	$2.50	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10
Menands	$4.00	$2.85	$2.85	$2.50	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10
Albany	$4.00	$2.85	$2.85	$2.50	$2.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.50	$1.10	$1.10

IMPACTS OF THE LOSS OF RURAL INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

It should be noted that there are now only six places in Vermont with intercity bus service, which is a substantial decline from the 55 points with service identified in the 1998 *Vermont Statewide Intercity Bus Study.* Exhibit 2-4 depicts the intercity bus and rail network available to Vermont at the time of the previous study. Table 2-2 lists the points that have lost intercity bus service since that study.

Greyhound Lines purchased Vermont Transit in 1975, and the firm became a fully-owned subsidiary of Greyhound Lines[1]. However, its management remained independent, and the firm was run as a separate company, with its own cost structure, maintenance facilities, employees and agents. Vermont Transit had lower operating costs than the parent firm, and this fact enabled the firm to continue operating many lightly-used rural/small town routes. Despite this, in September 2005 the national restructuring of Greyhound services resulted in the discontinuation of all Vermont Transit service in the Route 7 corridor; the Route 103 corridor from Rutland through Ludlow and Springfield; and the Newport to White River Junction route. Subsequently, in 2008 the remaining daily round-trip between Rutland and White River Junction was discontinued, leaving Rutland with no intercity bus service.

The loss of the Newport-White River Junction service was not surprising, because it carried few riders, had no through ridership, and incurred costs (driver lodgings, etc.) resulting from overnighting a bus in Newport. However, the loss of the Route 7 corridor on the western side of the state, particularly service from Burlington to Albany via Rutland and Bennington, was more significant. The frequency had been two round-trips per day, there were connections in Rutland to White River Junction (connecting to buses to Boston and New York) and to Bellows Falls/Brattleboro (and on to Boston) with connecting service to New York. All of these connections disappeared with the restructuring, and currently Middlebury, Rutland, Manchester, Springfield and Newport have no intercity bus connection.

To some extent these connections have been replaced with other services, including state-supported Amtrak services on two routes, and significantly increased availability of regional connections provided by the public transit operators. These alternatives are discussed below. Other types of providers such as Middlebury Transit have arisen to provide a different type of intercity transportation, offering advance-reservation ground transportation service (at higher fares than typical intercity bus fares) to airports and

[1] In 2008, following the purchase of Greyhound by First Group of the United Kingdom, Vermont Transit (along with Carolina Coach and Texas, New Mexico, & Oklahoma Stage Lines) was consolidated into Greyhound.

Table 2-2: Comparison of 1996 and 2011 Vermont Intercity Bus and Rail Service Points

Service Point	Full Bus Agency (1)	Amtrak Service	1996 Timetable Number (3)	1996 Frequency (Daily Service, Each Way)	2011 Timetable Number (3)	2011 Frequency (Daily Service, Each Way)
Arlington			1986	3 Scheduled plus (4) 1 Discharge Only		None
Ascutney	Yes		1995	7 Scheduled		None
Barnet			1997	1 Scheduled plus 1 Discharge Only		None
Barton	Yes		1997	2 Scheduled		None
Bellows Falls	Yes	Yes	1990	4 Scheduled		None
			1995	8 Scheduled	67	2 Scheduled
			Amtrak-Rail	2 Scheduled		2 Scheduled
			Amtrak-Bus	1 Receive only, 1 Discharge Only		None
Bennington	Yes		1986	6 Scheduled	Yankee Tr.	2 Scheduled
			Bonanza-2042	6 Scheduled		None
Bradford			1997	2 Scheduled		None
Brandon	Yes		1986	6 Scheduled		None
		Yes	Amtrak-Bus	2 Scheduled		None
Brattleboro	Yes	Yes	1990	4 Scheduled		None
			1995	9 Scheduled	67	2 Scheduled
			Amtrak-Rail	2 Scheduled		2 Scheduled
			Amtrak-Bus	1 Receive only, 1 Discharge Only		None
Bridgewater			2001	2 Flagstops (5)		None
Burlington	Yes		1986	6 Scheduled		None
			1987	10 Scheduled	62	8 Scheduled
		Yes	Amtrak-Bus	2 Scheduled		None
Burlington-Essex Junctio		Yes	Amtrak	2 Scheduled		2 Scheduled
Charlotte			1986	6 Flag stops		None
Cuttingsville			1990	4 Flag stops		None
Danby			1986	6 Highway Stops (6)		None
East Dorset			1986	6 Highway Stops		None
East Wallingford			1990	4 Highway Stops		None
Equinox House			1986	3 Flag stops plus 1 Discharge Only		None
Fairlee	Yes		1997	2 Scheduled		None
Long Trail Lodge			2001	2 Flag stops		None
Ludlow	Yes		1990	4 Scheduled		None
Lyndonville	Yes		1997	2 Scheduled		None
Manchester	Yes		1986	6 Scheduled		None
Middlebury	Yes		1986	6 Scheduled		None
		Yes	Amtrak-Bus	2 Scheduled		None
Middlebury College			1986	3 Discharge Only		None
Montpelier	Yes	Yes	1987	9 Scheduled	62	8 Scheduled
New Haven Junction			1986	6 Flag Stops		None
Newport	Yes		1997	2 Scheduled		None
North Clarendon			1986	6 Highway Stops		None
			1990	4 Highway Stops		None
Orleans			1997	1 Highway Stop		None
Proctorsville			1990	4 Highway Stops		None
Quechee			2001	2 Flag Stops		None
Randolph		Yes	Amtrak	2 Scheduled Stops		2 Scheduled
Randolph Center	Yes		1987	3 Scheduled Stops		None
Rutland	Yes	Yes	1986	6 Scheduled Stops		None
			1987	7 Scheduled Stops		None
Rutland (continued)			2001	4 Scheduled Stops		None
			Amtrak	2 Scheduled Stops		2 Scheduled
		Yes	Amtrak-Bus	2 Scheduled		None
Shelburne			1986	1 Scheduled plus 5 Flag Stops		None
Sherburne	Yes(2)		2001	4 Scheduled Stops		None
South Shaftsbury			1986	1 Scheduled, 1 Flag, 1 Discharge Only		None
South Wallingford			1986	6 flag stops		None
St. Alban's		Yes	Amtrak	2 Scheduled		None
Springfield	Yes		1990	4 Scheduled		None
St. Johnsbury	Yes		1997	2 Scheduled		None

Table 2-2: Comparison of 1996 and 2011 Vermont Intercity Bus and Rail Service Points

Service Point	Full Bus Agency (1)	Amtrak Service	1996 Timetable Number (3)	1996 Frequency (Daily Service, Each Way)	2011 Timetable Number (3)	2011 Frequency (Daily Service, Each Way)
St. Michael's College			1986	2 Scheduled (Discharge-Sundays)		None
Taftsville			2001	2-flagstops		None
Trinity College			1986	2 Scheduled (Discharge-Sundays)		None
Vergennes	Yes		1986	5 Scheduled, 1 Flag Stop		None
		Yes	Amtrak-Bus	2 Scheduled		None
University of Vermont			1986	2 Scheduled (Discharge-Sundays)		2 Scheduled
Wallingford	Yes		1986	5 Scheduled, 1 Flag Stop		None
Waterbury	Yes		1987	4 Scheduled, 2 Discharge Only		None
Waterbury-Stowe		Yes	Amtrak	2 Scheduled		2 Scheduled
Wells River	Yes		1997	2 Scheduled		None
West Bridgewater			2001	2 Flag Stops		None
White River Junction	Yes		1987	12 Scheduled	62	8 Scheduled
			1995	10 Scheduled	67	2 Scheduled
			2001	4 Scheduled		None
			1997	2 Scheduled		None
			Amtrak-Rail	2 Scheduled		2 Scheduled
			Amtrak-Bus	1 Receive Only, 1 Discharge Only		None
Windsor-Mt. Ascutney		Yes	Amtrak	2 Scheduled		2 Scheduled
Woodstock	Yes		2001	4 Scheduled		None

(1) Full service bus agency sells passenger tickets and accepts bus package express.
(2) Handles tickets only.
(3) Timetable numbers from Russell's Guide.
(4) Scheduled service is defined as being shown in the timetable as stopping at a particular time to discharge and receive passengers.
(5) At flagstops buses will stop only on signal to pick up or dropoff passengers.
(6) At a highway stop - buses do not go into town or to an agency to pick up or dropoff passengers.

train stations. But for most of Vermont there has been a significant reduction in intercity bus services—in terms of coverage, frequency and connectivity.

INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL

Although there are differences in the user and trip characteristics of intercity bus and rail, rail passenger service also provides a surface, non-auto transit mode which may be considered to address many of the same travel needs. The map in Figure 2-1 also presents the routes of the two Amtrak lines that currently serve Vermont. The *Ethan Allen Express* provides daily service, one roundtrip a day, from New York, NY to Rutland, VT by way of Albany, NY. This train service also stops in Castleton, VT, and motor coach connections are available to Killington and Okemo ski resorts during the ski season. The *Vermonter* provides a single daily service from Washington, D.C. to St. Albans, VT, offering connections to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. One southbound and one northbound trip are provided each day. The other stops within Vermont include Essex Junction, Waterbury, Montpelier, Randolph, White River Junction, Windsor, Bellows Falls, and Brattleboro. Both train services are financed primarily through funding from VTrans.

REGIONAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

Since the 2007 PTPP, there has been a growth of regional commuter services for both year-round and seasonal workers. Commuter routes that extend beyond the traditional areas service by each of the operators and seasonal connections currently include:

- Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) extends into Chittenden and Rutland Counties with commuter services. Rutland to Middlebury is operated jointly with Marble Valley Regional Transit District (MVRTD) (partially as a replacement for town-to-town service and access formerly provided by the Vermont Transit route that was discontinued in the Western Corridor), and Middlebury to Burlington is operated jointly with Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA).

- MVRTD offers regional services from Rutland into Middlebury, Manchester, Bellows Falls, Ludlow, and Fair Haven. It also has a seasonal route to Killington, primarily for workers.

- Connecticut River Transit (CRT) has a number of commuter routes that connect to other transit systems: the Rockingham – Lebanon route

(connecting to AT and Stagecoach Transportation Services (STSI)) and the Bellows Falls- Brattleboro (connecting with Deerfield Valley Transit Association DVTA)). The system also has a seasonal service to Okemo Mountain Resort and connects to Amtrak in Bellow Falls (Upper Valley Commuter Route).

- DVTA extends beyond its service area to Brattleboro and has a seasonal route to Mt. Snow.

- Green Mountain Community Network (GMCN)/GMX connects to MVRTD to cover the Route 7 corridor from Bennington to Rutland, and for out-of state travel it links to Peter Pan Bus Lines in Williamstown, Massachusetts (service to New York).

- Rural Community Transportation (RCT) has service on Route 2 from St. Johnsbury to Montpelier where a passenger could connect to Amtrak or Greyhound. This is operated in conjunction with Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA).

- STSI operates two commuter routes along the I-89 and I-91 corridors into the employment centers of White River Junction and Lebanon and Hanover, NH.

- CCTA operates the LINK Express commuter services between Burlington, Waterbury, and Montpelier to the east, Middlebury to the south, and to adjacent counties.

- Advance Transit (AT) provides commuter service to Enfield and Canaan, New Hampshire. Through the Upper Valley Transportation Management Association (UVTMA), AT coordinates with Stagecoach Transit Services and CRT in Vermont and Community Transportation Services in New Hampshire to provide information on public transit and promote connections between transit systems in the region. AT also promotes intermodal transportation with connections to Amtrak, Greyhound, and Dartmouth Coach.

For the most part these services have been established under the State's New Starts program, using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funding which provides operating assistance for three years. In general, these services have been designed based on identification of significant long-distance commuter patterns, focusing on attracting "choice" riders who may have a private vehicle option. Ridership on most of the services has grown rapidly (one, the route from White River Junction to St. Johnsbury was discontinued due to poor performance), and led to calls for increased park and ride lot capacity.

Some of these services (and other local transit routes as well) have been scheduled to provide some practical connections with less than two-hour wait times, and some less than one hour, to and from intercity bus services. For example, GMCN's Red Line offers a connection to Yankee Trails service toward Albany each weekday (a second connection is possible, but requires a 2.5-hour wait), providing the opportunity for a day trip to Albany.[2] GMCN's Orange Line provides two connections in Williamstown, MA to Peter Pan Bus Lines' services toward New York and Boston Logan International Airport Monday through Friday. AT's Green Route connects to Dartmouth Coach in Hanover, NH and provides six connections each weekday to Boston South Station and Logan International Airport, with two possible connections for the return trip in Hanover; as well as eight connections to New York City during the week, with one return trip connection available per weekday. Vermont's local operators facilitate these inter-state connections by providing schedule information and highlighting connection points on their websites and brochures.

However, even if a number of transit systems connect to the remaining intercity bus (and rail) service, it is not clear that they are a substitute for the intercity bus services that once existed. The Section 45 study on Regional Connectivity looked at intra-state connections in terms of both possibility and "practicality". The definition of practical public transit trip was that it would take no longer then two times as long as it would be to drive, and require no more than two transfers among vehicles. It found that route connections exist among most of the State's populated towns and cities (with the exception of the Northeast Kingdom) but that the set of practical connections was limited. The area of the state most disconnected from the intra-state transit fixed-route network is the Northeast Kingdom. Also it found that a trip from Burlington to Bennington is possible, but is not very practical requiring three transfers and most of a day. Since then a Route 2, St. Johnsbury to Montpelier, service has been instituted, which also allows for travel between St. Johnsbury and Burlington via connections with CCTA/GMTA LINK Express.

CONCLUSIONS

It should be noted that there are significant differences in the trip purposes and potential destinations between the regional commuter services and the intercity services. Intercity services in Vermont, both passenger rail and intercity bus, have long been routed and scheduled to pick up passengers in Vermont towns and cities and transport them to major destinations outside the State. Even the 1998 Vermont intercity

[2] However, the rider would need alternative local transportation in Bennington on the return trip, since Red Line service ends at 5:00 p.m. and Yankee Trails arrives back from Albany to Bennington at 7:20 p.m. This bus trip also takes about twice the time that driving would, but still offers an option for those unable to drive.

bus study noted that most of the services then existing were designed mainly to provide for departures toward Albany, New York City, and Boston in the morning, with return trips arriving late in the day (continuing on to Montreal in some cases). The ability of a resident of Bennington or Brattleboro (or even Rutland) to travel north to Montpelier or Burlington and return the same day was very limited if it existed at all.

Needs for intrastate trips have largely been addressed by the transit providers within their service regions, and more recently the regional commuters have addressed this for trip lengths that could be served effectively on schedules allowing for a day in the destination city (there are still some gaps in meeting this need, such as the inability to make a day trip from Rutland to Burlington and back on the regional services). Intercity trips are typically taken for family or social reasons, rather than as business trips or work commutes, and the riders are generally infrequent users. However, the riders value the ability to make these trips, as can be seen in the fact that most intercity services are able to charge fares that cover the full cost of the trip.

Given the losses of intercity bus service, how much of Vermont has intercity access? The recently released U.S. DOT study "The U.S. Rural Population and Scheduled Intercity Transportation in 2010: a Five-Year Decline in Transportation Access" measured access by looking at the population within a 25-mile radius of a small or non-hub commercial service airport, bus station, ferry terminal, or rail station; or within a 75-mile radius of a medium- or large-hub airport. It found that the percentage of Vermont's rural (non-urbanized) population with access to intercity bus service declined from 99.8% in 2005 to 78.8% in 2010 (largely as a result of the Greyhound/Vermont Transit restructuring). Vermont's two daily Amtrak trains to New York City provide access to 83.6% of the rural population, according to the same study. The rural areas of Vermont that have access only to intercity bus (but not rail or air service) include only 6.5% of the rural population, meaning that there is significant overlap of the current bus service origin areas with those of intercity rail and air. Additional intercity bus route coverage in rural areas would be needed to reach the populations not already served.

The importance of documenting the loss of access is related to the federal funding programs that provide for intercity bus service assistance in rural areas, as can be seen in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Analysis of Intercity Bus Service Needs

Demographic and economic characteristics of the population are key factors that highlight the locations that have a concentration of potential need for public transit services, either because of the characteristics of the population, the overall size of the population, or the density of the population. In addition, some places are likely to have a need for intercity bus service because a major activity attracts persons from distant locations. These places may have colleges and universities, military bases, major regional medical facilities, and state or federal correctional facilities (both for visitors and release of inmates). In this chapter both demographics and major trip generators are identified.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF INTERCITY BUS NEEDS

This analysis identifies the location of population segments that tend to be more dependent on intercity bus services, and compares these areas to the existing intercity bus network to determine gaps where service might be expanded or new services implemented. It is very similar to the analysis for public transit generally, except that it also includes the 18 to 24 year old population segment that forms a major portion of intercity bus ridership. At that age many persons are traveling to and from higher educational institutions or military bases; they are more likely to be traveling alone and to not have a vehicle available, both factors that increase bus usage. After reviewing transit-dependent populations individually, a combined analysis of the density of these populations indicates areas that may have higher potential needs for intercity bus service. The methodology for the demographic analysis is described below.

Methodology

The demographic analysis examined five potentially transit-dependent population segments:

- **Older Adults** – Persons age 65 and above. This group may include those who either choose not to drive any longer, have previously relied on a spouse for mobility, or because of factors associated with age can no longer drive;

- **Persons with disabilities** – Persons age 16 and over who have a disability lasting six months or more that makes leaving the home alone for simple trips such as shopping and medical visits difficult for them;

- **Low-income residents –** Persons living below the poverty level who may not have the economic means to either purchase or maintain a personal vehicle; and

- **Autoless households** – Number of households without an automobile. One, if not the most, significant factor in determining transit needs is the lack of an available automobile for members of a household to use.

- **Young Adults -** Persons 18 to 24 years of age. This group may include persons who do not a vehicle available for the trip, cannot have a vehicle at the destination, or have chosen not to use private vehicles.

The most recent data available for these population segments were collected from 2010 Nielson Claritas data, where available, or 2000 Census data.[1] The data was collected at the Census Block Group level to provide more geographic detail regarding potential transit needs across the State. The 2000 Census data was also adjusted by the statewide population increase from 2000 to 2010 to better approximate the current demographic distribution.

The first step in the analysis was using GIS ArcMap to map the densities of these individual population segments, in persons per square mile. The densities of potentially transit-dependent populations are a good indicator of the type of transit service that may be most feasible in an area. For example, fixed-route transit service is often prioritized for areas that contain higher densities of potentially transit-dependent persons, while demand response service is more feasible for low or moderate density areas. In addition, current intercity bus services including those provided in-State by Greyhound Lines and Yankee Trails and nearby opportunities for connections in New Hampshire and Massachusetts were included in the demographic maps.

The second step of the demographic assessment involved a combined analysis, where the data for the five population segments above were summarized by Census Block Group. Each Block Group was ranked, relative to the other Block Groups across

[1] The data for persons with disabilities and low-income residents were not available with the 2010 Nielson Claritas dataset, so 2000 Census data was used.

the State, by potential need for intercity bus service (i.e., a Block Group with greater densities of older adults, persons with disabilities, low-income residents, autoless households, and young adults ranked higher than another Block Group with smaller densities of these populations). Analyzing the densities of these population segments helped identify service gaps and the types of transit service that may be most appropriate for those areas.[2]

The summary density rankings for transit-dependent persons, per Block Group, were divided into natural breaks representing ranges of high, moderate, and low relative need. The results for the individual analyses of the potentially transit-dependent population segments and the combined analysis are described below.

It should be noted that this methodology focused mainly on the likely ridership for "traditional" intercity bus services, persons with higher transportation need characteristics who are also likely to need local public transit. Potential "choice" riders of intercity bus service are not captured through this demographic analysis because quantifying such demand is difficult, and public input is often a more feasible approach for collecting and analyzing data about choice markets. Young adults may be the exception, in representing both potentially transit-dependent riders and choice riders, because this age group constitutes a large portion of riders that choose to use "curbside" intercity bus services, described in more detail in Chapter 5.

Potentially Transit-Dependent Populations

Burlington is the State's only urbanized area and has the highest population densities including numbers of transit-dependent persons per square mile. Since this demographic analysis focused on densities of potential intercity bus riders, the results repeatedly highlighted that Burlington and surrounding communities, including Colchester, Winooski, Essex Junction, and South Burlington, have high needs for intercity bus service. Burlington also has the highest level of intercity bus service in the State at six roundtrips daily.[3] The descriptions per transit-dependent population below then focus on other towns outside of Greater Burlington that may have high relative need for intercity bus service. Whether intercity service should connect these towns to Burlington or to each other will be determined through additional analysis of public

[2] The numbers of people in each category are not added together in each Block Group because the categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, an older adult could also have an income below the poverty level and/or have no automobile available to them for personal use. It should also be noted that "autoless households" refer to occupied housing units and not persons.

[3] Four roundtrips are provided by Greyhound, while two roundtrips are provided by Megabus with service to Boston, starting August 17, 2011. (Source: Megabus Website, **http://us.megabus.com/expandboston.aspx**)

input and potential ridership estimates for route concepts, provided through a rural intercity bus demand model.

Older Adults

Age is considered a potential indicator of the need for public transit services. As seniors grow older, many eventually lose their ability to drive. Public transit becomes an essential element in maintaining their quality of life and avoiding relocation to an assisted living facility or a nursing home. Figure 3-1 shows the number of older adults, age 65 and above, per square mile by Block Group according to the 2010 Nielson Claritas data. The areas with the highest concentrations of seniors include St. Albans, Barre-Montpelier, St. Johnsbury, Rutland, Bellows Falls, Brattleboro, and Bennington. St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, and Rutland lie outside the existing intercity bus network, and Barre residents need to drive or take the local GMTA bus about seven miles to access the Greyhound stop in Montpelier.

Additional towns with relatively high densities of older adults include Swanton, Enosburg Falls, Newport, Waterbury, Northfield, Vergennes, Middlebury, Randolph, White River Junction, Windsor, Ludlow, and Springfield. Only White River Junction is served by current intercity bus service and Amtrak, while Waterbury, Randolph, and White River Junction are also Amtrak stops. The other towns may be candidates for new stops on existing intercity bus routes or for stops on new routes.

Intercity service is important for older adults who travel for medical services, shopping, and visiting friends and family. Public transit services between Chittenden County and the rest of the State are primarily limited to weekday commuter routes, typically requiring very early morning or late afternoon (peak commuter) trips. Furthermore, some trips require multiple connections. New intercity bus connections, especially rural intercity service that serves smaller towns between the larger urban areas, provide an important transportation option for seniors.

Persons with Disabilities

Transit accessibility offers more enriched lives for people with disabilities who require accessible transportation for various trip purposes, from employment and medical treatment to shopping and social activities. Public transit including intercity bus service is an important option for individuals with disabilities, especially where they do not have the ability to drive themselves or lack access to a personal vehicle. Local economies also benefit from the availability of an expanded workforce and increased access to businesses and retail centers. Figure 3-2 highlights concentrations of people with disabilities throughout Vermont. To create this map, data from the 2000 Census were adjusted using the percent increase of the total statewide population between 2000 and 2010 according to Nielson Claritas data.

Figure 3-1: Older Adults (Age 65 and Above) Population Density

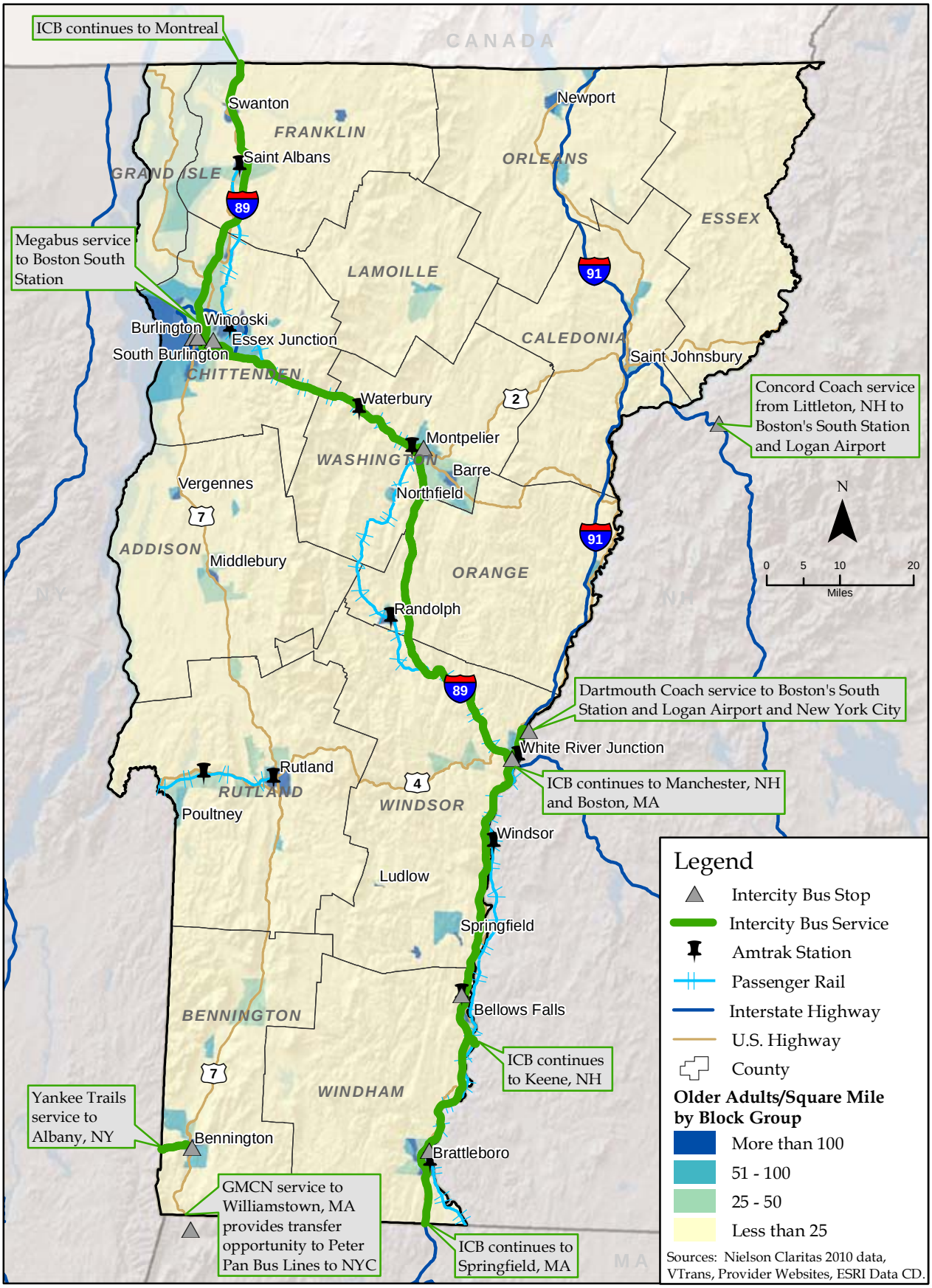
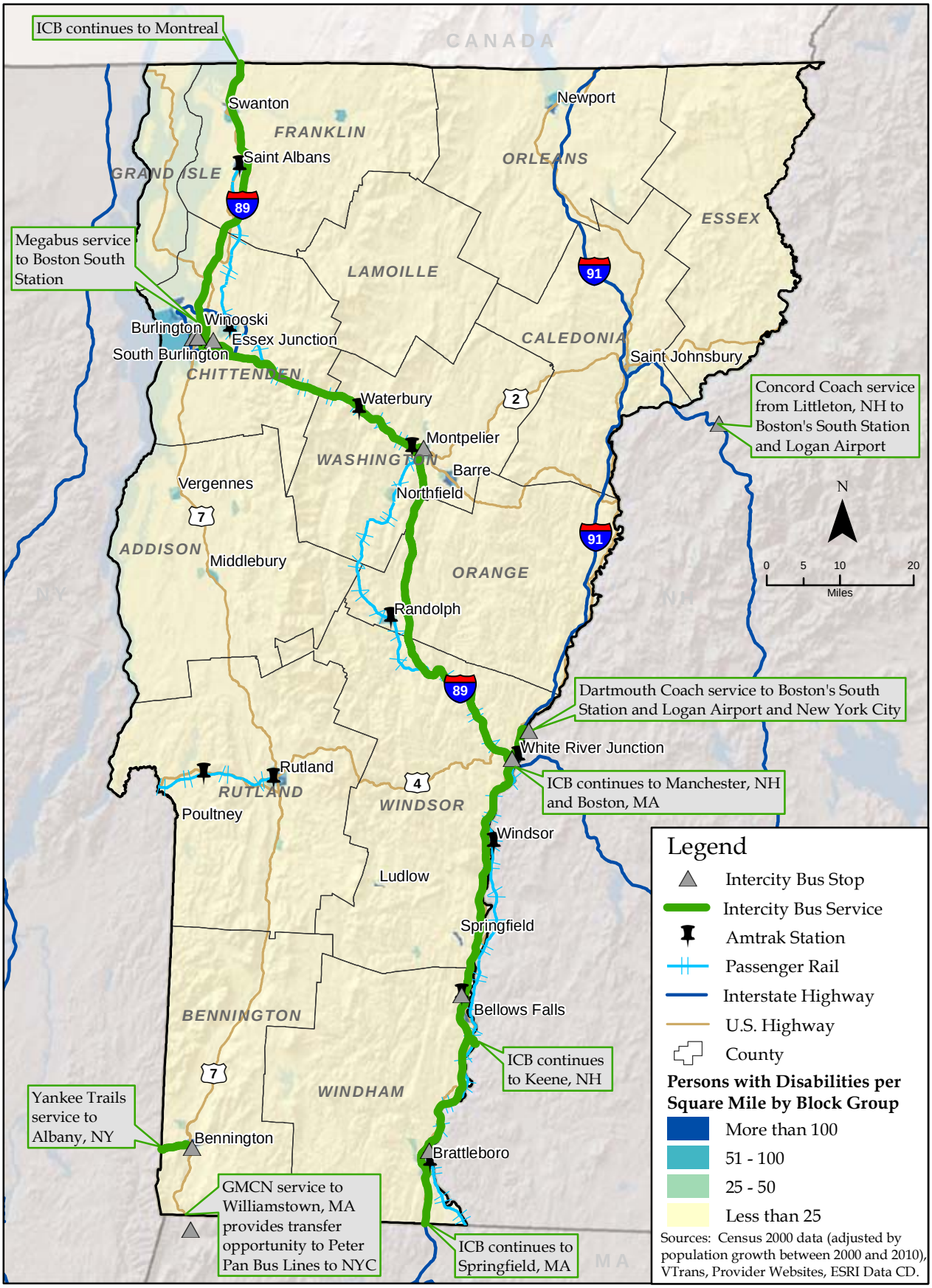


Figure 3-2: Persons with Disabilities (Age 16 and Above) Population Density



The concentrations of persons with disabilities correspond to the State's larger urban areas. The highest densities are found in St. Albans, Barre, Rutland, Bellows Falls, Brattleboro, and Bennington. Additional towns with relatively high need based on densities of persons with disabilities include Swanton, Newport, St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, White River Junction, Ludlow, and Springfield. Swanton, St. Albans, and Springfield lie along existing intercity bus routes, but are not currently served. St. Johnsbury is about 23 miles away from the intercity bus stop in Littleton, NH, while Newport and Ludlow have neither intercity bus nor passenger rail service.

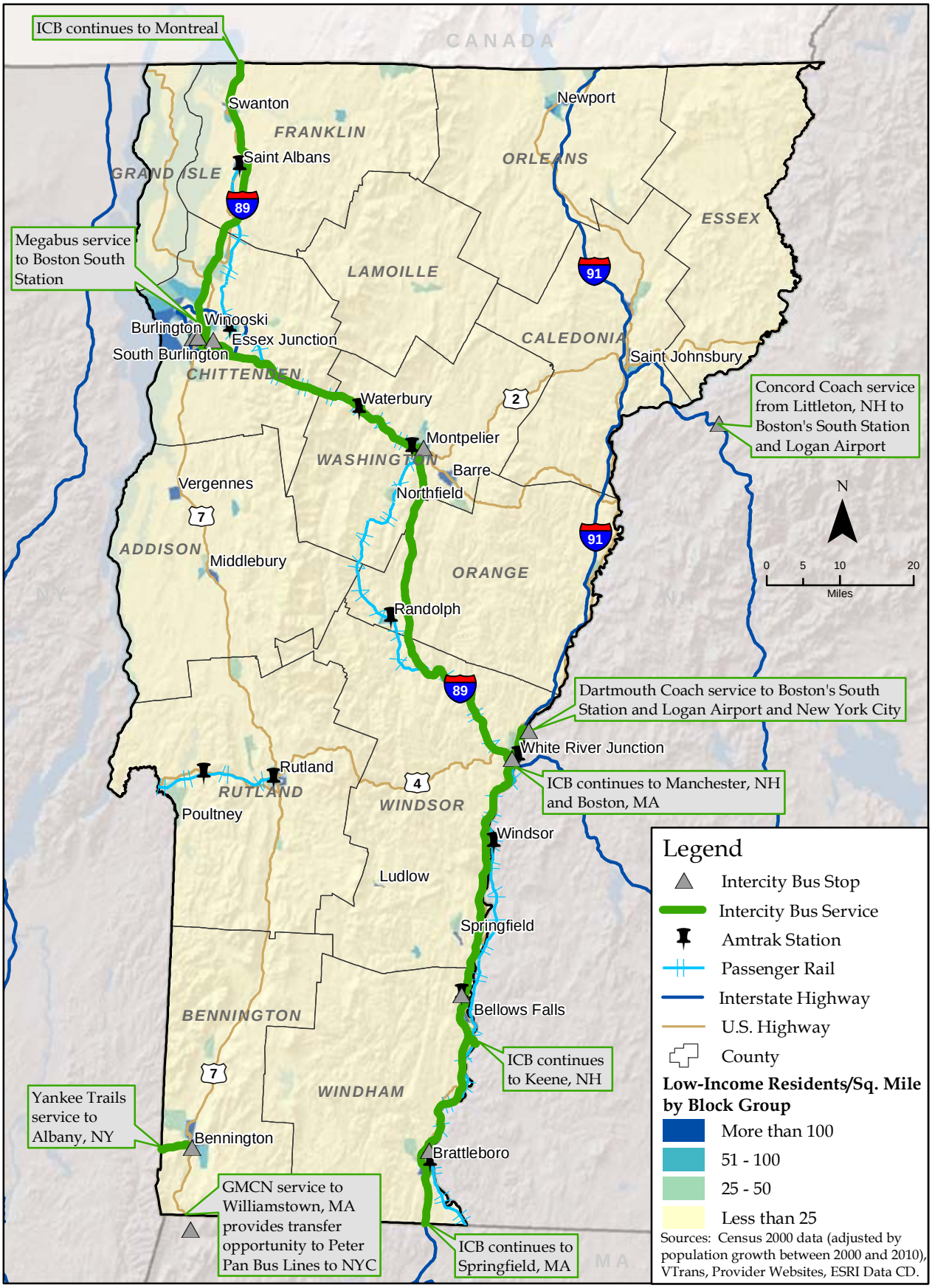
Low-Income Residents

Figure 3-3 considers an additional potential indicator for transit use – individuals living below the poverty line. Transportation costs put a tremendous strain on low-income household budgets. According to the Surface Transportation Policy Project's 2003 report, *Transportation Costs and the American Dream*, the poorest 20% of American households spend about 40% of their take-home pay on transportation.[4] For many low-income households, owning and maintaining a vehicle is necessary for travel to their workplace. Intercity bus could provide a more affordable transportation option for long-distance commutes, social visits, and shopping, especially where residents in rural areas need to access shopping and services only available in nearby urban areas. Figure 3-3 shows the number of individuals living below the poverty level per square mile in Vermont. To create this map, data from the 2000 Census were adjusted using the percent increase of the total statewide population between 2000 and 2010 according to Nielson Claritas data.

The highest concentrations of low-income residents are found in Barre, Rutland, Brattleboro, and Bennington, while St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, and Bellows Falls have the next highest densities. Of these higher need towns, St. Johnsbury, St. Albans, and Rutland currently have no intercity bus service, though St. Johnsbury residents are indirectly served by Concord Coach in Littleton, NH and the latter two towns are served by Amtrak. Barre is not directly served by intercity bus, but is located about seven miles from the Greyhound stop in Montpelier and local transit service is available to meet some Greyhound trips. Additional towns with relatively high densities of persons living below the poverty level include Swanton, Newport, Lyndon, Waterbury, Vergennes, Middlebury, White River Junction, Windsor, Ludlow, and Springfield. None of these towns, except for White River Junction, are served by the existing intercity bus network.

[4] The Surface Transportation Policy Project is a nationwide coalition of planners, community development organizations, and advocacy groups, which seeks to improve the national transportation system and promote safer communities.

Figure 3-3: Persons Living Below the Poverty Level Population Density



Autoless Households

The lack of a vehicle is a significant economic issue when households are not autoless by choice and public transit is unavailable. Vermont's major employment areas are regional in nature, and inter-town travel is required for many residents to reach employment sites. Members of autoless households also depend on transportation alternatives to access daily activities including medical services, educational opportunities, shopping, and social functions. Intercity bus can provide an important alternative to connect the urban areas in Vermont and to connect rural communities to the services and opportunities that may only be available in urban areas.

The number of autoless household per square mile is detailed in Figure 3-4. **(**Note that this part of the analysis considers households without cars, rather than individuals.) Outside of Burlington, Barre and Brattleboro have the highest densities of autoless households, followed by St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, Rutland, Bellows Falls, and Bennington. St. Johnsbury is the primary high need area that has neither intercity bus nor passenger rail service. (Barre is indirectly served by both modes in Montpelier.) The towns with high concentrations of autoless households have local transit service, which is important for residents looking to access intercity bus service. Local transit schedules and service hours should complement intercity bus trips to help Vermonters, especially those without access to a personal vehicle, travel the "first mile" or "last mile" of their trips.

Additional towns that have significant densities of autoless households include White River Junction, Newport, and Springfield. The latter two are not served by existing intercity bus service; Newport is particularly isolated from the intercity bus and passenger rail networks, while Springfield is located along a current Greyhound route.

Young Adults

Persons ages 18 to 24 constitute a notable portion of the intercity bus market. This group may include persons who do not have a vehicle available for the trip, cannot have a vehicle at the destination, or have chosen not to use private vehicles. This analysis examined the density of young adults across the State, shown in Figure 3-5 and found that (outside of Burlington) Rutland, Colchester, Bellows Falls, and Brattleboro have the highest densities of young adults. The latter two towns are currently served by one daily roundtrip between White River Junction and Springfield, MA. Colchester and Rutland do not have any intercity bus service, though Rutland is served by a daily roundtrip on Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express route.

Additional towns that have at least 100 young adults per square mile include Swanton, Saint Albans, Newport, Saint Johnsbury, Barre-Montpelier, Vergennes, Middlebury, Poultney, White River Junction, Windsor, Ludlow, Springfield, and

Figure 3-4: Density of Autoless Households

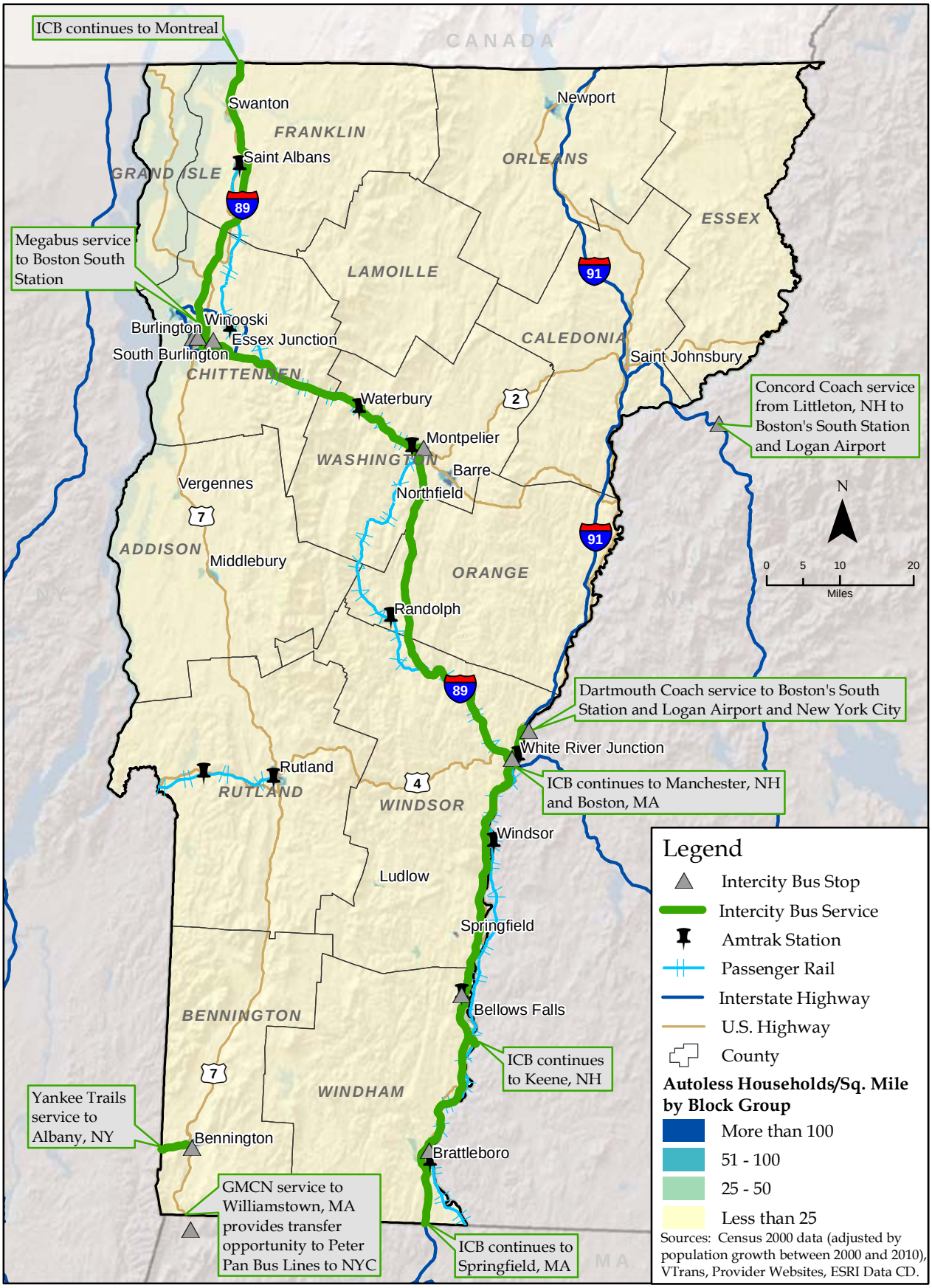
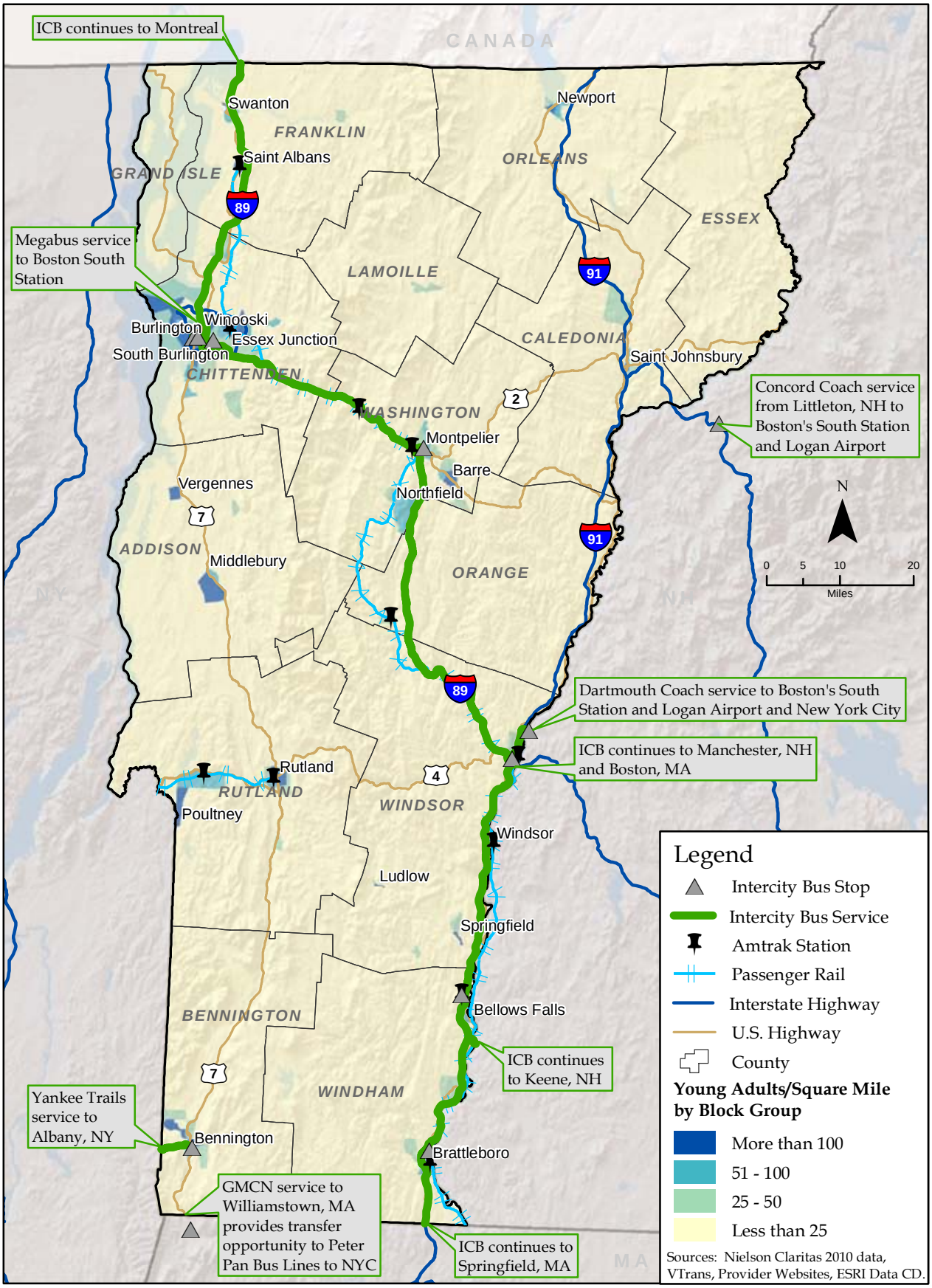


Figure 3-5: Young Adults (Ages 18-24) Population Density



Bennington. Many of these towns may have a density of young adults due to colleges, universities, or vocational schools; or nearby ski areas, such as Okemo Mountain near Ludlow and Ascutney Mountain near Windsor. These potential intercity bus destinations are discussed further below.

Combined Density Ranking of Transit-Dependent Populations

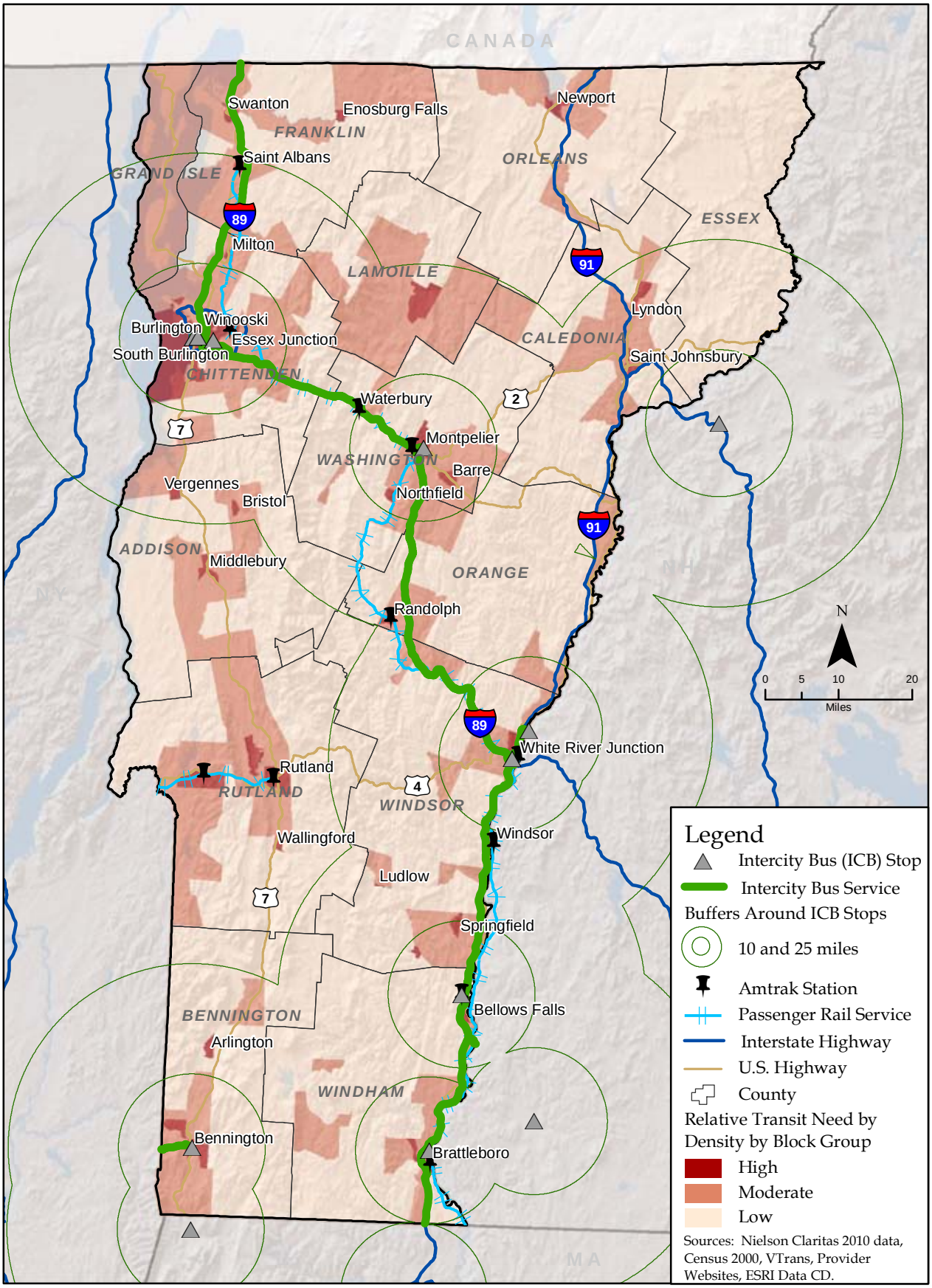
Figure 3-6 shows the relative levels of need for intercity bus service, by Block Group, based on the density of transit-dependent populations. 10- and 25-mile market areas were shown around the existing intercity bus stops to determine high need areas that currently have limited access to intercity bus services. The 10-mile buffer captured potential riders who have reasonably good and feasible access to the service, whether by local transit service, catching a ride with a friend or relative, or taking a taxi. The 25-mile buffer captured potential riders who have more limited access to intercity bus service, especially residents that live farther than 25 miles away. This analysis highlighted areas that have high concentrations of transit-dependent persons and are located more than ten miles from existing intercity bus stops.[5] The lists below include high need areas with populations of at least 2,500; these are unserved areas with rural intercity bus need that should be considered for potential service under the Section 5311(f) program.

The following towns have block groups with "High" concentrations of transit-dependent persons and are located more than 25 miles from an existing intercity bus stop: (The towns in bold ranked higher in potential needs.)

- **Swanton** – about 38 miles away from the Burlington stop
- **Newport** – about 65 miles away from the Montpelier stop
- **Rutland** – approximately 45 miles away from the White River Junction stop, 50 miles from the Bellows Falls stop, and 55 miles from the Bennington stop
- Morristown – approximately 30 miles to the Montpelier stop and 40 miles to the Burlington stop
- Lyndon – about 30 miles to the Littleton, NH stop and 44 miles away from the Montpelier stop
- Bristol – about 28 miles away from the Burlington stop
- Middlebury – about 36 miles away from the Burlington stop
- Randolph – about 27 miles to the Montpelier stop and 35 miles to the White River Junction stop
- Castleton – about 60 miles from the White River Junction stop and 65 miles from the Bennington stop

[5] Note that some high need areas in the map appear to lie within the 25-mile buffers, but the driving distance to the nearest intercity bus is actually farther. The analysis lists estimates of the actual driving distances, many of which were farther than they appear on the map.

Figure 3-6: Combined Density Ranking of Transit-Dependent Populations



Due to the greater distances that these high need areas are located from the current intercity bus network, these towns may be good candidates for entirely new routes, with the exception of Randolph, which lies along Greyhound's service in the I-89 corridor.

Located more than ten miles, but less than 25 miles away from an existing stop, the towns below also have "High" concentrations of transit-dependent persons and are good candidates for new or expanded intercity service because they lack local transit service that can regularly connect their residents to the intercity bus network: (The towns in bold ranked higher in potential needs.)

- **St. Albans** – nearly 25 miles away from the Burlington stop
- **St. Johnsbury** – about 23 miles away from the Littleton, NH stop or about 40 miles away from the Montpelier stop
- **Windsor** – about 14 miles away from the White River Junction stop
- Vergennes – about 25 miles away from the Burlington stop
- Springfield – about 14 miles to the Bellows Falls stop

While many of these towns have some level of local transit service, most are commuter routes that operate during peak periods and/or weekdays only, or riders need to transfer between two or more local transit routes to get to the intercity bus stop. A high number of transfers makes travel by transit less convenient and attractive, so these towns could be candidates for more direct service by a new or expanded intercity route.

Additional towns were also identified as high need based on the combined density ranking, but had populations less than 2,500 and may be less feasible as intercity bus stops: (Again, the towns in bold ranked higher in potential needs.)

- **Ludlow** – about 26 miles away from the Bellows Falls stop and about 40 miles away from the White River Junction stop
- Enosburg Falls – about 50 miles away from the Burlington stop
- Wallingford – about 45 miles away from the Bennington stop and 57 miles from the White River Junction stop
- **Waterbury** – about 10 miles away from the Montpelier stop and 25 miles away from the Burlington stop
- Milton – about 18 miles away from the Burlington stop
- Arlington – about 15 miles away from the Bennington stop

Major Destinations for Intercity Bus Service

Whereas the demographic analysis described above highlighted potential origin areas for intercity bus riders, major destinations in Vermont were also analyzed to determine potential "end" points that are common for intercity bus trips. Described further below, these destinations included colleges and universities, major medical centers, correctional facilities, ski resorts, and major intermodal connections at airports and rail stations. Military bases are another common trip generator for intercity bus services, but none are located in Vermont. This analysis also mapped the major destinations overlaid with existing intercity bus services and the 25-mile buffer around current stops to determine major destinations that may have limited access to the existing intercity bus network.

Educational Facilities

As discussed previously, a major segment of the intercity bus market is young adults, persons 18 to 24 years old. To some extent the ability of college students to use intercity bus services to make trips to and from home is a function of the location of their homes and the degree to which bus service comes close to home. Figure 3-7 indicates the locations of all two-year colleges and technical schools, four-year colleges and universities, and independent schools in Vermont in relation to the existing intercity bus network and the 10 mile- and 25 mile- service areas. Table 3-1 lists all these educational facilities, their locations, and student enrollment including undergraduate and graduate students, where available.

About half of the educational facilities included in this analysis, mainly the four-year colleges, offer student housing on or around campus. Community colleges and technical schools are generally commuter programs, though Vermont Technical College also offers a four-year undergraduate program with a residential component. Greater Burlington and Brattleboro have concentrations of educational facilities, and higher educational institutions are otherwise distributed throughout the State. The schools around Burlington are relatively well served by existing intercity bus service, especially with the addition of Megabus service to Boston, and Brattleboro schools are served by one daily roundtrip by Greyhound. Several colleges are located farther than 25 miles from current intercity bus stops: Johnson State College, Middlebury, and Castleton State College each have 2,000 or more students; while Green Mountain College, College of St. Joseph in Vermont, Sterling College, and the Community Colleges of Vermont in Newport, Middlebury, and Rutland are smaller schools. Eight other higher educational facilities were located between 10 and 25 miles from existing stops, but all had enrollments of 1,400 or less: Lyndon State College, Springfield College School of Human Services, Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center, Vermont Law School, Marlboro College, and the Community Colleges of Vermont in St. Albans, Morrisville, and St. Johnsbury.

Figure 3-7: Intercity Bus Destinations - Educational Facilities

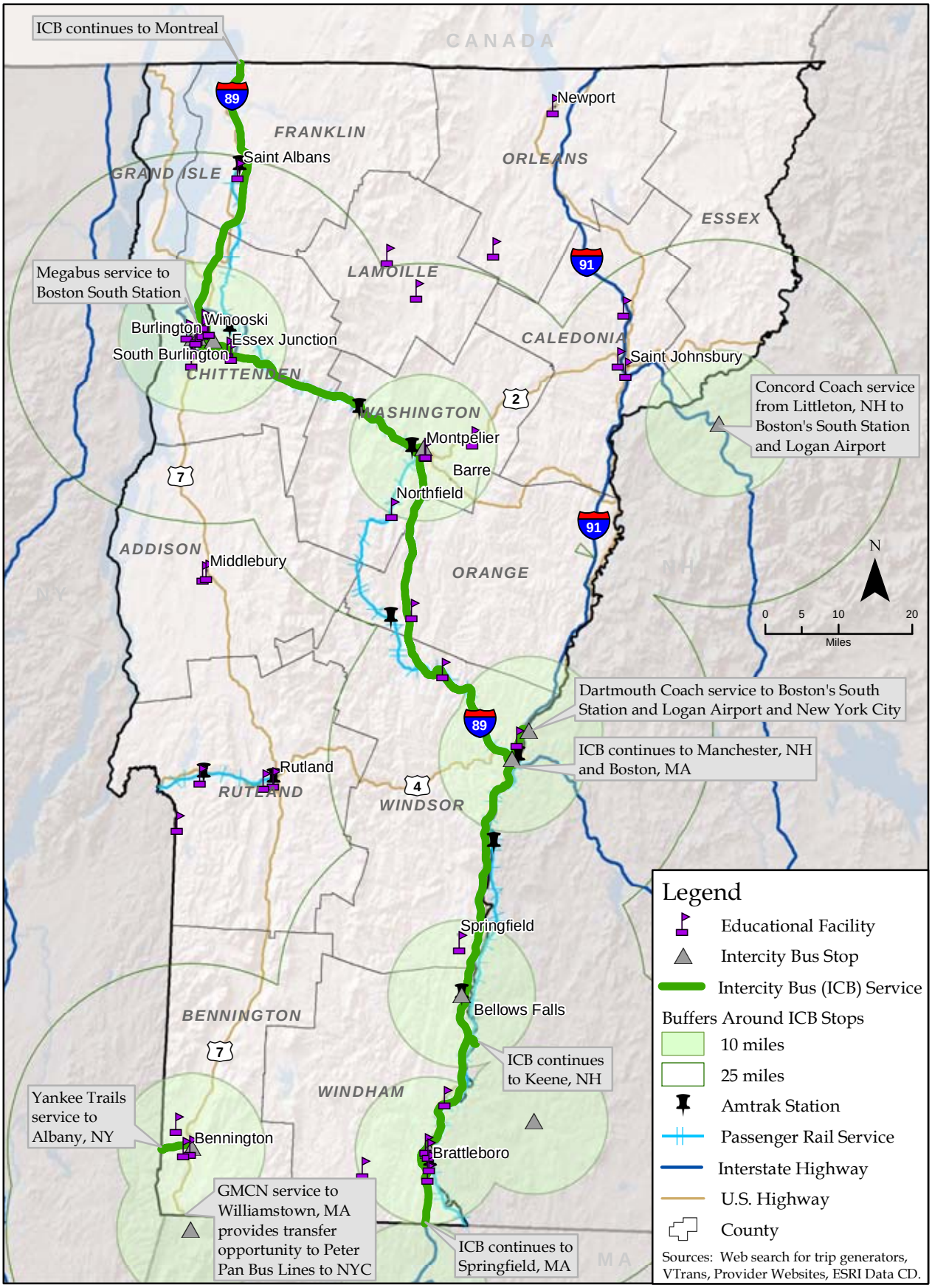


Table 3-1: Educational Facilities

Name	Address	Town/City	Zip Code	Enrollment
Bennington College	1 College Dr	Bennington	05201	811
Burlington College	351 North Ave	Burlington	05401	200
Castleton State College	86 Seminary St	Castleton	05735	2,215
Champlain College	163 S Willard St	Burlington	05401	2,000
College of St. Joseph in Vermont	71 Clement Rd	Rutland	05701	425
Goddard College	123 Pitkin Rd	Plainfield	05667	246
Green Mountain College	1 Brennan Circle	Poultney	05764	820
Johnson State College	337 College Hill Rd	Johnson	05656	2,000
Lyndon State College	1001 College Rd	Lyndonville	05851	1,436
Marlboro College	2582 South Rd	Marlboro	05344	330
Middlebury College	14 Old Chapel Rd	Middlebury	05753	2,450
Norwich University	158 Harmon Dr	Northfield	05663	3,300
Saint Michael's College	56 College Pkwy	Colchester	05446	2,700
School for International Training Graduate Institute	1 Kipling Rd	Brattleboro	05301	42
Southern Vermont College	982 Mansion Dr	Bennington	05201	500
University of Vermont	85 S Prospect St	Burlington	05405	13,568
Community College of Vermont - Bennington	324 Main St	Bennington	05201	7,000 at all locations and online
Community College of Vermont - Brattleboro	70 Landmark Hill	Brattleboro	05301	
Community College of Vermont - Middlebury	10 Merchants Row	Middlebury	05753	
Community College of Vermont - Montpelier	32 College St	Montpelier	05602	
Community College of Vermont - Morrisville	197 Harrell St	Morrisville	05661	-
Community College of Vermont - Newport	100 Main St	Newport	05855	-
Community College of Vermont - Rutland	24 Evelyn St	Rutland	05701	-
Community College of Vermont - St. Albans	142 S Main St	St. Albans	05478	-
Community College of Vermont - St. Johnsbury	1197 Main St	St. Johnsbury	05819	-
Community College of Vermont -Springfield	307 South St	Springfield	05156	-
Community College of Vermont -Upper Valley	145 Billings Farm Rd	White River Junction	05001	-
Community College of Vermont -Winooski	1 Abenaki Way	Winooski	05404	-
Landmark College	1 River Rd S	Putney	05346	490
New England Culinary Institute	56 College St	Montpelier	05602	500
Sterling College	16 Sterling Dr	Craftsbury Common	05827	125
Vermont College of Fine Arts	36 College St	Montpelier	05602	225
Vermont Law School	164 Chelsea St	South Royalton	05608	601
Vermont Technical College - Williston	201 Lawrence Place	Williston	05495	1340 Total
Vermont Technical College - Randolph Center	124 Admin Dr	Randolph Center	05061	-
Southern New Hampshire Univ. - Vermont Graduate Programs	463 Mountain View Dr	Colchester	05446	n/a
Fletcher Allen Health Care School of Cytotechnology	111 Colchester Ave	Burlington	05401	n/a
O'Briens Aveda Institute	1475 Shelburne Rd	South Burlington	05403	n/a
Springfield College School of Human Services	347 Emerson Falls Rd	St. Johnsbury	05819	n/a
The Salon Professional Academy	400 Cornerstone Dr	Williston	05495	n/a
Union Institute & University - Brattleboro Academic Center	3 University Way	Brattleboro	05301	n/a
Union Institute & University - Psy.D. Program	28 Vernon St	Brattleboro	05302	n/a
Union Institute & University - Montpelier Academic Center	62 Ridge St	Montpelier	05602	n/a

n/a = not available
Source: Consortium of Vermont Colleges Website, http://www.vtcolleges.org/#, and school websites

Major Medical Centers

Although medical trips make up a small percentage of intercity bus trips, the ability to make trips from rural areas and small towns to major medical facilities is often a policy consideration for maintaining bus services. It may be less of a consideration for patient transportation than for family and friends to visit, simply because most intercity services are not frequent enough to permit same-day outpatient visits. In addition, use of intercity bus services to provide regional medical trips requires a ride to and from the bus station at either end of the bus trip, adding to the cost, time, and physical effort required. However, in some states (for example Texas), long-distance medical trips under Medicaid do utilize intercity bus services. Employees at regional medical centers are another potential market for intercity bus services, though intercity bus schedules may not be conducive for commuter use.

Table 3-2 presents a list of all the hospitals and regional medical centers located in the State, including the number of beds per facility. These facilities are also displayed with the intercity bus network in Figure 3-8. Several medical centers are located along current intercity bus routes, though only seven are reasonably served by intercity bus taking into account that local transit, a ride with someone, or taxis must be used to access the medical center to and from the bus stop. Vermont's largest medical center, Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington, is less than a mile from the Megabus stop and three miles from the Greyhound stop. The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is the second largest hospital accessible to Vermonters, located just across the State border in Lebanon, NH. Advance Transit's Orange Route connects riders between the Greyhound stop in White River Junction and the hospital, but the local route only operates on weekdays.

Northwestern Medical Center, Vermont State Hospital, Gifford Medical Center, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center, and Springfield Hospital are located near existing routes but not at stops. Newport, Middlebury, and Rutland have medical centers that are located more than 25 miles from the existing intercity bus network.

Intermodal Transportation Hubs

This category of destinations includes commercial airports and Amtrak stations, where passengers can connect between intercity bus, rail, flights, local public transportation, and/or private transportation options such as taxis. These transportation hubs are shown in Figure 3-9 and listed in Table 3-3**,** along with the locations of park and ride lots. The two commercial airports in Vermont are Burlington International Airport and Rutland Southern Vermont Regional Airport. The Burlington International Airport is currently served by Greyhound, with four round-trips daily; CCTA, providing local transit service to Burlington, South Burlington, and the University of Vermont; and private taxi operators. Rutland Southern Vermont Regional

Table 3-2: Major Medical Facilities

Hospital	Address	Town/City	Zip Code	Beds
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital	17 Belmont Ave	Brattleboro	05301	61
Brattleboro Retreat	75 Linden St	Brattleboro	05302	149
Central Vermont Medical Center	130 Fisher Rd	Berlin	05602	122
Copley Hospital	528 Washington Hwy	Morrisonville	05661	43
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center	1 Medical Center Dr	Lebanon, NH	03745	369
Fletcher Allen Health Care	111 Colchester Ave	Burlington	05401	562
Gifford Medical Center	44 S Main St	Randolph	05060	52
Grace Cottage Hospital	185 Grafton Rd	Townshend	05353	19
Mt. Ascutney Hospital & Health Ctr.	289 County Rd	Windsor	05089	33
North Country Hospital	189 Prouty Dr	Newport	05855	49
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital	1315 Hospital Dr	St. Johnsbury	05819	75
Northwestern Medical Center	133 Fairfield St	St. Albans	05478	70
Porter Medical Center	115 Porter Dr	Middlebury	05753	45
Rutland Regional Medical Ctr.	160 Allen St	Rutland	05701	188
Southwestern Vermont Medical Ctr.	100 Hospital Dr E	Bennington	05201	99
Springfield Hospital	25 Ridgewood Rd	Springfield	05156	69
Vermont State Hospital	103 S Main St	Waterbury	05676	53
Veterans Affairs Medical Center	215 N Main St	White River Jct.	05009	60

Sources: Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and U.S. News Health (http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/dartmouth-hitchcock-medical-center-6120170/details) Websites.

Figure 3-8: Intercity Bus Destinations - Major Medical Facilities

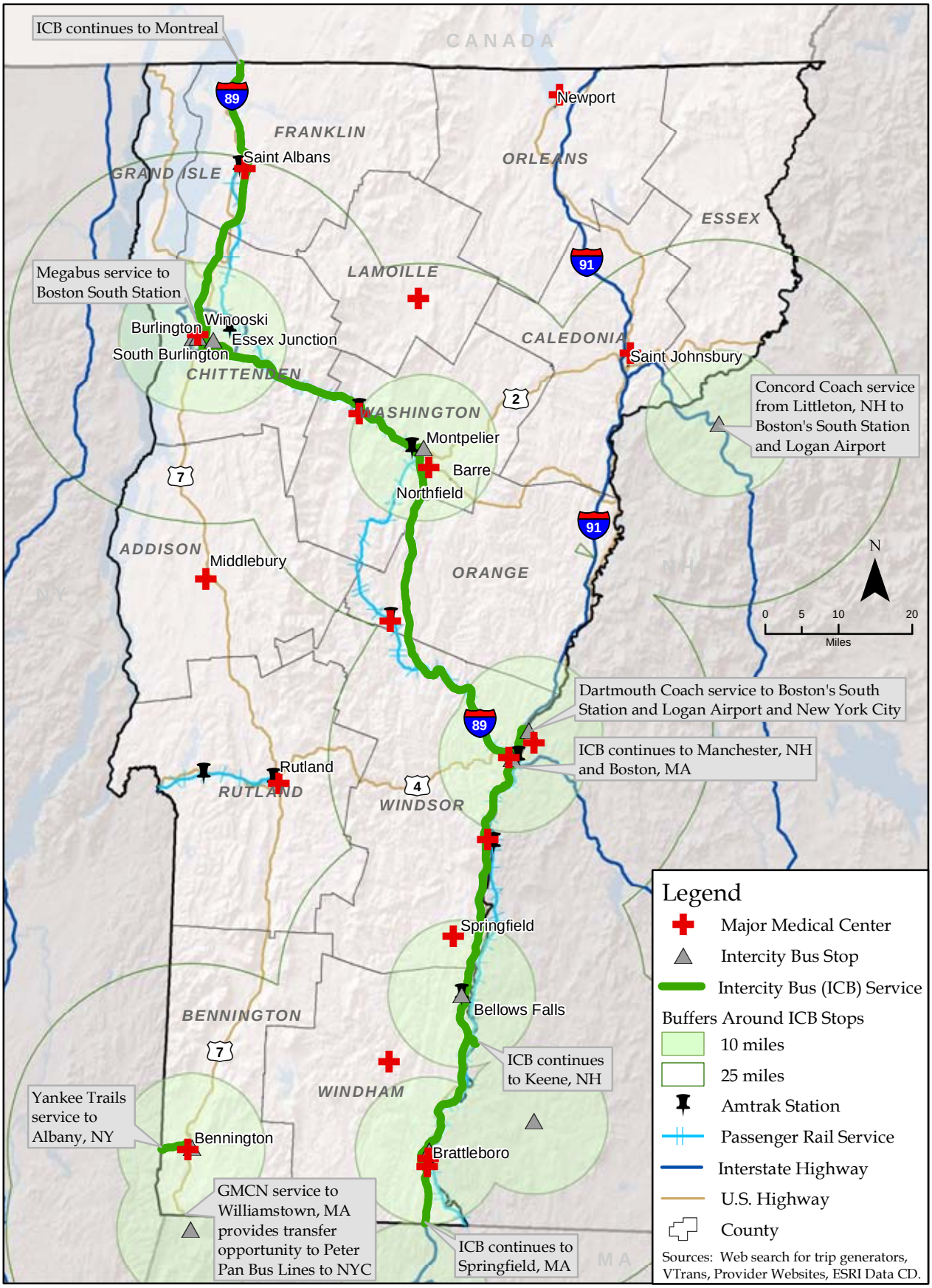


Figure 3-9: Intercity Bus Destinations - Intermodal Transportation Hubs

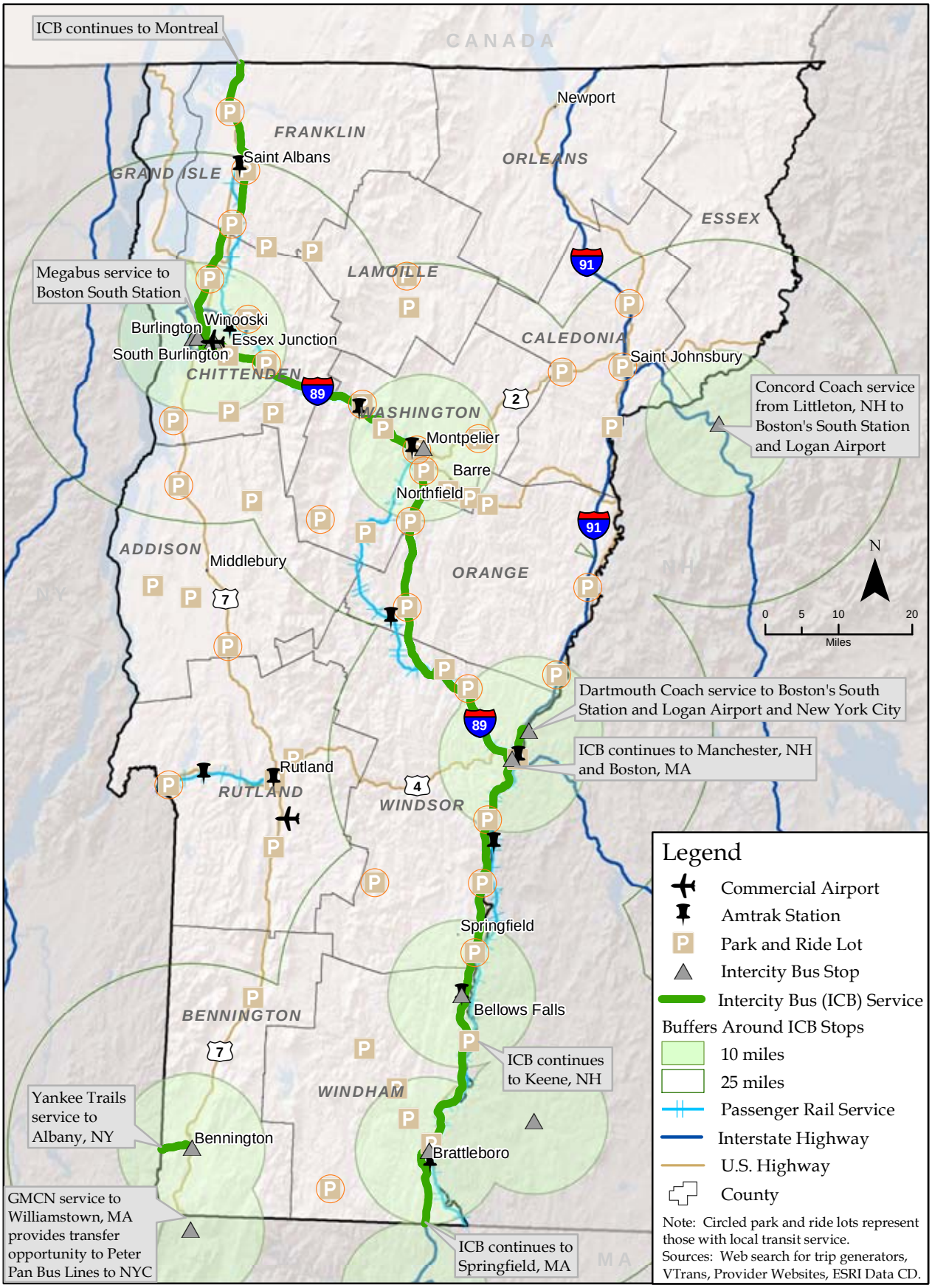


Table 3-3: Intermodal Transportation Hubs

Type	Name	Address	Town/City	Zip Code
Airport	Burlington International Airport	1200 Airport Dr	South Burlington	05403
Airport	Rutland Southern Vermont Regional Airport	1002 Airport Rd	North Clarendon	05759
Amtrak Station	Bellows Falls	54 Depot Sq	Bellows Falls	05101
Amtrak Station	Brattleboro	10 Vernon Rd	Brattleboro	05301
Amtrak Station	Castleton	266 Main St	Castleton	05735
Amtrak Station	Essex Junction	29 Railroad Ave	Essex Junction	05452
Amtrak Station	Montpelier	Junction Rd & Short Rd	Montpelier	05602
Amtrak Station	Randolph	S Main St	Randolph	05060
Amtrak Station	Rutland	25 Evelyn St	Rutland	05701
Amtrak Station	St. Albans	40 Federal St	St. Albans	05001
Amtrak Station	Waterbury	US Hwy 2 & Park Row	Waterbury	05676
Amtrak Station	White River Junction	102 Railroad Row	White River Junction	05478
Amtrak Station	Windsor	26 Depot Ave	Windsor	05089

Source: Airport and Amtrak Websites.

Airport is not served by any intercity bus routes, but passengers can use public transit service provided by Marble Valley Regional Transit District or taxis.

Vermont has 11 Amtrak stations: Castleton and Rutland are served by the Ethan Allen Express, while the other stations are served by the Vermonter route. Both State and municipal park and ride lots were included in the map to demonstrate opportunities for intercity bus riders to use park and ride lots, whether on existing or new routes. Existing intercity bus stops promote intermodal connections in that the majority is located near Amtrak stations and park and ride lots and is also served by local transit services. Coordinated schedules between modes and expanded hours of service, for local transit in particular, could greatly improve the convenience and feasibility of using intercity bus service. Rutland and Castleton are the primary Amtrak stops located more than 25 miles from intercity bus service.

Correctional Facilities

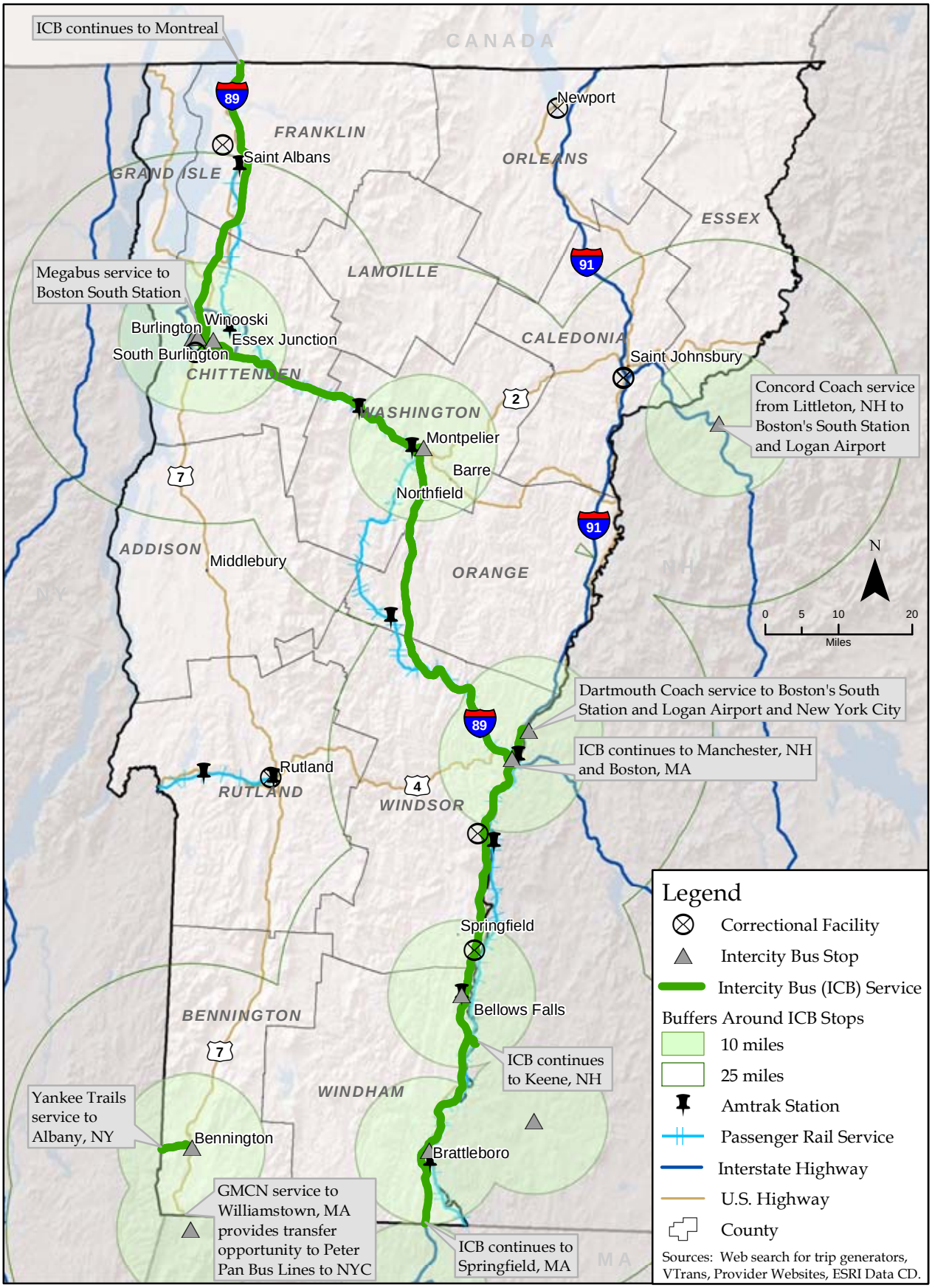
The demand for correctional facility trips accounts for a small percentage of intercity bus trips, but the ability to make these trips from rural areas and small towns may be crucial to visiting family members, released inmates, and employees. Table 3-4 is a list of State correctional facilities in Vermont, which are mapped in Figure 3-10. Only three of Vermont's eight correctional facilities are reasonably served by existing intercity bus services, including the facilities in Windsor and Springfield, which are still more than ten miles away from the nearest stops. The St. Johnsbury facilities are about 20 miles from the Concord Coach stop in Littleton, NH. The correctional facilities in Newport, St. Albans, and Rutland are farther than 25 miles from the existing intercity network, though the latter two are close to Amtrak stations.

Table 3-4: Correctional Facilities

Correctional Facility	Address	Town/City	Zip Code
Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility	7 Farrell St	South Burlington	05403
Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility	167 State St	Rutland	05701
Northeast Regional Correctional Facility (NERCF) Comp	1270 US Route 5	St. Johnsbury	05819
NERCF Complex - Caledonia Community Work Camp	1266 US Route 5	St. Johnsbury	05819
Northern State Correctional Facility	2559 Glen Rd	Newport	05855
Northern State Correctional Facility	3649 Lower Newton Rd	Swanton	05488
Southeast State Correctional Facility	546 State Farm Rd	Windsor	05089
Southern State Correctional Facility	700 Charlestown Rd	Springfield	05156

Source: Vermont Department of Corrections Website, http://www.doc.state.vt.us/custody-supervision/facilities.

Figure 3-10: Intercity Bus Destinations - Correctional Facilities



Ski Areas and Resorts

Given Vermont's significant ski industry, ski areas and resorts could be popular tourism and employment destinations for intercity bus riders. Shown in Figure 3-11 and listed in Table 3-5, Vermont's ski areas are mostly located within reasonable driving distances (approximately 25 miles) of existing intercity bus stops. However, none are directly served by existing intercity routes, and the current services are only feasible if the riders have transportation options to cover the distance between the intercity stops and the ski areas. Some local transit systems do provide such services, such as the Moover between Brattleboro and Mount Snow and The Current between Bellows Falls and Okemo Mountain. Otherwise, intercity bus riders would need to pay for expensive taxi rides or catch a ride with someone.

While intercity bus provides an affordable option for frugal travelers, most tourists visiting ski resorts will most likely take personal vehicles, especially since ski and snowboard equipment can be unwieldy to travel with. However, it should be noted that some ski shops in New York City operate day trips, using intercity bus-like coaches, to Vermont's ski areas, demonstrating that some tourism demand for intercity services exists. Seasonal workers at the ski areas, who are often young adults traveling on a budget, may be more likely to use intercity bus services to access employment opportunities.

PUBLIC INPUT ON TRANSIT NEEDS

VTrans highly values public input as part of its planning process, and accordingly held public meetings in February 2011 to obtain input for this PTPP update. Three meetings were held, one through the VIT Worldwide (formerly Vermont Interactive Television) public videoconferencing network and two others in Montpelier and Rockingham. Residents were invited to share their input to help shape the vision for transit in Vermont. Several representatives from the transit systems and regional transportation planners also attended these meetings. The discussion topics included strengths and weaknesses of the existing transit network, the characteristics desired for transit in Vermont, and issues that need to be addressed. VTrans also has an ongoing online process to collect public input for the PTPP, where residents may download and email a comment card to provide their feedback and perspectives on the transit topics mentioned above. The feedback regarding intercity bus needs provided through these public input avenues is described below.

Many residents identified the need for inter-regional connectivity. While transit systems may serve their local areas relatively well, it is difficult to travel between regions and provider service areas. The number of regional transit routes, mainly

Figure 3-11: Intercity Bus Destinations - Ski Areas and Resorts

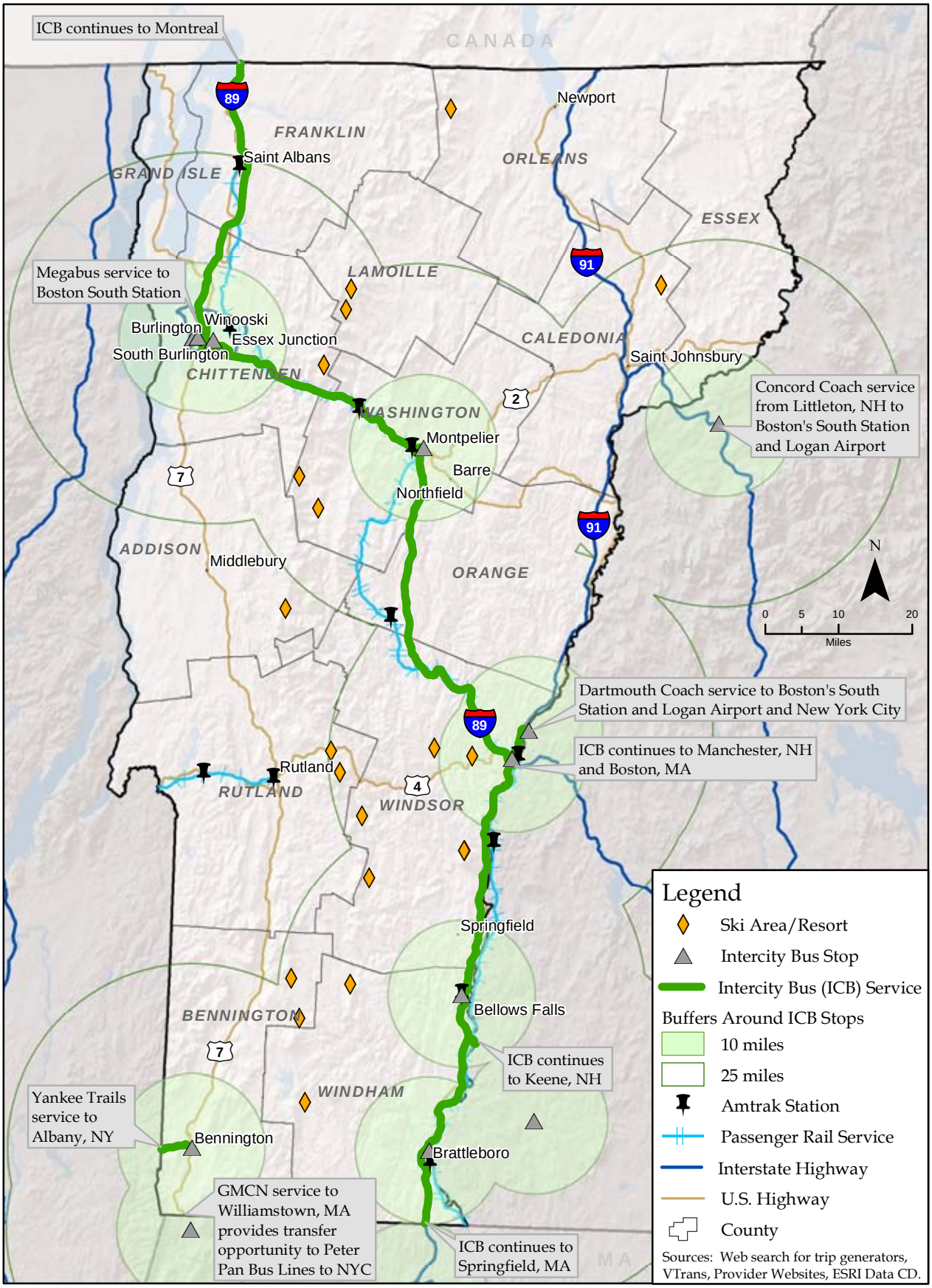


Table 3-5: Ski Areas and Resorts

Ski Area/Resort	Address	Town/City	Zip Code	Estimated Employees*
Ascutney	485 Hotel Rd	Brownsville	05037	320
Bear Creek	Rome Top Rd	Plymouth	05056	n/a
Bolton Valley	4302 Bolton Valley Access Rd	Richmond	05477-7702	200
Bromley Mountain	3984 Vermont Route 11	Peru	05152-9708	50
Burke Mountain	223 Sherburne Lodge Rd	East Burke	05832	n/a
Jay Peak	4850 VT Route 242	North Troy	05859-9404	400
Killington Resort & Pico Mountain	4763 Killington Rd	Killington	05751-9746	80
Mad River Glen	23-61 Mad River Resort Rd	Waitsfield	05673	120
Magic Mountain	495 Magic Mountain Access Rd	Londonderry	05148	n/a
Middlebury College Snow Bowl	6886 Vermont 125	Hancock	05748	n/a
Mount Snow	39 Mount Snow Rd	West Dover	05356	80
Okemo Mountain	77 Okemo Ridge Rd	Ludlow	05149-9692	245
Pico Mountain at Killington	73 Alpine Dr	Killington	05751	n/a
Quechee Lakes	176 Waterman Hill Rd	Hartford	05001	n/a
Smugglers' Notch	4323 VT Route 108 S	Jeffersonville	05464	200
Stowe	5781 Mountain Rd	Stowe	05672	359
Stratton	19 Village Lodge Rd	Stratton	05360	270
Sugarbush	1840 Sugarbush Access Rd	Warren	05674-9747	160
Suicide Six (The Woodstock Inn & Resort)	14 The Green	Woodstock	05091	190

*Employee estimates are based on February 2011 data for individual employers from Dun & Bradstreet. Estimates are based on companies named after the resort or major lodge/inn, so employment is likely underestimated since data for additional establishments (i.e., retail and restaurants) near the ski area is not included.
n/a = not available

Source: SkiReport.com Map of Vermont Ski Areas, http://www.skireport.com/vermont/map, and resort websites.

commuter service, has increased in the last few years but additional improvements could be made to increase access to employment, provide weekend service, and allow riders to make longer distance day trips. A LINK express service between Burlington and Jericho and bus service connecting Burlington and Rutland were specifically requested. The Northeast Kingdom is also isolated and lacks regional connections to other parts of the State, as well as an intra-regional connection between the existing local deviated services in Newport and St. Johnsbury. On a related note, residents also discussed the need for regional transit connections outside the State, such as trips to take workers and shoppers across the New York and New Hampshire borders. More intercity bus service to destinations outside of Vermont, including New Hampshire and New York City, was also discussed as a transit need.

Intermodal connectivity was a popular issue that identified the need to make transit more convenient and accessible by promoting other alternative modes, including walking, bicycling, ridesharing, and car-sharing. These modes could help fill gaps in the existing transit network or facilitate access to transit services, including intercity bus. Providing options for riders to travel the "first mile" to or "last mile" from a transit stop was another identified need. Intercity bus service in Vermont is not very accessible since there are limited stops in Vermont; then local transit services must be extensive to provide the connection between homes and intercity bus stops. Physical facilities, such as intermodal terminals, increased signage, and information on transit schedules were identified as needs to promote connections between modes. Riders also requested additional park and ride lots to facilitate increased transit use. Transit connections to airports, specifically from Montpelier to Burlington International Airport, was another need identified through public input.

Information Gap

While some service "gaps" exist, there is also an information gap for potential riders. A central source of information for travelers is essential to support public transit needed in Vermont – one that is *"seamless, efficient, user friendly with usable connections among in-state and out-of-state points"*. [6] While there have been some strides in compiling and sharing information on all transit services in the State as well as mention in marketing materials of connections and possible transfers among routes operated by different systems, without one central information sharing mechanism, it remains difficult to navigate through the information available on the various transit system media and websites. While Go Vermont has a start on matching ridesharing trips, there is currently no "trip planner" function on the Go Vermont site, (similar to Oregon).

[6] In the 2007 session, the Vermont legislature directed VTrans to examine the feasibility of making public transportation in Vermont seamless, efficient, and user-friendly with usable connections among in-state and out-of-state points.

SUMMARY

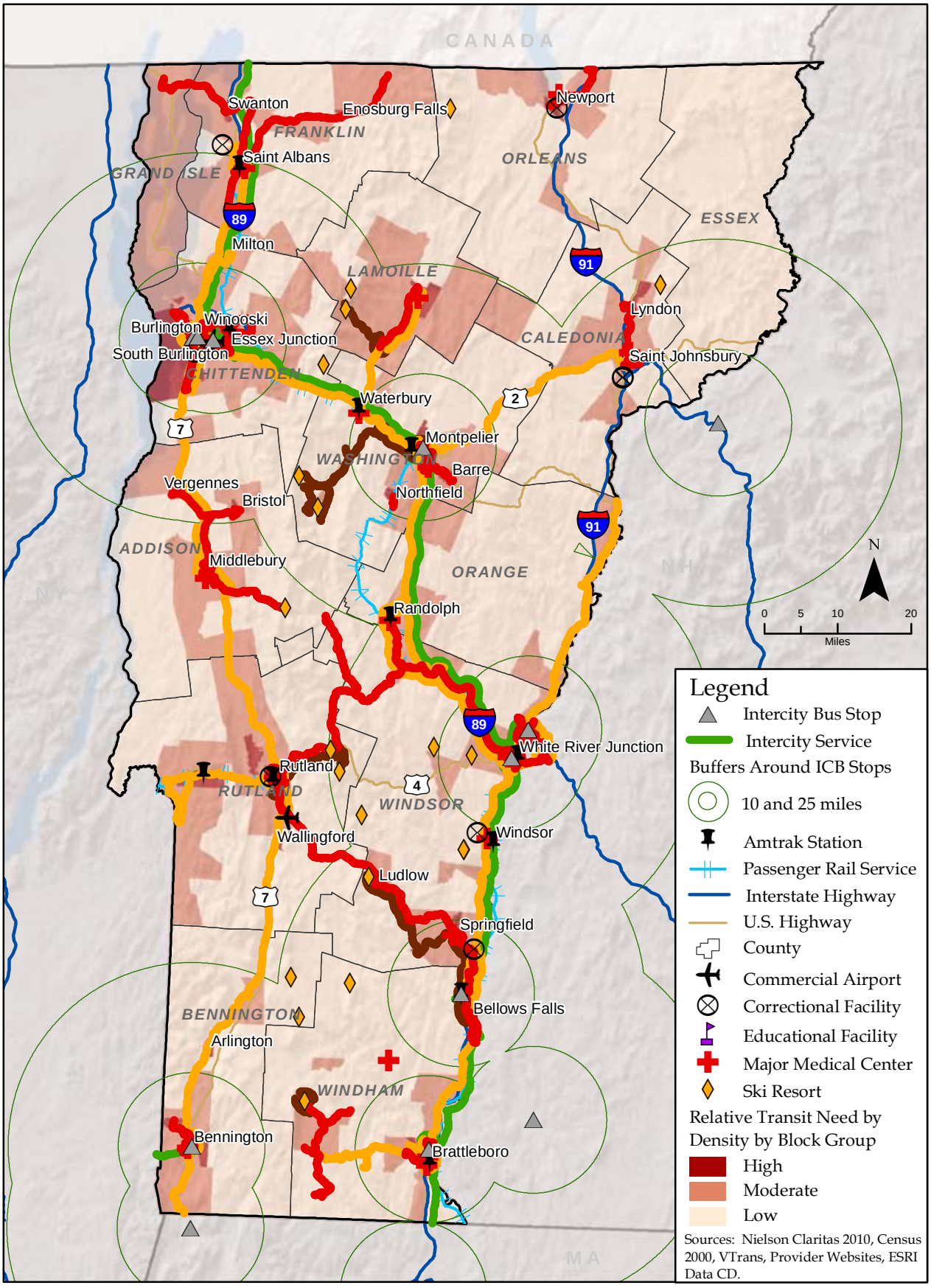
The needs analysis examined both demographic data and major destinations to determine areas with higher potential need for intercity bus service. Newport, Rutland, Middlebury, and Morristown could be considered among the highest priorities for new or expanded intercity service due to their longer distances from current stops, concentrations of transit-dependent persons and destinations, and relatively larger populations. Lyndon also met similar needs thresholds, and a new intercity stop could be established in nearby St. Johnsbury, which has a larger concentration of major destinations. Other towns with high needs and several major destinations, which are about 25 miles or less from existing stops, could be considered for expanded intercity bus service: St. Albans, Randolph, Windsor, and Springfield. These towns are already located along current intercity bus routes, and could potentially be added as new stops. Another alternative would be to increase local or regional transit services to better connect these towns to the intercity bus network.

Additional towns that had sufficient population sizes and high densities of transit-dependent persons, but fewer major intercity bus destinations included Swanton, Bristol, Castleton, and Vergennes. These communities could be considered for intermediate stops along new routes, or again, local transit services could be improved to act as feeder routes to the intercity bus network.

Figure 3-12 portrays the combined density ranking results with major destinations and other existing transit services including local, commuter, and seasonal routes. The map indicates that most of the high needs areas identified through this analysis have some form of transit service to connect them to the statewide (fixed- and deviated fixed-route) network, with the exception of Newport, which is quite isolated from the rest of the State. However, many of these local and regional transit services do not operate everyday and their schedules are typically not coordinated with intercity buses to provide feasible connections and promote the use of intercity services. Another consideration for developing new or improved intercity bus routes is whether to serve towns that already have passenger rail service. Intercity bus can provide a more affordable option than Amtrak, and passengers appreciate having multiple transit options for their trips, but the demand for long-distance transit will need to be assessed to help address this issue.

Additional needs identified through public input included the ability to use transit for regional day trips, both within Vermont and to urban areas across the State border, and more intercity bus service to destinations outside of Vermont, including New Hampshire and New York City.

Figure 3-12: Combined Density Ranking of Transit-Dependent Populations with Major Destinations and Existing Fixed- and Deviated Fixed-Route Transit



Chapter 4

Policy Options

In the distant past, Vermont Transit routes allowed Vermonters to travel between towns in-State as well as provided linkages to out-of-state destinations. With the reduction in intercity bus service, Greyhound (and Amtrak—and now Megabus) primarily provides the out-of-state linkages. Increasingly, the in-state trips are being provided by local transit providers; the gaps in in-state long distance trips are being addressed by regional services operated by the transit providers. However, these services have been planned to primarily serve commuter markets, and only secondarily provide access to the intercity network. The existing intercity network is that which is provided by the marketplace (except the Amtrak services), but there is a federal program that is intended to provide assistance to address the lack of rural intercity connections in the areas of the state that do not have direct or close access to the intercity bus network. This program is called the Section 5311(f) program of rural intercity bus assistance.

SECTION 5311(F) RURAL INTERCITY BUS ASSISTANCE

One of the important distinctions between the regional commuter services and rural intercity bus service is the fact that there is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program directed toward maintaining or improving rural intercity service. Section 5311(f) was developed as a policy response to exactly the situation faced by Vermont, the loss of rural intercity bus services. Under Section 5311(f) each state is directed to use up to 15% of its overall Section 5311 rural transit funding allocation for rural intercity bus services—unless the state certifies that there is no unmet rural intercity need in the state. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, states were left on their own regarding how to make the determination of "no unmet rural intercity need," but in the SAFETEA-LU legislation language was added requiring states to conduct a consultation process involving the intercity providers, studies or analysis, and other stakeholders. If, following that consultation, the state did certify, it would need to document the consideration it made of the input provided.

In recent years Vermont has certified (annually) that it has no unmet rural intercity bus needs, allowing the state to use this funding for other Section 5311 services. Vermont has not set aside the 15% amount or built up any kind of balance in a Section 5311(f) program (unlike many states that began setting aside Section 5311(f) pending the results of the consultation process). It is likely that submittal of a certification letter to reprogram these funds would require documentation of a consultation process. It is possible that such a process would not be able to say there is no unmet need, given the documented loss of rural intercity access, the analysis of unserved areas with a density of potential need, and possible comments from stakeholders about the potential need for rural intercity linkages.

The outreach and stakeholder input to this point in the current PTPP process has recognized the loss of the intercity services, but raised questions as well. One is whether the needs are being met by the regional commuter routes that have been developed. The possible role of the regional services in providing access to the existing intercity network could be considered in the consultation process, but the regional services, as currently provided, do not actually provide for the "meaningful" connection called for in the Section 5311(f) program circular. A "meaningful connection" is one in which the Section 5311(f) service must serve the same locations at times that permit convenient transfers to and from the national intercity network. The federal guidance does not specify how close the arrival and departure times of the Section 5311(f) service must be to those of the national intercity network carrier.

In addition, while the map of Vermont's existing fixed and deviated services might make it appear that the regional services have filled in for the discontinued intercity routes, making some of these trips through end-to-end transfers between different regional operators would be so inconvenient and time-consuming that the trips are not practical or feasible, as documented in the Act 45 study described above. Thus it is likely that it would be difficult for VTrans to certify that there are no unmet rural intercity needs.

POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR RURAL INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

The other question raised in the outreach was whether or not there is potential demand for intercity services, given that Greyhound abandoned them as unprofitable. Greyhound has supplied data on the former Vermont Transit/Greyhound routes, and it appears that the Route 7 Corridor had revenues on some trips of $2.35/mile, which means that if Greyhound (or another intercity operator) had costs of $4.00 per mile, these trips would have had a farebox recovery of nearly 60%, making it one of the better transit routes (on this measure) in the State. Note that intercity services need to be

assessed differently as compared to local transit, because there are relatively few boardings and long trips, with fares that vary by distance—so measures of effectiveness need to focus on how many passengers are on the bus over what distance, not just the number of boardings.

Also, demand could be assessed using the new rural intercity bus demand Toolkit developed under the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Project B-37. A preliminary use of the Toolkit results in estimated ridership for the Route 7 corridor of 11,400, if the service connects to the airports in both Burlington (Greyhound's station in Burlington is at the airport already) and Albany, with lower ridership of 5,700 if it does not. The data supplied by Greyhound shows that ridership on the Burlington – Rutland – Albany route was approximately 22,000 boardings annually (with multiple daily frequencies). However, there was not enough demand to cover the fully-allocated cost of the multiple services at Greyhound cost levels—but a combination of operating assistance, reduced frequency, and a lower-cost operator might allow for service, at least in this corridor, that would have comparable performance to other rural transit routes in the State. A similar demand analysis for the Newport to White River Junction corridor results in a range of estimated ridership between 2,400 and 5,900 annual trips, using the same stops served by the former Vermont Transit/Greyhound route. The feasibility of routes to serve these corridors is discussed below.

POTENTIAL FUNDING FOR RURAL INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

If one accepts the notion that a consultation process would find unmet needs and significant potential demand in the Route 7 corridor (or elsewhere), the next questions that arise are those related to funding. Vermont's Section 5311(f) 15% share of its overall Section 5311 allocation would be about $400,000, and there is always the issue of local match—as the operating ratios for this program are the same as Section 5311 generally, with a limit on the federal share of 50% of the net operating deficit. Fortunately, as a means of dealing with the local match requirements for intercity services, FTA has an administrative program regulation for Section 5311(f) that allows for rural intercity projects to be defined as having both a subsidized segment and an unsubsidized segment. Bus-miles on the connecting unsubsidized segments can be valued at their fully-allocated cost, and 50% of this value (representing the value of capital) can be counted as in-kind operating match for the subsidized segment. With artful identification of project routes and services, it is thus possible to use the in-kind match to cover all or a large portion of the required operating match.

Table 4-1 presents an illustration of the application of this funding method for a Burlington-Bennington-New York state line route, operated one round-trip per day, 365 days per year, connecting to Greyhound services at the Burlington Airport. As can be seen, the projected net deficit of $109,835 can be completely matched by the available unsubsidized connecting miles from Greyhound, leaving an additional $80,665 in in-kind value to be used on other routes. In this example, it is assumed that the ridership is at the low end of the projected range of demand, and the operating cost per mile of the operator is $3.50 a mile, which is lower than Greyhound costs, more typical of a private regional intercity operator. Lower per-mile costs could potentially reduce the net deficit.

Table 4-2 presents an example of the use of the Pilot Project for an expanded rural intercity project, that would include not only the Burlington-Bennington-New York state line route described above, but a second connecting route from Rutland to Springfield, Bellows Falls, and Brattleboro, where it could potentially connect to a possible Section 5311(f) route in New Hampshire that would serve Keene (and continue to Boston). It is included here to illustrate the impact on local match requirements. As can be seen, the additional route increases the net deficit to $250,775 (which is still less than the $400,000 of the entire 15% set-aside), but the number of Greyhound in-kind miles is no longer enough to provide the entire local match, so nearly $61,000 in cash match would be required. This example was chosen based on a previous Greyhound route. Scheduling would allow for connections between the two Section 5311(f) routes in Rutland, with connections to Greyhound services in Burlington and Albany**.** Table 4-3 presents a potential timetable for these routes, including the connection in Rutland for the route from Rutland to Brattleboro. It would require coordination with New Hampshire to have funding provided for portions of the route in that state. It should be noted that Utah and Colorado, and Colorado and Kansas have collaborated on joint funding of multi-state services, so it is possible that New Hampshire could use the same program if it also sought to reinstate services from Keene and Nashua.

Table 4-4 presents a similar analysis for the route from Newport to White River Junction. The fact that it is a relatively long route serving a lower population means that the ridership demand is less, and consequently the estimated farebox recovery is lower, and the subsidy per passenger is higher, than those of the Route 7 corridor. Note also that the analysis for this corridor is using the same Greyhound miles as match, so a program constrained to require no local cash match could not support both this corridor and the Route 7 services.

Table 4-1: Example of Potential Section 5311(f) Pilot Project Funding for Vermont Rural Intercity Service on the Route 7 Corridor Using Greyhound In-Kind Miles as Local Match

	Annual				
	Cost	Revenue	Deficit	Farebox Recovery	Subsidy/Pass.
	$ 332,150	$ 223,015	$ 109,135	67%	$19.15
In-kind Capital Match Available (Greyhound connecting service)	$ 213,525				

Excess Match
$ 104,390

Project Description: Provides One Round-Trip Per Day to Connect Burlington with Bennington (Albany)
Connects with Greyhound Services in Burlington, Albany. Connecting schedules shown on attached table.

	Operating Costs		Operating Revenue		Operating Deficit
New Route:	Round Trip Miles	260	Daily Ridership	16	$ 109,135.00
Burlington to	Daily Trips	1	Annual Ridership	5,700	
Bennington,	Daily Miles	260	Fare (2)	39.00	
to NY State line	Operating Days	365	Annual Revenue	$ 223,015	
(Albany)	Ann. Miles	94,900			
	Cost/Mile	$ 3.50			
	Total Cost	$ 332,150.00			

Connection	**Operating Costs**		**Eligible Match**
Greyhound	Round Trip Miles	260	Value of In-Kind Capital costs (50% of operating cost)
Service: Swanton	Daily Trips	1	$ 213,525
to White River	Daily Miles	260	
Junction	Operating Days	365	
	Ann. Miles	94,900	
	Cost/Mile (4)	$ 4.50	
	Total Cost	$ 427,050	

Notes:

(1) Ridership estimated based on TCRP B-37 low trip rate estimate.
(2) Fare estimated based on $2.35 per mile revenue, divided by 5,700 annual riders.
(3) For purposes of determining the value of in-kind capital, only one round-trip per day of the Greyhound miles from Swanton to White River Junction,Vermont, was used.
(4) Estimated at $4.50 per mile based on recent Greyhound reports.

Table 4-2: Vermont Section 5311(f) Pilot Project--Rural Intercity Service in the Route 7 Corridor from Burlington to Bennington (New York State line) and from Rutland to Brattleboro (Boston) using Greyhound Miles as In-kind Match

	Annual Cost	Annual Revenue	Annual Deficit	Farebox Recovery	Subsidy/Pass.
	$ 523,775	$ 273,000	$ 250,775	52%	$35.83
In-kind Capital Match Available (Greyhound connecting service)	$ 213,525				
			Excess Match		
			$ (37,250)		

Project Description: Provides One Round-Trip Per Day to Connect Burlington with Bennington (Albany)
Connects with Greyhound Services in Burlington, Albany. Connecting schedules shown on attached table.

	Operating Costs		Operating Revenue		Operating Deficit
New Route:	Round Trip Miles	410	Daily Ridership	16	$ 250,775.00
Burlington to	Daily Trips	1	Annual Ridership	7,000	
Bennington,	Daily Miles	410	Fare (2)	39.00	
to NY State line	Operating Days	365	Annual Revenue	$ 273,000	
(Albany)	Ann. Miles	149,650			
Plus Rutland-	Cost/Mile	$ 3.50			
Brattleboro	Total Cost	$ 523,775.00			
(Keene-Nashua					
Boston)					

	Operating Costs		Eligible Match
Connection	Round Trip Miles	260	Capital costs (50% of operating cost)
Greyhound	Daily Trips	1	$ 213,525
Service: Swanton	Daily Miles	260	
to White River	Operating Days	365	
Junction,	Ann. Miles	94,900	
	Cost/Mile (4)	$ 4.50	
	Total Cost	$ 427,050	

Notes:

(1) Ridership estimated based on TCRP B-37 low trip rate estimate.
(2) Fare estimated based on $2.35 per mile revenue, divided by expected ridership.
(3) For purposes of determining the value of in-kind capital, only one round-trip per day of the Greyhound miles from Swanton to White River Junction,Vermont, was used.
(4) Estimated at $4.50 per mile based on recent Greyhound reports.

Table 4-3: Proposed Timetable for Route 7 Albany-Burlington Service with Connecting Greyhound Service, and Connecting Service from Rutland to Boston
(Vermont ICB Proposal for Route 7 Corridor)

North	Stop	South
10:05	White River Junction	**8:10**
11:00	Montpelier	**7:15**
11:45	Burlington Airport	**6:15**

	Southbound		Northbound				
	8:15	*Montreal*	***8:30***				
		St. Jean, PQ					
	10:45	Burlington Airport, VT	***7:00***				
12:00	11:00	Burlington Airport	**7:00**	**6:00**			
12:40	11:40	Vergennes	**6:15**	**5:15**			
1:05	**12:05**	Middlebury	**5:55**	**4:55**			
1:25	**12:25**	Brandon	**5:30**	**4:30**			
2:05	**1:05**	Rutland	**5:00**	**4:00**			
2:15	**1:15**	Rutland	**4:50**	**3:50**	**2:15**	LV Rutland	**3:35**
3:00	**2:00**	Manchester	**4:05**	**3:00**	**2:50**	Ludlow	**2:45**
3:15	**2:15**	Arlington	**D**	**D**	**3:15**	Springfield	**2:25**
3:35	**2:35**	Bennington	**3:35**	**2:35**	**3:40**	Bellows Falls	**2:05**
D	**D**	Troy, NY	**f**	**f**	**4:10**	Brattleboro	**1:35**
4:35	**3:35**	Albany Airport	**2:35**	**1:35**	**4:40**	Keene, NH	**1:05**
4:45	**3:45**	Albany	**2:00**	**1:00**	**7:30**	Boston-Logan	10:00

f Flag stop (stops on request).

D Discharge only (no passengers are picked up at this place).

Table 4-4: Example of Potential Section 5311(f) Pilot Project Funding for Vermont Rural Intercity Service on the Newport-White River Junction Using Greyhound In-Kind Miles as Local Match

	Annual Cost	Annual Revenue	Annual Deficit	Farebox Recovery:	Subsidy/Pass.
	$ 268,275	$ 86,400	$ 181,875	32%	$75.78
In-kind Capital Match Available (Greyhound connecting service)	$ 213,525		Excess Match $ 31,650		

Project Description: Provides One Round-Trip Per Day to Connect Newport with White River Junction. Connects with Greyhound Services in White River Junction. Connecting schedules shown on attached table.

	Operating Costs		Operating Revenue		Operating Deficit
New Route: Newport, VT to White River Junction, VT (Albany)	Round Trip Miles	210	Daily Ridership	7	$ 181,875.00
	Daily Trips	1	Annual Ridership	2,400	
	Daily Miles	210	Fare (2)	36.00	
	Operating Days	365	Annual Revenue	$ 86,400	
	Annual Bus-Miles	76,650			
	Cost/Mile	$ 3.50			
	Total Cost	$ 268,275.00			

	Operating Costs		Eligible Match
Connection Greyhound Service: Swanton to White River Junction,	Round Trip Miles	260	Value of In-Kind Capital costs (50% of operating cost)
	Daily Trips	1	$ 213,525
	Daily Miles	260	
	Operating Days	365	
	Ann. Miles	94,900	
	Cost/Mile (4)	$ 4.50	
	Total Cost	$ 427,050	

Notes:

(1) Ridership estimated based on TCRP B-37 low trip rate estimate.
(2) Fare estimated based on current Greyhound standard fares for similar trip length.
(3) For purposes of determining the value of in-kind capital, only one round-trip per day of the Greyhound miles from Swanton to White River Junction,Vermont, was used.
(4) Estimated at $4.50 per mile based on recent Greyhound reports.

These examples have been developed to show that under the existing program, services that partially address the loss of rural intercity service could be provided without additional local match, and without using more Section 5311 funding than the 15% set-aside. None of these examples is based on a particular operator of the subsidized service, only that an operator is found that can provide the service on a fully-allocated cost basis of $3.50 per bus-mile. The operator could be public (one of the existing public transit operators) or private (one of the private intercity operators). Lower cost operators could allow for more service, and use of a higher cost operator (such as Greyhound) could limit the amount of service provided (but result in higher ridership due to national marketing and information).

The Pilot Project funding mechanism can reduce or eliminate the need for operating cash match. It does require that the firm operating the unsubsidized service (which in Vermont would be Greyhound Lines) provide a letter agreeing to the use of their miles, and identifying the routes, schedules, and miles being contributed. Use of this funding method also means that the available federal funding does not cover as much service as it would if there were local cash match, as it is effectively being used as 100% of the net operating deficit.

Several **Alternative Approaches** may address intercity issues, and there are some tools available:

- The **consultation process** alone is not really an option, but must be conducted and documented if Vermont is to have the option of doing a full or partial certification (a state can certify that it did not need the full 15% for rural intercity services).
- If unmet needs are identified, there are at least two general options to be investigated by more detailed service planning:
  - One way of providing this access might be to **modify or expand the regional transit services operated by Vermont's public transit providers to make meaningful connections to the national intercity bus network.** This could involve additional trips to meet scheduled intercity buses, and additional miles to connect at the intercity bus stations—but such services would be eligible for Section 5311(f) assistance. This would require additional planning efforts to evaluate connections, costs, and likely revenues—and assessment of the degree to which it would provide intercity access to the population that has lost it.
  - Another alternative would be to **further develop the proposal for re-instituting intercity bus service on the Route 7 corridor, using the in-kind funding method**. This would require more detailed planning of schedules and connections, and assessment of likely funding needs (which

would include assumptions regarding the likely operator and its costs, and the estimated revenue). It should be noted that Greyhound is not necessarily the operator, but would have to be a party to the project as the provider of the value of the in-kind miles. As both a potential applicant or bidder on the subsidized service and the provider of the in-kind match, Greyhound's current policy is to offer to provide the in-kind miles to whichever operator the State selects, as long the operator and the proposed service meet Greyhound's requirements for connecting service that can be quoted by them in their schedule information, has appropriate levels of insurance, is fixed-route fixed-schedule service at least five days per week, and has required legal federal and State operating authority.

In either event, it is likely that some or all of the 15% Section 5311(f) set-aside would need to be used to support these services. This would reduce the amount of Section 5311 funding available for other services by the amount used for rural intercity projects. The 15% set-aside amount is approximately $400,000. However, without more detailed service planning it is not possible to tell if or how much of the rural intercity needs can be addressed with that level of funding, or if more would be required.

Implementation of a Section 5311(f) rural intercity program could be accomplished in several ways. The State could view itself as the grantee, and issue a Request for Bids (RFB) for particular services that it has identified as filling gaps in the State's intercity network In that case the firms responding would be bidders on a competitive contract to provide the services specified by the State. This approach was successfully used by Washington State in the development of its "Travel Washington" network of intercity connectors to the Greyhound and other intercity routes (see Appendix A), and is also used in Oregon for its "POINT" network of rural intercity feeders (which also connect to state-supported Amtrak service). Other states have kept their Section 5311(f) programs as grant programs, allowing more discretion in the choice of operators, but increasingly they also define the routes and services desired as part of the grant solicitation, rather than simply announcing the availability of funding and hoping that the resulting applications will provide service that addresses the highest priority corridors or fills network gaps. In either case VTrans would need to take an active role in program implementation.

Changes in State policy to support the implementation of rural intercity bus services would not only need to consider the potential transit funding impact as Section 5311 funds were shifted to the rural intercity projects, but also the relationship of the potential services to the developing State-supported Amtrak services. Ideally, these rural intercity routes would provide connectivity among all modes, but the FTA Section 5311(f) circular makes it clear that this funding is intended to provide meaningful connections to the national intercity bus network as its first priority, not the rail passenger network. Section 5311(f) also cannot be used for commuter bus services, so it

is not a potential source of funding for the regional services graduating from the New Starts program, unless they provide for the "meaningful connection".

"CURBSIDE" BUS SERVICES

During the public outreach efforts for the PTPP several commenters have asked whether or not Vermont "curbside" intercity bus operators could or would address the lack of intercity services. These comments reflect the rise of "curbside buses" or "Chinatown buses", which provide curb-to-curb, express bus services between major cities, such as New York, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, and increasingly to medium-size cities too.[1] These curbside carriers generally pick up and drop off passengers at the curb, where a stop is designated with a simple sign. They manage reservations and sell tickets online, and have minimal overhead costs as they do not operate bus terminals and only need a small support staff. They are nimble in comparison to passenger rail or air services, and can add buses as demand (shown through website sales) warrants and alter routes or stop locations through online notifications.

Curbside buses are the fastest growing transportation mode in the country, with ridership growing by 33% in 2010.[2] The fares are considerably cheaper than rail or air services, and thus appeal to students, young people, and others looking for affordable transportation, especially as gas prices have increased. The buses are often equipped with free Wi-Fi and power outlets and have drawn technology savvy passengers who surf the internet, work, or watch movies on computers and other electronic devices during their rides. Curbside buses have found a niche in serving travel distances of 200 to 300 miles, such as New York to D.C. or Boston, Los Angeles to Las Vegas, and Chicago to Detroit. These trips are typically too short to justify the expense and hassle of a flight and long enough that driving is not enjoyable or very affordable.[3] These bus services have demonstrated that choice riders will ride buses (particularly if there are limited stops) if the fare is low and there are multiple schedule frequencies. It is not yet clear whether these new passengers will be willing to ride more traditional intercity bus services having realized that bus service can be quite acceptable.

The large corporate companies that operate curbside bus service include Megabus and BoltBus (a collaboration between Greyhound and Peter Pan), while the "original" Chinatown bus carriers include Fung Wah and New Century Travel. Megabus is the largest private company to operate curbside bus service in the United

[1] Austen, Ben. (2011, April 7). The Megabus Effect. *Bloomberg Businessweek.* Retrieved April 11, 2011, from **http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/11_16/b4224062391848.htm**.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

States, and has been expanding services to medium-size cities with populations around one million, now serving more than 50 cities from the Midwest to the East Coast.[4] In some cases Megabus has added stops at smaller locations with large college populations, such as State College, Pennsylvania (Penn State) and Christiansburg, Virginia (Virginia Tech)—and in August 2011 it will add service between Burlington and Boston, serving the student union at the University of Vermont.

Other carriers have begun offering such service. In northern New England Dartmouth Coach provides one or two express round-trips per day (depends on the day of the week) from its station in Lebanon, New Hampshire (with one stop in Hanover) to New York City, with its New York stop on the curb in front of the Yale Club adjacent to Grand Central Station (rather than using the Port Authority Bus Terminal). Its buses are also equipped with Wi-Fi and power outlets.

Based on the observed behavior of the curbside companies, it is unlikely that these private carriers will institute new service to any of the rural or small urban locations in Vermont that have lost service in the past few years. Megabus is addressing the most likely opportunity for curbside buses in Vermont, which is a stop in Burlington along a route that connects to larger, nearby cities like Montreal and Boston, Albany, or New York City (Megabus already serves the latter three cities, but not Montreal). Greyhound provides four round-trips per day on the Montreal-Boston route, with Vermont stops in Burlington, Montpelier, and White River Junction. In other parts of the country it is responding to curbside competition with its own similar product, Greyhound Express[5], which also offers on-line ticket purchase, some seats at extremely low prices, Wi-Fi, curbside stop locations, etc. It is likely that Greyhound would seek to respond to potential or announced competition on its route by implementing Greyhound Express service on the current corridor.

In terms of State policy, under the federal bus regulatory policy and its pre-emption of state regulations, the private carriers can add or exit routes or services responding only to market forces. State policy needs to consider what the market will provide, and then use available tools (such as Section 5311(f)) to address needs that remain unmet, such as service to smaller population centers on existing routes and places that have lost intercity bus service.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter demonstrates that there is federal funding available to address the rural intercity service gaps identified in the previous chapter, and that the amount

[4] As of May 2011, according to the Megabus USA Website, **http://us.megabus.com/BusStops.aspx**.
[5] See the Greyhound website: http://www.greyhound.com/Express/default.aspx

would allow Vermont to address a significant portion of these needs. This federal Section 5311(f) funding cannot be used to provide commuter bus services, or intercity services that have as their primary connection commercial air or rail passenger service, and is expressly intended to provide a means for states to address the loss of intercity bus services in rural areas.

Under the current FTA guidance, there is a method that would allow Vermont to use this funding without having to provide any local cash operating match. In order to use that funding without also having to supply local match, Vermont would have to work with Greyhound Lines to ensure that the services funded would provide connecting service to the existing Greyhound Lines. However, these are federal funds that Vermont is already using for other purposes, and so other sources would need to be found to replace that funding.

An examination of the recent expansion of unsubsidized "curbside" intercity bus services as an alternative to use of the Section 5311(f) suggests that these services are unlikely to ever serve the small cities and towns of rural Vermont. They do reveal, however, that intercity bus service can be attractive to passengers who have other modal choices.

Given the documented loss of rural intercity service, and the needs analysis above, a certification by VTrans that there are no unmet rural intercity needs (which would allow the state to continue using these funds for something other than intercity bus service), it would need to conduct a consultation process that would include solicitation of input from intercity bus providers, as well as other stakeholders—and together with the results of this study, a final determination would need to be made regarding whether or not the existing rural intercity bus needs are being met. This determination would need to document to FTA that VTrans had conducted this process, and how it made the determination that there were no unmet needs (given the loss of services and the unserved population).

Chapter 5

Proposed Policy and Program Actions

POLICIES ON REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND INTERCITY BUS

Determining the State role and the way in which regional and intercity needs can be addressed is one of the key policy areas initially identified for inclusion in the PTPP and in subsequent public outreach meetings. These issues are related in that they are generally services that provide longer-distance service, often on routes that go between the service areas of different providers. For the regional services, the key issues include the need for funding to maintain regional services that are meeting performance criteria and whether there are additional regional needs. On the intercity side, issues include the likely demand for such service (or whether the regional services are addressing intercity needs), and if warranted, how it can be funded and operated.

It should be noted that there are significant differences in the trip purposes and potential destinations between the regional commuter services and the intercity services. Intercity services in Vermont, both passenger rail and intercity bus, have long been routed and scheduled to pick up passengers in Vermont towns and cities and transport them to major destinations outside the State. Intercity bus services often use over-the-road buses (OTRBs) with luggage compartments. Needs for intrastate trips have largely been addressed by the transit providers within their service regions, and more recently the inter-regional commuter services have addressed this for trip lengths that could be served effectively on schedules allowing for a day in the destination city. Intercity trips are typically taken for family or social reasons, rather than as business trips or work commutes, and the riders are generally infrequent users.

Policies on Intercity Bus

Over the past decade intercity bus services in the state have been reduced significantly. It should be noted that there are significant differences in the trip purposes and potential destinations between the regional commuter services and the

intercity services. Intercity services in Vermont, both passenger rail and intercity bus, have long been routed and scheduled to pick up passengers in Vermont towns and cities and transport them to major destinations outside the State. Needs for intrastate trips have largely been addressed by the transit providers within their service regions, and more recently the regional commuters have addressed this for trip lengths that could be served effectively on schedules allowing for a day in the destination city (there are still some gaps in meeting this need, such as the inability to make a day trip from Rutland to Burlington and back on the regional services).

One of the other important distinctions between the regional commuter services and rural intercity bus service is the fact that there is an FTA program directed toward maintaining or improving rural intercity service. Section 5311(f) was developed as a policy response to exactly the situation faced by Vermont, the loss of rural intercity bus services. Under Section 5311(f) each state is directed to use at least 15% of its overall Section 5311 rural transit funding allocation for rural intercity bus services—unless the state certifies that there is no unmet rural intercity need in the state. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, states were left on their own regarding how to make the determination of "no unmet rural intercity need," but in the SAFETEA-LU legislation language was added requiring states to conduct a consultation process involving the intercity providers, studies or analysis, and other stakeholders. If, following that consultation, the state certifies, it needs to document how it considered the input provided. For the past several years Vermont has conducted a consultation process, certified that intercity needs are being met and, thus, the State has not set aside the 15% amount or built up any kind of balance in a Section 5311(f) program.

The outreach and stakeholder input in the current PTPP process has recognized the loss of the intercity services, but raised questions as well. One is whether the needs are being met by the regional commuter routes that have been developed. The possible role of the regional services in providing access to the existing intercity network could be considered in the consultation process, but the regional services, as currently provided, do not actually provide for the "meaningful" connection called for in the Section 5311(f) program circular. In addition, while the map of Vermont's existing fixed and deviated services might make it appear that the regional services have filled in for the discontinued intercity routes, making some of these trips through end-to-end transfers between different regional operators would be so inconvenient and time-consuming that the trips are not practical or feasible.

The other question raised in the outreach was whether or not there is potential demand for intercity services, given that Greyhound abandoned them as unprofitable. Chapter 4 presented an analysis that shows that there may be enough demand for intercity services if those services were subsidized and outlines a possible intercity service along the Route 7 corridor – with a plan for using Greyhound in-kind miles as

the local matching. This Pilot Project funding mechanism can reduce or eliminate the need for operating cash match.

One significant issue that should be acknowledged is that using all of the 15% Section 5311(f) set-aside would reduce the amount of Section 5311 funding available for other services by about $400,000. Changes in state policy to support the implementation of rural intercity bus services would not only need to consider the potential transit funding impact as Section 5311 funds were shifted to the rural intercity projects, but also the relationship of the potential services to the developing state-supported Amtrak services. Ideally, these rural intercity routes would provide connectivity among all modes, but the FTA Section 5311(f) circular makes it clear that this funding is intended to provide meaningful connections to the national intercity bus network as its first priority, not the rail passenger network. Section 5311(f) also cannot be used for commuter bus services, so it is not a potential source of funding for the regional services graduating from the New Starts program, unless they provide for the "meaningful connection".

PROPOSED ACTIONS

The proposed intercity program starts with this document, which is an expanded assessment of rural intercity bus needs. It is intended to serve as the needs assessment aspect of the overall consultation process. If unmet needs are identified[1], VTrans will need to develop a service description/program for the services using the in-kind funding method. This would require detailed planning of schedules and connections, and assessment of likely funding needs (which would include assumptions regarding the likely operator and its costs, and the estimated revenue)[2]. The overall process would include the following steps.

Consultation Process

Following the needs assessment and prior to the call for projects for the next S.5311 funding cycle, VTrans will conduct the FTA-required consultation process. This consultation will include distribution of the needs assessment sections of the PTPP, and

[1] The preliminary needs assessment presented in Chapter 3 does present evidence of unmet need in rural areas for intercity bus services.

[2] It should be noted that Greyhound is not necessarily the operator, but would have to be a party to the project as the provider of the value of the in-kind miles. As both a potential applicant or bidder on the subsidized service and the provider of the in-kind match, Greyhound's current policy is to offer to provide the in-kind miles to whichever operator the state selects, as long the operator and the proposed service meet Greyhound's requirements for connecting service that can be quoted by them in their schedule information, has appropriate levels of insurance, is fixed-route fixed-schedule service at least five days per week, and has required legal federal and state operating authority.

solicitation of input on available services, unmet needs, capabilities and opportunities from intercity bus providers, transit operators, the rail passenger program, and the public. The consultation process will document the input, and provide written documentation of how the results of the needs assessment and the consultation process were used in the development of state policy regarding certification of unmet needs or use of Section 5311(f) funding for projects.

Development of Program Application and Guidelines

If the process identifies unmet needs, VTrans will include in the Section 5311 application (or in a separate Section 5311(f) application) requests for services and connections in specific corridors to address the identified gaps. The consultation process may also identify needs such as capital for vehicles or facilities, or user information systems, and VTrans will need to consider its policy on eligibility of such requests as it assesses the results of the consultation in developing its policy. Given the limited amount of Section 5311(f) funding, the scope for capital projects would be limited.

CONCLUSIONS

- Vermont residents have limited access to the national intercity bus network.

- This access has declined significantly over the past decade:
  - The number of points served has declined from 55 to six, and
  - The percentage of the rural (nonurbanized) population having intercity bus access within 25 miles has declined from 99.8% in 2005 to 78.8% today, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

- Intercity passenger rail, although it serves several stations that are in locations not also served by intercity bus, generally serves the same population already served by intercity bus. Only 6.5% of rural residents are uniquely served by intercity bus.

- Regional and local transit services are operated in some of the same corridors that have lost intercity bus service, but a previous study conducted for the state legislature highlighted the fact that these services do not offer practical connections, because of scheduling designed to serve commuter and other local markets rather than long-distance riders or connections to remaining intercity services. Long-distance trips using these services would require transfers (sometimes multiple transfers), and have significant wait times.

- Analysis of demographic data reveals that 14 towns across the State with populations of 2,500 or more have high densities of transit-dependent persons and are located more than ten miles from intercity bus stops; nine of these towns are more than 25 miles from remaining intercity bus stops. These towns could be candidates for potential intercity bus service under the Federal Section 5311(f) program.

- Analysis of potential key destinations reveals that there are 17 colleges or universities more than ten miles from an intercity bus stop, nine of which are more than 25 miles; ten major medical centers that are more than ten miles from a stop, three of which are more than 25 miles away; nearly all State correctional facilities are more than ten miles from existing intercity bus service, and three are farther than 25 miles away; and most ski areas and resorts are within reasonable driving distances of existing stops, but intercity bus riders would need another reliable mode to complete their trips.

- The Federal Section 5311(f) program of rural intercity bus assistance is available to address these service gaps, but it is funding that Vermont is already using for other purposes, and so other sources would need to be found to replace that funding. The set-aside under Section 5311(f) is 15% of the state's overall Section 5311 allocation, or about $400,000.

- In order to use that funding without also having to supply local match, Vermont would have to work with Greyhound Lines to insure that the services funded would provide connecting service to the existing Greyhound Lines.

- This funding cannot be used to provide commuter bus services, or intercity bus services that have as their primary connection commercial air or rail passenger service. It is not available to replace CMAQ operating funding for successful commuter bus services.

- Before Vermont can use this funding for something other than intercity bus service, it would need to conduct a consultation process that would include solicitation of input from intercity bus providers, as well as other stakeholders—and together with the results of this study, it would need to consider whether or not the existing rural intercity bus needs are being met. It would need to document to FTA that it had conducted this process, and how it made the determination that there were no unmet needs (given the loss of services and the unserved population).

- If Vermont determines that there is unmet need, it would need to develop and implement a program/process for addressing service needs in those areas of unmet need.

Chapter 6

Vermont Rural Intercity Consultation Process

In Chapter 5 it was recommended that Vermont conduct a consultation process to solicit input about the need for rural intercity bus services. This chapter documents that process, which took place during the period from September through November of 2011. It included a survey and a statewide consultation meeting. Also considered as part of this process is input on this topic provided as part of the overall 2011 Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan.

CONSULTATION PROCESS SURVEY

As part of the consultation process, a survey was developed and sent to identified potential providers of intercity bus services, public transit operators in Vermont, and to the transportation planners at regional planning agencies. Twelve completed surveys were received.

Survey Form

A survey form was developed to solicit input on intercity needs, and it asked questions about current services, information and marketing, perceived service needs, areas or groups needing services, other needs (such as facilities, etc.). Three versions of the survey were developed: one for private intercity bus firms, a second for public transit operators, and a third for planning agencies. The main differences were in the wording regarding existing services. A cover letter was developed for each survey form as well. Examples of the letters and blank surveys are included in Appendix A.

Mailing List

A list of potential intercity bus carriers was developed to include firms currently providing scheduled intercity service in Vermont or adjacent states, and firms offering charter or airport limousine-type service in Vermont. Information on potential providers and contact information was obtained from internet searches, Yellow Pages listings, and from membership rosters of the New England Bus Association available

on-line. Appendix B presents a list of the intercity providers who were sent survey forms.

SURVEY RESULTS

As noted above 12 surveys were received, six from private carriers, two from planning agencies, and four from transit providers:

- Intercity/Private Carriers:
  - Premier Coach—Randall Charlebois
  - Adirondack Trailways—Anne M. Noonan
  - Student Transportation of Vermont dba Mountain Transit dba Bet-Cha Transit—John Sharrow
  - Peter Pan Bus Lines—Michael Sharff
  - Greyhound Lines—Stephanie Gonterman
  - Middlebury Transit Inc./Burlington Limousine and Car Services/Vermont Chauffeured Transportation—Bill Fuller

- Planning Agencies:
  - Lamoille County Planning Commission—Amanda Holland
  - Bennington County Regional Commission—Mark Anders

- Public Transit Providers:
  - Green Mountain Community Network—Donna Baker
  - CCTA/GMTA—Meredith Birkett
  - Advance Transit—Van Chestnut
  - Rural Community Transportation, Inc.

Survey responses are summarized below by question:

1. Do you operate scheduled intercity bus services in Vermont or adjacent states?

   - Greyhound Lines—Four roundtrips per day between Montreal and Boston, with Vermont stops in Burlington (downtown), Burlington Airport, Montpelier and White River Junction; and one round-trip per day between White River Junction and Springfield, Massachusetts, with Vermont stops in Bellows Falls and Brattleboro.
   - Peter Pan—One roundtrip per day between Greenfield, MA and Springfield, MA.
   - Yankee Trails—Bennington, VT to Albany, two roundtrips per day.

- Adirondack Trailways—extensive service in New York State, closest routes to Vermont are Montreal-NY via Plattsburgh and Albany (with intermediate stops).

2. Do you operate scheduled long-distance services (from public transit provider survey)?

   - GMCN—Feeder service to Manchester, VT, and to Williamstown, MA; regular unsubsidized private service to Albany Airport, train and bus depots for local college students (using privately funded vehicles)—Thursday and Friday afternoons outbound and Sunday and Monday evenings inbound. Colleges pay the bulk of the costs of these trips. In partnership with DVTA they plan to submit a CMAQ request for the Bennington to Wilmington route.
   - Advance Transit—commuter service connecting Canaan, Enfield, and Lebanon, NH.
   - RCT—Route 2 Commuter, demand-response, Kingdom Express does charter.
   - CCTA—Montpelier Link, Middlebury Link, St. Albans Link, and US 2 Commuter.

3. Other types of service provided:

   - Student Transportation—school, charter, shuttle.
   - Adirondack Trailways—service to Albany Airport, Amtrak in Utica, Syracuse, and next to Amtrak in Rochester, NY.
   - Premier Coach—Charter, Amtrak replacement bus service when lines closed for track maintenance.
   - Greyhound Lines—charter service.

4. Areas or corridors needing intercity service:

   - Private carriers:

     - Premier Coach—Western Corridor of Vermont, connection to Albany Amtrak.
     - Peter Pan--Springfield, MA to Greenfield, MA to Burlington, VT; (Route 2 in Massachusetts—serving Berkshires, Greenfield, Boston).
     - Adirondack Trailways—Route 7 Corridor Burlington to Albany.
     - Student Transportation—Burlington to Albany, Rutland-Boston, White River Junction to Springfield, MA.

- Greyhound Lines—Daily roundtrip service from White River Junction to Albany, New York, with intermediate stops (Vermont locations only) in Bridgewater, Rutland, Danby, Manchester Center, Arlington and Bennington.

- Planning Agencies:

  - Bennington County Regional Commission—Bennington to Albany, Bennington to Boston, Bennington/Manchester to Burlington, Bennington/Manchester to Montpelier.
  - Lamoille County Planning Commission—Route 100 into Lamoille County, connection to Route 15 corridor destinations.

- Transit Providers:

  - Green Mountain Community Network, Inc.—Bennington to Albany (airport, train, bus connections), Manchester to Albany (airport, train, bus connections) Bennington to Williamstown, MA (to intercity bus); Bennington to Brattleboro.
  - Advance Transit—Route 4 Corridor Woodstock to White River Junction/Lebanon/Hanover.
  - RCT—St. Johnsbury to Littleton, NH to connect with Concord Trailways; Newport/St. Johnsbury/Wells River (connect with Stagecoach); Hardwick to Burlington.
  - CCTA/GMTA—Saturday/Sunday St. Albans Link service, Sunday Middlebury Link to connect to Greyhound at Burlington International Airport. Saturday/Sunday Service on the Route 2 commuter between St. Johnsbury and Montpelier.

5. Destinations or Groups Needing More Service:

   - Private Carriers:

     - Premier Coach—New York City, Albany.
     - Peter Pan—no specific market group.
     - Adirondack Trailways—low income people, seniors and students. Also note many requests for service to/from NY state points to Bennington, Rutland, and Burlington.
     - Student Transportation—service to connect current rail and public transportation, coordinating service. Where possible replace local services with intercity service (Burlington to Albany).

- Greyhound Lines—generally identified southwest Vermont as needing more service, connections to intercity networks to provide links to major northeastern cities, provided a sample service concept for White River Junction to Albany via Rutland and Bennington. Connections in White River Junction would allow service to Burlington, Montreal, or Boston; connections in Albany would tie to other GLI services to Montreal, Boston, New York City, Buffalo; to Adirondack Trailways services to Long Island; and to Peter Pan service to Springfield, Hartford and Providence. Access to the Albany Airport would be provided.

- Planning Agencies:

  - Bennington County Regional Commission—Commuters traveling from Bennington to Albany, visitors traveling from Albany Amtrak or Albany airport to SW Vermont.
  - Lamoille County Planning Commission—Medical facilities (Morristown), ski resorts (Stowe, Jeffersonville, and colleges (Johnson)).

- Transit Providers:

  - GMCN—college students, seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, employees, persons needing access to urban services (includes veterans affairs). Users would need connectivity at destinations to reach other modes, retail, medical, offices, tourism destinations, colleges, sports venues.
  - Advance Transit—Additional evening service on the Orange Route to allow better connections to Amtrak.
  - RCT—St. Johnsbury to Littleton, NH to connect with Concord Trailways; Newport/St. Johnsbury/Wells River (connect with Stagecoach); Hardwick to Burlington.
  - CCTA/GMTA—Weekend service to Burlington (will be less productive than commuter services).

6. Other Improvement Needs:

   - Middlebury Transit—more public/private cooperation.
   - Premier Coach—use private providers with subsidies to add service in the western corridor.
   - Adirondack Trailways—if new services instituted, would need sales outlets, and marketing to promote new services.

- Greyhound Lines—If operated by Greyhound rural services would require vehicle capital for two small buses. Service would also need marketing and promotion for new services, Greyhound also recommends including any new services under their Greyhound Connect branding, and on their internet site.
- Peter Pan—We need other states to do similar consultation and planning for intercity service.
- RCT—VTrans should fund more service with CMAQ funds to create commuter routes with connections.
- Advance Transit—We are going to do a TDP for Advance Transit, with a focus on increasing frequency on Green and Orange routes, and connections to the Swim Center—which could service a park and ride lot. A park and ride lot is needed near the I-91/I-89 interchange.
- GMCN—Bennington—We are building a multi-modal center to link intercity and regional services, adding more service to connect to rural areas of the county and to connect to future planned rail passenger services.
- CCTA/GMTA—We will be getting over-the-road coaches for Montpelier Link and other Link routes under an FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Livability Grant.
- Bennington County Regional Commission—Needs include schedules, other information, and marketing—all in one website for current services operated by different entities, including firms like Yankee Trails. It is hard to get information from different sources that may not be known to the potential user.

SUMMARY

To sum up the responses:

- No respondent said there are no unmet intercity needs.

- The Albany-Bennington-Rutland-Middlebury corridor is the most frequently identified service need, including connections to the Albany airport, Amtrak, and intercity bus services.

- Other intercity corridors identified as areas of need include:
  - Albany-Bennington-Rutland-White River Junction (with intermediate stops).
  - Bennington-Wilmington-Brattleboro.
  - Newport to White River Junction.

- Woodstock to White River Junction (and Lebanon/Hanover New Hampshire).

- A need was identified for weekend service where existing regional commuter services are provided (Middlebury to Burlington, for example), or for transit connections to existing intercity service (St. Johnsbury to Littleton, NH, for example).

- There was some focus on information needs for existing service and connections, and the need to have sales outlets and marketing for any new services.

- The only facility need identified is a park and ride in WRJ at the I-89/I-91 interchange.

- One intercity provider explicitly mentioned a need for bus capital to operate funded expansion services.

CONSULTATON MEETING

In addition to the written survey, all of those surveyed were invited to a meeting held on November 15, 2011 at the VTrans offices in Montpelier, Vermont. Approximately 16 persons attended, in addition to VTrans' staff and consultants. Three private carriers, nine transit operators, and two regional planning agencies were represented, along with a member of the Vermont legislature. A list of the attendees is included as Appendix C.

A presentation covered the Section 5311(f) program, the needs assessment, and the policy options including use of the in-kind match provisions. A copy of this presentation is included as Appendix D. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to ask questions or add their comments regarding the need for additional rural intercity services in Vermont, and the appropriate policy. There was considerable discussion of needs and potential policies.

Decision on Certification of Unmet Intercity Needs Still Open

An initial question was whether or not a decision had already been made by the state regarding certification of "no unmet rural intercity needs" (as required by FTA if the 15 percent set-aside is to be used for other purposes), and if so would the input at the meeting have any impact. VTrans' staff made it clear that no decisions regarding the Section 5311(f) program had been made, and that the state was still examining the

needs study and considering options, and it would take into account all input provided. Another question concerned the likely fiscal year of any potential change in state policy regarding intercity bus. VTrans' staff replied that at this point FY14 was the focus of discussion.

In-Kind Match

Other questions concerned the in-kind match provisions and how that could work to reduce or eliminate the need for local or state cash operating match. One clarification is that Greyhound is not the only potential provider of in-kind miles for match—a carrier such as Adirondack Trailways could use its own connecting services as match, as long as they are fixed-route, fixed-schedule intercity services, and they are not already being used as match under another state Section 5311(f) program. There was also some discussion of how to ascertain the true costs of intercity bus service provided by private carriers, which would be needed either to value the in-kind miles correctly, to determine actual net deficits if they receive subsidies, and for performance measures. The consultants stated that Greyhound had provided this data in other states using the in-kind match method.

Determining Unmet Rural Intercity Need Given Existing Regional Transit Connections

A discussion of what constituted unmet intercity need followed. It was noted that many of Vermont's transit operators had implemented services that would allow residents of towns without intercity service to get to towns with service, for example from Middlebury (no intercity service) to Burlington (intercity service available). One questioner asked if Greyhound match miles could be used to support these services. The federal regulations would allow such an arrangement if the services provided "a meaningful connection" to the intercity services, and there would need to be a granting of these miles by the intercity carrier. Typically "a meaningful connection" has meant that the subsidized service needs to operate to the same location as the intercity bus stop, arriving and departing within a two-hour window on either side of the intercity service schedule, seven days per week (or at least five), with the connection included in both regional and intercity carrier public information. Ideally, there would be an interline ticketing arrangement between the operator providing the subsidized service and the carrier providing the unsubsidized service. It is not clear how many of the transit links provided by the transit operators currently meet these requirements, or what might be needed to enable them to do so.

This led to further discussion of the potential demand for intercity connections as compared to commuter services. Would an additional service in these corridors that offered a meaningful connection carry enough riders by itself to justify the funding? An

example again was the Middlebury to Burlington service operated by ACTR. It is commuter service with multiple frequencies into Burlington in the morning, returning in the late afternoon. These buses go to the Cherry Street terminal shared with CCTA, but do not go on to Greyhound's stop at the Burlington Airport. A passenger on the ACTR buses would need to transfer to a CCTA bus going to the airport (and some do). Does this meet the need of Middlebury residents for access to intercity connections? ACTR has not heard requests for any service beyond the commuter service, according to Jim Moulton of ACTR, and in general he feels that intercity needs from Middlebury are met, even though it does not have intercity service.

A general point made about the connections provided by the local transit operators is that the needs assessment should include more detailed analysis of the potential of these services to be considered as meeting intercity needs—do they provide a meaningful connection now, or what changes would need to be made to allow them to be considered as providing a meaningful connection?

Potential for Cost Savings from Alternative Operational Models

It was suggested that perhaps the remaining rural intercity needs could be met most efficiently by a service model unlike the standard intercity bus service that had been withdrawn—that perhaps the use of small buses instead of over-the-road coaches would reduce subsidy requirements and be more appropriate given the anticipated low levels of demand. Intercity bus operators replied that most of the costs of operating bus services are labor or labor-related, and that it was unlikely that small buses would save very much. Also, intercity bus demand is very peaked, with higher ridership around weekends and holidays, and that any cost savings from operating small buses off-peak could be lost if several buses needed to be used to meet peak demands, which could otherwise be met by a single large bus (with a single driver).

Measures of Need, Demand and Performance

A related point is that the likely demand for a low frequency intercity service might be very low, and there is a need for some tool or metric to compare spending of funds on such a service to the potential use of the funding on other services—in effect measuring the opportunity cost of using funds for an intercity route as compared to other transit needs, given that these funds have been used in the past for other rural services. There is a value judgment that must be made regarding the kinds of trips that merit support.

It was suggested that rural intercity services could have performance measures like other transit services in Vermont, with services below a certain level losing funding. Measures used in other states have included farebox recovery and subsidy per

passenger. Farebox recovery is most comparable to the profitability test of the private market, as it encompasses fare policy, usage, and operating costs—it could be compared to other transit services. Subsidy per passenger can be used as a cap, with a level set at the cost of alternative services—for example the cost of sending the same passenger by taxi or limousine, or at the level of subsidy per passenger for other intercity modes such as passenger rail. For proposed service estimates of demand, revenue, and cost could be used to develop likely performance, which could be considered in evaluating whether or not a particular service should be funded.

Areas or Corridors with Unmet Rural Intercity Needs

Other participants made the point that although some areas in Vermont have new services that could be seen as replacing intercity service, other areas have not. Rutland, although it has Amtrak service to Albany and New York City, does not have any intercity bus service that could allow connections north to Burlington and Montreal, or east to Boston. Existing connections developed by the transit operators for commuters to Burlington do not allow Rutland passengers to make the round-trip in the same day. Newport has lost its connection to Greyhound and Amtrak services in White River Junction, and there is a need for links from that region, possibly to the Concord Coach services from Littleton, New Hampshire, if not to White River Junction. Another corridor that lacks service, which might be considered as intercity, is Bennington-Wilmington-Brattleboro. A general observation was that there was a need for service to Boston from the western half of the state (south of Burlington).

Conclusions from the Meeting

There was a lot of discussion and many valid points were made. No consensus was reached, and VTrans staff noted again that no decisions had been made, and that all of the comments would be considered as a proposed policy is developed. There was some agreement that more was needed of the degree to which existing regional transit services provided adequate access to remaining intercity bus services, and that possibly there was not as much unmet rural intercity need as it would appear by looking at a map of discontinued services.

ADDITIONAL INPUT

As part of the concurrent PTPP, there were several opportunities provided for public input regarding transit needs, and in several cases intercity needs were identified. These included:

- At the Montpelier meeting, a user of the Greyhound Montreal-Boston service (resident of Montpelier) commented on the need to maintain this service, which he used for frequent trips to Montreal. In general he noted that intercity bus supports economic development, by allowing such trips directly from Montpelier, and that having the stop in front of City Hall increased its visibility and made it more accessible (even by bicycle).

- At other public meetings, there was discussion of broader intermodal and intercity needs, including some rural intercity needs:

  - There are difficulties in making connections between different modes (local transit to intercity bus) where stops are not co-located,
  - There is a need for intercity service from the Northeast Kingdom,
  - There is a need for connections between regions within the state, including more commuter services,
  - There is a need for services that allow for day-trips between towns,
  - There is a need for weekend regional services, and
  - There is a need for improved information that would allow a user to put together trips that involve several providers, or allow a potential traveler to share the ride on a particular trip.

- There were also questions about state policy regarding intercity bus, including concerns about initiating new or replacement services if demand is insufficient, the difficulty in re-establishing ridership that has been lost, and concerns that subsidized intercity bus service would not be cost-effective. Data reflecting the ridership on the CMAQ-funded regional routes demonstrates higher levels of usage, and they can be seen as helping to fill intercity bus network gaps. In response it was noted that the private, unsubsidized carriers had set fares and reduced frequency to maximize farebox recovery, and that the demand seen by public operators likely reflects lower fares and higher frequencies that can be provided because the public operators do not have to recover their full costs.

- At the Rutland public meeting there was a clear expression that the state needed to address the loss of mobility resulting from the loss of intercity bus service on the western side of the state. Even though Rutland has Amtrak service to Albany and New York City, it was felt that former bus riders were left with no options, and that it was still difficult to get to Burlington (with multiple transfers) even with the public transit services. There was strong sentiment that a connection to intercity services in White River Junction was needed (as well as to medical and shopping facilities in nearby New Hampshire). One commenter suggested that Vtrans needed to create a kind

of statewide transit authority to provide the regional/intercity services that would replace the kind of network formerly provided by Vermont Transit.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In general, the surveys, meetings, and public outreach process (for the PTPP) resulted in a general expression that there are unmet rural intercity needs, particularly in these corridors (destination points shown in brackets):

- [Albany] – Bennington – Manchester – Rutland – Middlebury - Burlington [Montreal or Boston]
- [Albany] – Bennington – Manchester – Rutland – Bridgewater - White River Junction-[Boston]
- Newport-St. Johnsbury - White River Junction (with intermediate stops) - [Boston or Springfield (MA) - New York City]
- [Albany] – Bennington – Wilmington – Brattleboro - [Springfield (MA) - New York City]

Discussion in the consultation meeting and in the PTPP meetings also included concerns that the demand on some or all of these routes for intercity service could be too low to justify funding, or that existing regional/commuter services provided adequate access to the remaining intercity bus services, or that Amtrak services met some of these needs.

However, of the places in the corridors cited, only Middlebury and Bennington residents have the opportunity to reach a city served by the national intercity bus network without one or more transfers between public transit services, and even then Middlebury residents would need to transfer to local bus (which is fairly frequent) to reach the airport/intercity bus station in Burlington. Although there is Amtrak service from Rutland to Albany and New York City, input suggested that it serves a different market segment than was formerly served by intercity bus, and that both of Vermont's Amtrak services go to New York City, leaving access to Boston limited to the existing intercity bus service. Some input recommended improvements to information systems to facilitate trips involving multiple transfers between different operators as a means of addressing the limited demand.

Ultimately it may be that the funding required to provide intercity service in some of these corridors would be too great, given limited ridership. However, Vermont has addressed similar questions for other transit routes by applying benchmark performance measures, and denying or eliminating funding for services that did not have enough ridership. Such an approach would likely be applied to any intercity services receiving funding as well.

APPENDIX A

Examples of the Letters and Blank Surveys

October 1, 2011

Dear _____:

The State of Vermont, through the Vermont Agency of Transportation (Vtrans), is conducting a statewide intercity bus needs assessment. A major focus of this study is to determine the potential need for state/federal assistance to maintain or provide connections from rural areas to connect with the national intercity bus network. Federal funding is potentially available for operating assistance, capital assistance (including the purchase of vehicles and other equipment or facilities), or marketing. Vtrans has already conducted an initial analysis of the need for and feasibility of implementing new rural intercity bus services, which is available for download at [http://www.kfhgroup.com/vermonttransitplanupdate.htm]. This letter is intended to solicit your input regarding unmet needs for scheduled intercity bus services, particularly rural services. We would also appreciate it if you could provide information about any scheduled services currently provided by your firm.

Your input will be considered as Vermont decides whether to develop a program of rural intercity bus assistance under Title 49 U.S.C. Section 5311(f). It will help establish program goals, assess the degree to which available services meet the needs, and make recommendations on needed program activities, services, and potential funding sources. A vital component of this assessment is consultation with existing and potential operators of rural intercity bus services regarding unmet rural intercity service needs, and your assistance in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

Based on Federal Transit Administration Circular 9040.1F the "Intercity Bus Service means regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available." Commuter bus service is not included in this definition.

Aspects of intercity services in Vermont that you can assist us in understanding include:

1. Existing scheduled services that provide connections between the rural areas and urban areas and how this information is made available to the public;

2. Areas/corridors/regions that you perceive as having an unmet need for service, whether there is a complete absence of service, or if existing services do not meet the needs.

3. Other aspects of intercity services in Vermont that need to be addressed. This could include facilities, wheelchair accessibility, marketing and information, schedule connections, etc.

Please provide your comments on the attached survey form, and return it in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope, or by fax or e-mail. **We would greatly appreciate a response by November 1, 2011**. In addition to this survey, **your input can be provided at a meeting on this topic to be held on November 15th, 2011, at 1:00 pm, in Montpelier at the Vtrans offices** in the National Life building in the 5th floor Board Room. At that meeting additional information will be provided regarding the Section 5311(f) program and how it could potentially be used in Vermont.

If you have no comment, please indicate that on the form and return it to us. Also, please let us know if you wish to be included in subsequent aspects of this study (and the best way to contact you or your firm). We will then distribute project information and requests for information as we proceed with the study. If you would not like to receive project information, just let us know in your response.

Vtrans has engaged the KFH Group, Inc. to compile the results of the survey and assist in the study. If you have any questions about the survey itself, please contact Fred Fravel at the KFH Group at 301-951-8660 or ffravel@kfhgroup.com. You can contact me, Barbara Donovan if you have any questions or concerns about this Vtrans initiative. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Barbara Donovan
AOT Public Transit Administrator
Barbara.donovan@state.vt.us

Enclosure: Needs Survey

VERMONT INTERCITY BUS CONSULTATION:
INTERCITY BUS OPERATOR SURVEY

Name:_____

Organization:_____

Mailing Address:_____

Phone:_____

Email:_____

Intercity Bus Service means regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available.

1. Based on this definition, do you operate any scheduled intercity bus services in Vermont or adjacent states? **Yes** ❑ **No** ❑

   If "Yes" please describe in terms of stops served, schedules, etc. (attach timetables or other information if available)

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   Do you operate any other kinds of service, such as connections to airports or train stations, charter or tour service? Please describe:

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. How/Where do you make information of these services available to the public? Websites, brochures, posted schedules, etc.

3. Are there areas or corridors that you consider as having a need for more intercity bus service (particularly in rural areas)? This could be areas with no service, or places with existing service that could benefit from additional service (more schedules, local service, etc.).

4. Are there particular markets or groups that you see needing more service? Where do you think people wish to go - are there destinations needing additional service?

5. Please offer any comments regarding other aspects of intercity bus services that you see as needing improvement, such as vehicles, condition of bus facilities, schedule information, wheelchair accessibility, marketing, etc.

6. Do you want to receive future notifications about this study, including any additional surveys, meeting notices, or study reports? **Yes** ❑ **No** ❑

If "Yes", please provide review contact information at the top of this survey, and make sure it is complete.

Please return by November 1, 2011:

Fred Fravel
KFH Group, Inc.,
4920 Elm St., Ste 350
Bethesda, MD 20814.

Or fax to 301-951-0026, or email to ffravel@kfhgroup.com.

October 1, 2011

Dear _____:

The State of Vermont, through the Vermont Agency of Transportation (Vtrans), is conducting a statewide intercity bus needs assessment. A major focus of this study is to determine the potential need for state/federal assistance to maintain or provide connections from rural areas to connect with the national intercity bus network. Federal funding is potentially available for operating assistance, capital assistance (including the purchase of vehicles and other equipment or facilities), or marketing. Vtrans has already conducted an initial analysis of the need for and feasibility of implementing new rural intercity bus services, which is available for download at [kfhgroup ptpp website] This letter is intended to solicit input from the providers of local/regional public transit services in Vermont regarding the existence or lack of scheduled intercity bus services in your area, and any service you offer that connects with, or has potential to feed, into existing intercity bus services. We know that the regional transit operators operate a range of services and can provide a local perspective on potential or identified needs for providing scheduled transportation services to connect small town populations to larger urban areas and interstate services.

Your input, and the analysis in the draft needs assessment will be used by Vtrans as it considers whether to establish a program of rural intercity bus assistance under Title 49 U.S.C. Section 5311(f). It will also help establish program goals, assess the degree to which available services meet the needs, and make recommendations on needed program activities, services, and potential funding sources. A vital component of this assessment is consultation with existing and potential operators of rural intercity bus services regarding unmet rural intercity service needs, and your assistance in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

Based on Federal Transit Administration Circular 9040.1F the "Intercity Bus Service means regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available." Commuter bus service is not included in this definition.

Aspects of intercity service needs in Vermont that you can assist us in understanding include:

1. Existing scheduled services that provide connections between the rural areas and urban areas and how is this information made available to the public;

2. Areas/corridors/regions that you perceive as having an unmet need for service, whether there is a complete absence of service, or if existing services do not meet the needs.

3. Other aspects of intercity services in Vermont that need to be addressed. This could include facilities, wheelchair accessibility, marketing and information, schedule connections, etc.

Please provide your comments on the attached survey form and return it in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope, by fax or e-mail. We would greatly appreciate a response by November 1. In addition to this survey form, your input is invited at a meeting to be held on November ___, at _____, in Montpelier at the Vtrans offices in the National Life building in Room ____.

If you have no comment, please indicate that on the form and return it to us. Also, please let us know if you wish to be included in subsequent aspects of this study (and the best way to contact you). We will then distribute project information and requests for information as we proceed with the study. If you would not like to receive project information, just let us know in your response.

Vtrans has engaged the KFH Group, Inc. to compile the results of the survey and assist in the study. If you have any questions about the survey itself, please contact Fred Fravel at the KFH Group at 301-951-8660 or ffravel@kfhgroup.com. You can contact me, Dave Peletier, at _____ if you have any questions or concerns about this Vtrans initiative. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dave Peletier

VERMONT INTERCITY BUS CONSULTATION
LOCAL TRANSIT PROVIDER SURVEY

Name:_____

Organization:_____

Mailing Address:_____

Phone:_____

Email:_____

Intercity Bus Service means regularly scheduled bus service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available.

1. Are there areas or corridors that you consider as having a need for more intercity bus service (particularly in rural areas)? This could be areas with no service, or places with existing service that could benefit from additional service (more schedules, local service, etc.).

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Are there particular markets or groups that you see needing more service? Where do you think people wish to go - are there destinations needing additional service?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Please offer any comments regarding other aspects of intercity bus services that you see as needing improvement, such as vehicles, condition of bus facilities, schedule information, wheelchair accessibility, marketing, etc.

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Do you currently operate any long-distance services (Scheduled or demand-response)? **Yes** ❑ **No** ❑

   If "Yes" please describe in terms of pickup points, destinations, stops served, how passengers make reservations, eligibility restrictions, schedules, fares, etc. (attach timetables or other information if available)

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. How/Where do you make information of these services available to users? Websites, brochures, posted schedules, etc.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Do you see any potential need or opportunity to expand or modify these services to connect with existing intercity bus services or meet needs for intercity bus services?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   Do you want to receive future notifications about this study, including any additional surveys, meeting notices, or study reports? **Yes** ❑ **No** ❑

   If "Yes", please provide review contact information at the top of this survey, and make sure it is complete.

   Please return by November 1, 2011:

   Fred Fravel
   KFH Group, Inc.,
   4920 Elm St., Ste 350
   Bethesda, MD 20814

   Or fax to 301-951-0026, or email to ffravel@kfhgroup.com

APPENDIX B

Surveyed Intercity Providers

Appendix B: VT Operators of Transportation Services

Organization	Contact		Address				Email	Phone	Fax
	L, Name	F, Name	Street	City	Zip Code	State			
Greyhound Lines, Inc.	Isaacs	Randy	361 West Main Street	Hendersonville	37075	TN	risaacs@greyhound.com	615.338.0847	615-338-0845
Concord Coach Lines, Inc.; Dartmount Coach; Boston Express	Blunt	Harry	7 Langdon Street	Concord	03301	NH		603-228-3300	
Yankee Trails World Travel	Adams	Jeff	569 Third Avenue Ext.	Rensselaer	12144	NY	jadams@yankeetrails.com	518-286-2400,ext. 203	518-283-3279
Adirondack Transit Lines	Berardi	Eugene	499 Hurley Avenue	Hurley	12443	NY	info@trailwaysny.com	845-339-4230	845-339-5222
Peter Pan Bus Lines	Picknelly	Peter	P.O. Box 1776	Springfield	01102	MA	customerservice@peterpanbus.com	413-781-2900	
MegaBus	Mullin	Amanda	4400 S. Racine Ave	Chicago	60609	IL	megabusmedia@hanser.com	800.340.6434	
Dattco Coach & Tour									
Premier Coach Company	Charlebois	Randall	946 Route 7 South	Milton	05468	VT	randy@premiercoach.net	802-655-4456	802-655-4213
Bristol Tours, Inc.	Bolles	Susan	P.O. Box 198	Bristol	05443	VT	mark@bristoltoursusa.com	802-453-2661	
Middlebury Transit	Fuller	Bill and Sara	P.O. Box 423	Middlebury	05753	VT		802-388-3838	
Bet-cha Transit			202 Marinelli Road	Middlebury	05753	VT		802-388-7800	
Mountain Transit	Sharrow	John	19 Precast Road	Milton	05468	VT	jsharrow	802-893-1334	
Lamoille Valley Transportation	Prive	Norman	643 VT Route 15 W	Morrisville	05661	VT	norm@lvt.org	802-888-2103	

APPENDIX C

List of the Attendees
Consultation Meeting – November 15, 2011

Interaty Bns - Sign In 11/15/11

Name	Affiliation	phone	email
Meredith Birkett	CCTA	864-0211	mbirkett@cctaride.org
Petr Kesty	CCRPC	660 4021	pkesty@ccrpcvt.org
~~Barbara Donovan~~	VTrans	828-2828	barbara.donovan@state.vt.us
Stephanie Gorterman	Greyhound/AT	802-295-1824	VCHESNUT@ADVANCETRANSIT.com
ANNE NOONAN	TRAILWAYS	845 339 4230	anoonan@trailwayny.com
Katharine Otto	SWCRPC		kotto@swcrpc.org
Mary HABIG	CRT	802-460-7433	mhabig@crtransit.org
Brian Waterman	CRT	802 460 .7433	Bwaterman@crtransit.org
Bob Young	Premier	802-655-4317	bob@premiercoach.net
Chris Andreasson	ADVANCE TRANSIT	802 295-1824 ext 206	chrisa@advancetransit.com
Jim Moulton	ACTR	802-388-1946	jim@actr-vt.org
DAVID PALMER	STAGECOACH	802 728-3713	DPALMER@STAGECOACHBUSES.ORG
DONNA BAKER	GREEN MTN EXPRESS	447-0477	dbaker@greenmtnexpress.org
Myrga Dana	MVRTD	775-3244 x113	/adx@vermontel.net
Ross MacDonald	VTrans	828-5577	Ross.macdonald@state.vt.us
Amy Rast	VTrans	828-6521	amy.rast@state.vt.us
Mollie Burke	VT. Leg.	802-257-4844	mburke@sover.net
Leonard Linney	DVTA	802-464-8187	leonard@moover.com

APPENDIX D

Rural Intercity Transit Consultation Workshop Presentation – November 15, 2011

Rural Intercity Transit Consultation Workshop

Source: The Dartmouth, http://thedartmouth.com/2008/03/25/news/coach

November 15, 2011

Today's Agenda

1:00 – 1:15	Introductions/Agenda/Goals
1:15 – 2:00	5311/5311(f) Basics
2:00 – 2:30	White Paper on Unmet Intercity Needs
2:30 – 3:30	Discussion on Vermont Policy: Certification, Program Options, Services and Funding
3:30 – 4:00	Summary and next steps
4:00	Adjourn – Thank you for your participation

History – Rural Intercity Services

- Intercity bus network formerly regulated at federal (ICC) and state levels
- Resulted in cross-subsidies that supported rural services
- Decline in rural bus services and growth in human service agency transportation led to creation of federal rural transit program in 1975--began as Section 18, it is now called the Section 5311 program.
- Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1982 and ICC Sunset in 1989 ended federal and state economic regulation
- Carriers abandoned unprofitable rural service from that time to the present—number of stops declined from about 15,000 to around 2,000 today.
- Federal policy response was limited assistance as part of rural transit program—initially called Section 18(i), now Section 5311(f).

FTA Section 5311: Rural Public Transportation Program

- Administered by VTrans
- Provides funding for transportation in areas under 50,000 population, called Non-Urbanized areas
- Eligible applicants include public agencies and private non-profit agencies
- Services must be open to the general public without restrictions, but may be designed to maximize use by persons who are transportation disadvantaged (including elderly and persons with disabilities)
- Funding is available for capital (vehicles, computers, facilities, etc.); operations (subsidies); and planning, administration and marketing
- Federal S.5311 shares:
  - Up to 80 percent federal for capital; administration, planning and marketing
  - Up to 50 percent of the net operating deficit for operations

FTA Section 5311(f): Rural Intercity Program

- Subsection of the overall Section 5311 program
- Also must serve Non-Urbanized areas- under 50,000 population
- Intercity service is defined in the FTA guidance
- Federal S.5311(f) shares same as for S. 5311—but with the addition of a program of in-kind match that can enable funding of up to 100 percent of the net operating deficit
- New federal consultation requirements require involvement of intercity operators and other stakeholders
- Also administered by VTrans

Definition of Intercity Service

- Regularly scheduled bus service
- General Public
- Operates with limited stops between two or more urban areas not in close proximity
- Not commuter service
- Fixed-route, capable of carrying baggage
- Meaningful connection with national intercity network

Meaningful Connection

- To National Network of Intercity Bus Service
- Service to physical locations where connections can be made (stations or stops)
- Scheduled to facilitate connection with intercity bus service
- Information to make connection—schedules, stop locations
- Interline ticketing not required by FTA, but Greyhound and other firms are supportive

Eligible Uses of S.5311(f) Funds

- Operating Assistance (generally 50/50 match on net deficit):
  - Funding of net deficit on a particular route or service
  - Funding for all intercity routes to support the network
  - Purchase-of-service/demonstration projects
  - User-side subsidies
- Capital Assistance (generally 80/20):
  - Vehicles
  - Shelters, stops, signage
  - Intermodal facilities (related to rural usage)
  - Computers/communications equipment (ticketing)
  - ADA accessibility equipment
- Planning and Marketing
  - Studies
  - Marketing Plans, materials, campaigns
  - Information systems

FTA Section 5311(f) In-Kind Operating Match

- Only applies on Section 5311(f) Operating Assistance projects

- Redefines the project to include both the subsidized rural intercity route and connecting unsubsidized intercity service

- The value of the capital on the unsubsidized portion is used as "in-kind" match for the operating subsidy on the subsidized portion

- The value of the in-kind capital is calculated as 50% of the fully-allocated operating cost per mile on the unsubsidized portion, times the the number of revenue miles included in the project

FTA Section 5311(f) In-Kind Operating Match (cont.)

- The value of the in-kind capital is calculated as 50% of the fully-allocated operating cost per mile on the unsubsidized portion, times the number of revenue miles included in the project

- If enough unsubsidized revenue miles are included in the project, the subsidized portion is effectively 100 percent federally funded (no cash local match required)

- Agreement from the carrier providing the unsubsidized miles to participate in the project must be included in the application/bid package, documenting the services to be used as match

- A potential disadvantage is that this method uses the funds available to the state at twice the rate of the normal 50 percent federal/50 percent local match on the net deficit

Sample Projects: Operating Assistance

- Route-level assistance:
  - Washington State: state is S.5311(f) grantee, contracts for particular
  - service in four corridors
  - Michigan: funds service on five routes with an intercity carrier
  - Minnesota: funds service on a number of rural routes with an intercity carrier
  - Maryland is funding two routes, one operated by a regional carrier and the other by a national firm
- Network assistance:
  - Iowa funds a set amount per-mile on all rural intercity services
  - New York funds all upstate intercity bus service on a rate per mile and per passenger
- Rural feeder assistance:
  - California funds Sage Stage, rural operator, on connecting route to Greyhound in Reno
  - Alabama funds rural operator West Alabama to connect with Greyhound

Sample Projects: Capital

- **Vehicles:**
  - Georgia funds private intercity carriers to purchase coaches for use in rural areas
  - Michigan funds coaches for scheduled service throughout the state
  - Colorado has purchased coaches for two private intercity operators
  - Washington is funding smaller buses for use on contracted rural intercity routes
  - Maryland funded an over-the-road bus and three small buses for use on routes

- **Facilities:**
  - Minnesota funded a portion of the Minneapolis intermodal terminal (in proportion to rural usage)
  - California intermodal terminal projects
  - Numerous states have funded trailblazer sign projects to direct people to station locations
  - New Hampshire used CMAQ funds to build intercity bus stations, leased to private operators who operate and maintain them (including park and ride lots)
  - Texas has funded intercity bus station rehab and accessibility projects

- **Other:**
  - Computers and ticketing equipment funded in a number of states
  - Shelters at rural stops of intercity service
  - A number of states have funded retrofits of intercity vehicles to support ADA accessibility

Sample Projects: Other

- Washington State funding of development of traveler information system (Google Transit statewide)

- Iowa funding of 1-800 telephone assistance operated by Jefferson Lines to tell users how to use rural transit to connect to intercity

- Marketing research in Minnesota, Iowa

Section 5311(f) Funding Levels

- 15 percent set-aside of a state's S.5311 rural transit apportionment is for rural intercity

- Unless a state has conducted a consultation process with intercity operators and certifies that it has no unmet intercity needs

- Vermont amount:

Intercity Bus Needs Assessment and Policy Options White Paper

- Completed in September 2011, part of the 2012 Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan (PTPP)

- Included:
  - Background and policy context
  - Inventory of existing intercity passenger services
  - Analysis of intercity bus service needs based on demographic analysis and identification of potential key destinations
  - Input from PPTP stakeholders and public meetings

- Policy Options:
  - Conduct consultation process to obtain additional input from stakeholders and potential providers, and if warranted
  - Develop a rural intercity program element in the state's overall public transportation program using Section 5311(f)
  - Potential funding/use if the in-kind funding method to implement new services on identified corridors using an RFP process
  - Provide capital funding for vehicles to operate new services

Review of Previous Planning Studies:

- **February 1998: Vermont Statewide Intercity Bus Study**
  - **Inventory of existing service**
  - **Identified unmet needs**
  - **identified gaps in the network and potential services to fill them**
  - **Policy and funding options**

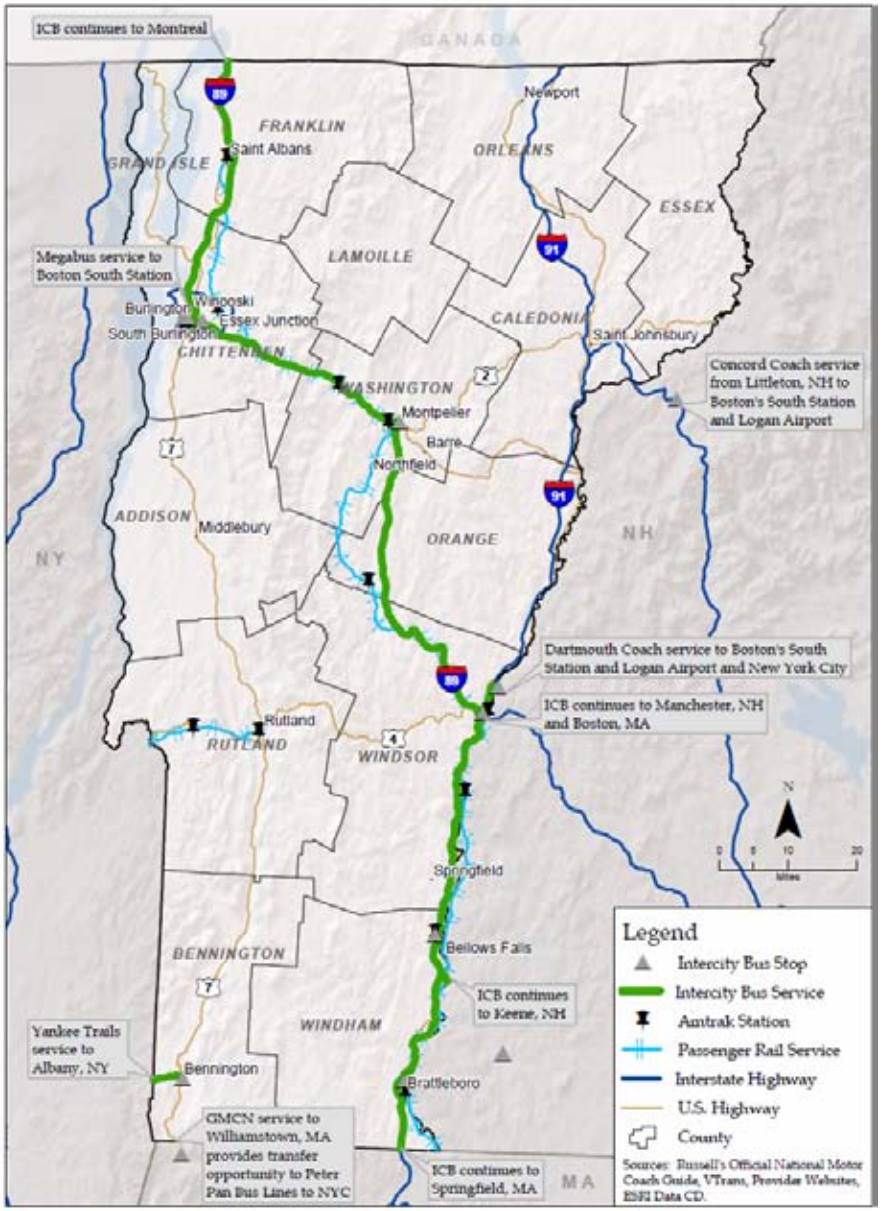
- **January 2008: A Study Regarding the Regional Connectivity of Vermont's Public Transportation System –Legislative Report**
  - **Reviewed ability to make intercity or regional trips using existing transit services following reduction in intercity bus services**
  - **Found that many trips are technically possible, but would require multiple transfers and delays**
  - **Recommended improved information about available service and potential connections**

Inventory of Current Providers

- Six providers of regularly scheduled intercity bus services:
  - Greyhound Lines
  - Megabus
  - Yankee Trails
  - Concord Coach (NH)
  - Dartmouth Coach (NH)
  - Peter Pan Bus Lines (MA)

- Within Vermont service is limited:
  - Greyhound: Montreal-Burlington-Montpelier-White River Junction-Boston and White River Junction-Bellows Falls-Brattleboro-Springfield
  - Yankee Trails: Bennington-Albany
  - Megabus: Burlington-Boston

Figure 2-1: Existing Intercity Bus Service in Vermont



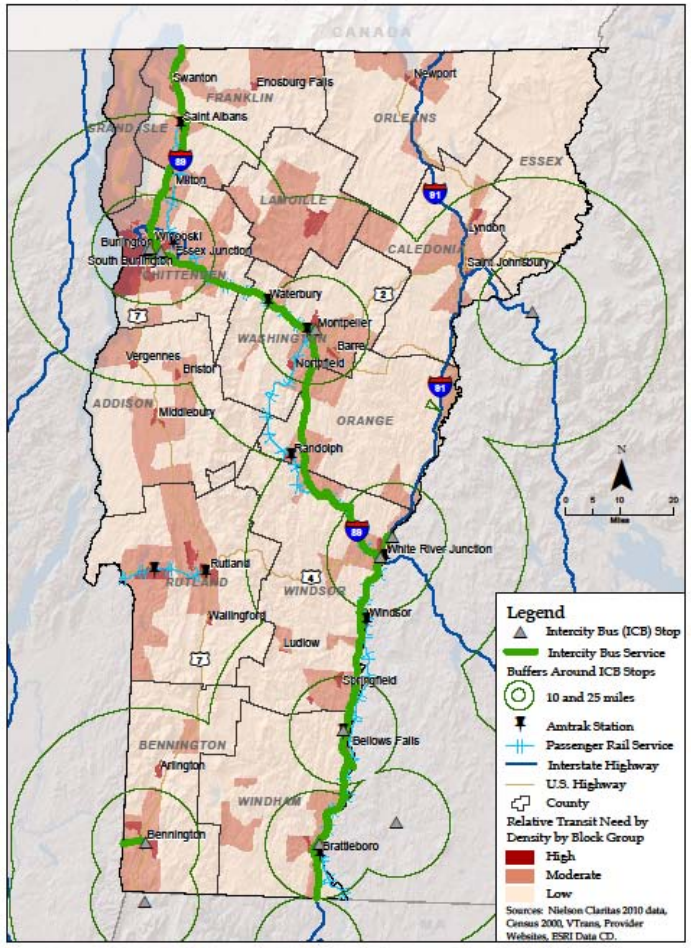
Demographic Analysis:

Identify persons with characteristics similar to those of intercity bus passengers

- **Young adults**
- **Older adults**
- **People with low income**
- **People with disabilities**
- **Autoless households**
- **Density adjustment**

Unmet Needs Based on Demographic Data

- Fourteen towns with populations greater than 2,500 and high densities of transit dependent persons are more than ten miles from existing intercity bus stops
- Nine of these towns are more than 25 miles from the nearest intercity bus stop



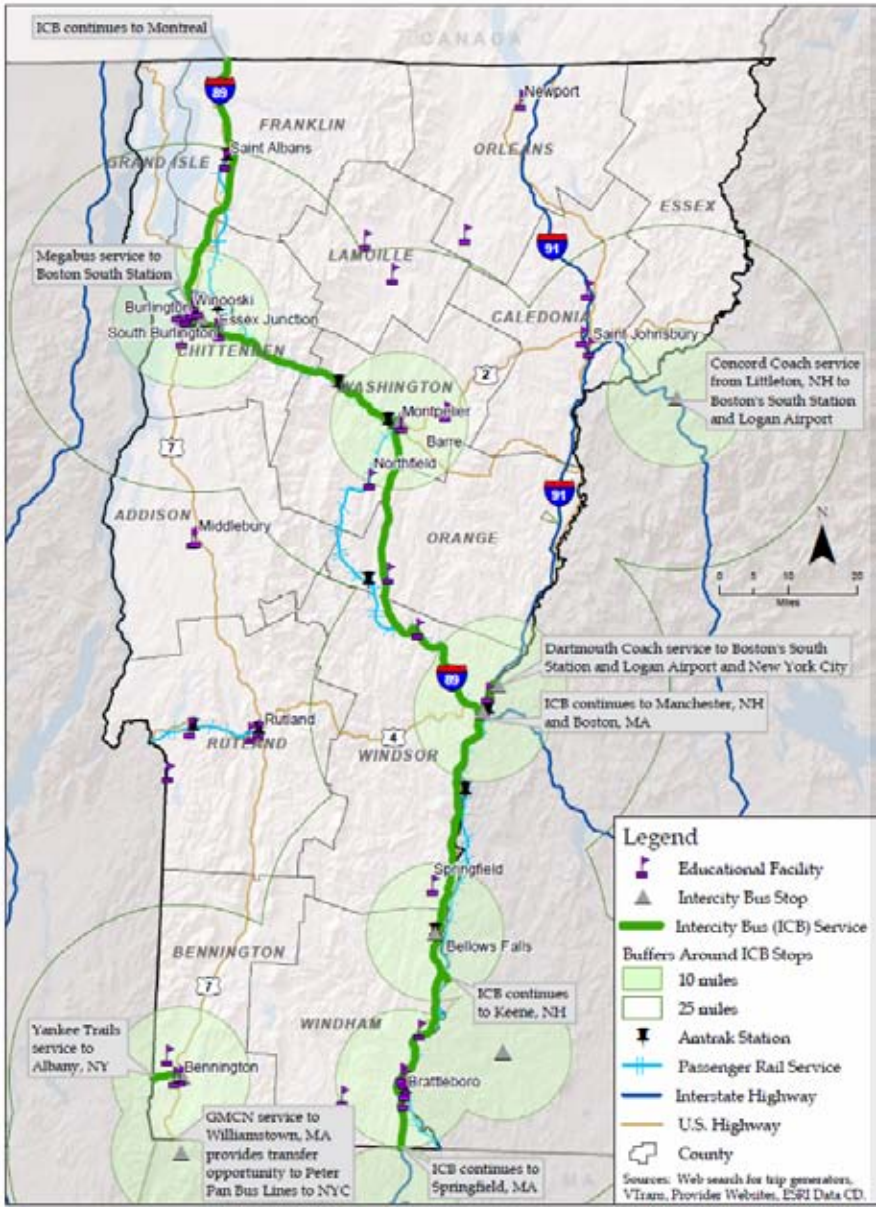
Establishing Intercity Bus Need: Destinations

- **Location of Intercity Bus Stops**

  And:
  - Colleges and universities
  - Correctional facilities
  - Hospitals
  - Major airports
  - Military Installations
  - Recreation sites—ski areas

- **Many unserved origins and destinations are in the Route 7 Corridor, Newport**

Figure 3-7: Intercity Bus Destinations - Educational Facilities



Potential Corridors:

- Illustrative Routes in the White Paper:
  - Burlington-Middlebury-Rutland-Manchester-Bennington-Albany (NY)
  - Rutland-Springfield-Bellows-Falls-Brattleboro (Boston)
  - Newport-White River Junction

- Other Routes are possible, or other connections

- Route 7 corridor may be possible using in-kind match alone with no local cash match

Recommended approach:

- VTrans should not certify no unmet needs—demographic analysis and input from the surveys identified intercity service needs

- Offer a Section 5311(f) program separate from the overall Section 5311 grant program

- Begin with a solicitation for service in a limited number of corridors

- Use the in-kind funding method so that carriers or localities do not have to provide local cash match for operating projects

- Use an RFP process to solicit bids to provide desired routes (like Washington and Oregon programs)

- Continue planning and consultation process

Establishing Intercity Bus Need: Statewide Outreach

Purpose of Discussion –

1. Review and discuss Vermont's intercity transportation: Needs, Desires, Planning

2. Discuss potential solutions to address intercity transportation needs

3. Marketing and Branding