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Contact: Jon Kaplan, jon.kaplan@vermont.gov

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VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Grants Total Nearly \$5.1m in 2015

MONTPELIER, Vt— The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is awarding \$5,100,000 in grants to municipalities for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects. The mix of construction projects and planning grants will benefit cities and towns statewide, improving connectivity and safety for the traveling public as well as providing tangible economic benefits.

There is an ongoing interest in making communities and streets work better for all modes of transportation. Especially in downtowns and village centers, municipalities are answering a call for better conditions for walking and bicycling. “Walking and bicycling, especially for the many short trips that are made, are a great way to reduce congestion and to provide an opportunity for physical activity for both Vermonters and visitors.” said VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager Jon Kaplan. “We see a positive impact on property values, tourism, and business growth, in addition to reductions in traffic congestion, improvements in public health and a reduction in personal transportation costs.”

VTrans annually awards millions of federal dollars through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, with the goal to provide safe and convenient facilities for those Vermonters who desire alternative transportation opportunities. According to the 2009 National Household Travel Survey, national participation in walking and biking for transportation has risen by 25%.

Included in this year’s awards is a pilot to fund small-scale improvements using 100% state funds. These smaller projects address critical safety needs, such as pedestrian crossings and filling critical sidewalk gaps. It is hoped that these small projects can be constructed quickly with a minimum of delays. Small scale projects were awarded in South Hero, Burlington, Swanton, Williston, Groton and Jericho.

Interest in the program has been high, with over \$16 million in proposed projects applied for. This year’s funding will go toward a number of different construction projects including off street paths in Bennington, Rutland City, Colchester and Jericho, new or expanded sidewalks in West Rutland, Middlebury, Alburgh, Pittsford and Burlington, as well as streetscape improvements in Manchester. Furthermore, scoping studies in eleven municipalities will be conducted to identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements for future funding opportunities.

To learn more about the program and see a complete list of this year’s grant recipients visit: (<http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/bureaus/mab/local-projects/bike-ped>)

