

Transportation and Complete Streets

Goals & Objectives

1. Maintain town roads in good condition as municipal budgeting and natural contingencies allow, with emphasis on the safety of all users and in compliance with State regulations.
2. Provide safe pedestrian access to village resources and businesses with sidewalks and other streetscape amenities.
3. Provide a variety of well-maintained scenic trails and paths throughout the Town.
4. Ensure that the town’s road network can safely accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Strategies

1. Implement necessary improvements for compliance with the Municipal Roads General Permit.
2. Identify and upgrade undersized culverts to prevent washouts. Use best management practices for managing runoff during road construction or reconstruction.
3. Complete a Streetscape Scoping Study to improve pedestrian accessibility, including sidewalks, traffic calming elements and other streetscape amenities. Coordinate with LCIEDC’s S.H.O.R.E. project.
4. Support and participate with the LCIEDC’s S.H.O.R.E project to improve bicycle safety, share the road etiquette and other opportunities to create optimal experiences for cyclists from the Island Line Bike Ferry and local residents.
5. Communicate and coordinate with local residents on planned road improvements.
6. Support regional cooperation on trails development, interconnectivity of trails and connectivity of trails with destinations in order to provide non-motorized means of travel.
7. When conversions of seasonal homes to year-round occupancy are proposed, ensure that adequate all season access is provided for the occupants as well as for emergency vehicles as part of the zoning approval process for conversions.
8. Support Safe Routes to School and other walking projects.
9. Coordinate with VTrans on pedestrian accessibility and the need for reduced speeds and a crosswalk near the former Apple Island Resort property.
10. Support public and private policies, programs or other efforts that promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel such as public transit improvements, car-sharing, telecommuting, flexible work schedules and school bus usage.
11. Support the construction of an additional park and ride lot near Exit 17.
12. Support and coordinate with CIDER on providing transportation for elderly, disabled or other non-drivers.

Transportation

The purpose of the South Hero transportation plan is to provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, the vibrant Village areas, and the rural character of South Hero. The plan shall include the maintenance and necessary development of roads, public transit options and facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists of all ages and abilities. It is more efficient

to accommodate all modes at the planning and design stage rather than try to retrofit.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is an to planning, design, construction and maintenance of our roadway network to consider all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. Context and current or potential travel patterns need to be considered in determining the appropriate way to meet the needs of all modes of transportation. Not every street or

road will be used by a wide variety of modes, but a complete streets approach considers all users, and seeks desirable, practical and affordable improvements that will be accepted by the community.

Roads & Vehicle Traffic

The town maintains 22.09 miles of town roads with the use of town owned equipment, a full-time road foreman and 2 other full-time employees. The Selectboard appoints a Road Commissioner who directs the work done by the road crew. The budget is set by the Selectboard, approved by voters, and supported by taxes and approximately \$55,000 in state aid. Approximately 14 town roads are paved and 2 are gravel. The decision to pave a gravel road is currently balanced between maintaining a rural aesthetic, slower speeds, the convenience of blacktop and the availability of funds.

U.S. 2, a Federal Highway, traverses for about five and a half 5.783 miles along the western and northern side of the town. There is also state highway, VT 314, connecting US 2 to the ferry in New York State (1.592 miles in South Hero). Vermont Agency of Transportation completes actual and estimated traffic counts. The count shows an increase in traffic on Route 2 from 2019 to 2021 based on an actual count, from 8,837 to 9,156. It estimated a decrease in 2020, likely reflecting less travel during the pandemic. The northern mile of Route 2 and 314 are showing a decrease from 2019 to 2021, but it is based on estimated counts.

There are a large number of privately owned and maintained roads in the Town. The Town provides services on town highways only. New private roads and upgrades to support new development are required to comply with the Town's Road Standards. The Town is not in the practice of accepting new town roads and is not obligated to, regardless of whether the private road is in compliance with town road standards.

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In response to the Municipal Roads General Permit implemented as a result of the Vermont Clean Water Act (Act 64, 2015) to reduce stormwater runoff and erosion on local roads, South Hero has accessed and will continue to seek funding through the Agency of Transportation Grants In Aid Program to complete stone lined ditches and other important road improvement projects that improve stormwater management and the resiliency of local roads.

Travel to Work and Commuting

The majority of workers living in South Hero (over 60%) travel to work in Chittenden County, with only 9% remaining in South Hero for employment. As a result, over 60% of commuters have over a 20-minute drive.

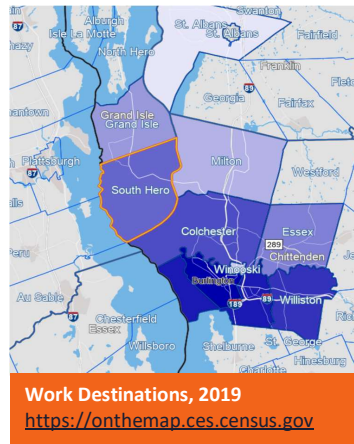


Table X. Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (VTRANS)

Route	Start Location	End Location	2019	2020	2021	
US2	Grand Isle Town Line	MM 1.158	6,111	Est. 5,176	E 5,172	Actual
US 2	MM 1.158	Milton Town Line 5.573	8,837	Actual 7,485	E 9,156	Actual
VT314	Route 2 intersection	Grand Isle Town Line 1.592	3,242	Est. 2,746	E 3,111	Estimate

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

South Hero is committed to ensuring a complete streets approach with roadway projects in the town. In the village specifically, this will mean the design and construction of improvements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In the rural areas of town, appropriate context sensitive solutions that factor in all users of the road will be employed.

South Hero’s roads attract a significant number of pedestrians and bicyclists. There are 4,398 feet of existing sidewalk along the north and south sides of Route 2 in the center of South Hero Village, there are no other dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities (other than off road trail networks). 1,604 linear feet of sidewalk were added since 2017. The village is committed to expanding the network of pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

South Hero’s appeal as a destination for visitors who want to spend a day exploring by bike has been amplified by the Local Motion Bike Ferry, which brings 250+ cyclists into South Hero on weekend days in the summer (200+ during the week).

In 2021, the Lake Champlain Islands Economic Development Corporation received a Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborate grant to:

- Better manage and grow cycling and pedestrian activity in the Town of South Hero,
- Reduce friction between cyclists, motorists, residents, and local businesses in South Hero, and
- Maximize the economic impact of cycling and pedestrian traffic on the South Hero economy.

This project will result in a plan for townwide improvements for bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, connection and etiquette.

Specific to South Hero Village and Keeler Bay Village, the Town has received a grant from the VT Bicycle & Pedestrian Program to develop a scoping study for streetscape improvements in the villages that will calm traffic, improve pedestrian safety and the overall design of the streetscape for pedestrian and bicycle users. This scoping study will start in 2023.

Why Complete Streets?

- 🚲 Streets that accommodate all users are safer for everyone, including automobile drivers and passengers.
- 🚲 Complete Streets can provide greater mobility and accessibility to those without a car.
- 🚲 Complete streets can offer a choice for less costly modes of transportation, which has economic benefit to individuals or families.
- 🚲 Active travel (walking and bicycling) can improve health and provide needed daily exercise.
- 🚲 It is more efficient to accommodate all modes at the planning and design stage and correct safety issues for non-automobile road users, rather than retrofit after the fact.

Adapted from Complete Streets: A VT Guide for Municipalities, VT Dept. of Health, 2012

Additionally, South Hero Land Trust (SHLT) and the SH Recreation Commission have developed several public access trails, and are now working on a linked network of pedestrian and cycling trails that will connect local parks and beaches to the downtown.



Pedestrian access in the villages was an important priority to residents responding to the South Hero Town Plan Survey. 90% of respondents supported the vision of safe pedestrian crossings and 83% supported the vision of a walkable village with connected and well-maintained safe sidewalks. In an open-ended question about what residents would like to see changed in South Hero, 14% referenced bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Throughout the community engagement process for the plan update, residents referenced walkability within the villages as well as bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the villages as an important goal.

Community Transportation


Commuter Parking. There is one park and ride lot in South Hero on the east side of Route 2 north of Keeler Bay. Park and ride lots allow commuters to access car and vanpool options to save vehicle miles traveled and reduce carbon emissions.

Senior and Special Needs Transportation. C.I.D.E.R., an acronym for Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources, is a local organization dedicated to providing transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities in order to help them remain independent. CIDER provides paratransit transportation to critical needs such as to medical appointments.

Public Transportation. There are no regional public transit routes that directly service South Hero, nor does the Town provide any public transportation for its residents (other than the services offered by CIDER). The closest transit stop is located at the Chimney Corners Park and Ride in Milton, which provides service on Green Mountain Transits Milton Commuter (Route 56) or the St. Albans Link Express (Route 96) to Winooski and Burlington. The Town supports a new proposed State Park and Ride off of Interstate 89 Exit 17 in Colchester.

This new Park and Ride would be on the west side of Interstate 89 and would offer easy access to South Hero residents.

The Town supports the expansion of public transportation in South Hero, including expansion of flexible and micro transit options.



As part of the South Hero Town Plan Survey, roughly half of residents stated they would or were unsure of if they would use public transit. The most common reasons for wanting to use public transit were for appointments and transit connections. Almost 2/3s of those interested in using public transit were only interested in occasional use. Micro-transit or other flexible public transit options may be able to address these public transit needs.

Ferries. The Lake Champlain Transportation Company provides year-round ferry service between the town of Grand Isle and Plattsburgh, New York. The ferry dock is located on VT 314 in the Town of Grand Isle. Route 314 is an important link for the ferry traffic traveling to US 2 and I-89.

Air and Rail. Amtrak provides passenger rail service out of the St. Albans and Burlington depot on the Vermonter line which extends down to Washington, D.C. via Boston. A new route was added in 2021 with service to New York City. The Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, the Plattsburgh International Airport in Plattsburgh, and the Trudeau Airport in Montreal provide air service to the region. There is one identified water airstrip, West of Stave Island. Airstrips and helipads are not compatible with the quiet rural nature of South Hero. **New airstrips and helipads shall not be built in South Hero unless they are designated for emergency use only.**

Commented [EK1]: Language to enable zoning

