

Transportation

A safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation system is essential to our community, connecting residents, visitors, businesses, and recreational destinations. While the Town has long invested in maintaining roads, from our first locally funded improvements in 1797, our rural setting limits options for rail or air travel, and public transit, biking, and pedestrian routes remain limited. As a result, personal vehicles are the primary mode of travel, influencing traffic patterns, where development occurs, and how public facilities are located and designed. Planning for an efficient and sustainable transportation network is necessary to support our future growth, preserve our character, and meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

Transportation planning is a collaborative effort among local officials, regional partners, state and federal agencies, and private landowners and developers. Effective planning strengthens the Town's ability to responsibly manage growth, support community and economic development, enhance health and safety, and ensure accessibility and efficiency. To help address community concerns and increasing traffic pressures, the Town commissioned a comprehensive Stowe Highway Capacity & Congestion Evaluation by Stantec in 2023. The study's findings and recommendations form the foundation of this transportation element. As we continue to grow and welcome visitors, stronger coordination between land use planning and transportation policy will be essential to improving walkability, expanding transit options, enhancing safety, and preserving the mobility that contributes to our quality of life.

This chapter provides an overview of our transportation network, including state highways, local roads, public transit, traffic safety, and non-motorized travel, and assesses current conditions and emerging challenges.

Roads & Highways

Roadways constitute the most significant component of our local transportation network. There are approximately 190 miles of private and public roads in Stowe, of which the Town provides year-around maintenance for over ±81.4 miles, or almost 51%. All Town Highways in Vermont are classified as Class 1, 2, 3, or 4, based on their use, maintenance responsibilities, and standards. In addition to Town Highways, there are almost ±14 miles of state-maintained roads, approximately ±75 miles of private roads, and ±6.56 miles of state forest roads. See [Map #](#) in the appendix for the location of our public highways and transportation infrastructure.

Road Classification	Mileage
State Highways (Rt.100 & 108)	13.9
Class 1 Town Highways	1.549
Class 2 Town Highways	14.37
Class 3 Town Highways	64.63
Class 4 Town Highways	9.91
Legal Trail	4.76
State Forest Roads	±6.6
Private Roads	±75
Total	±190.7

Town Highways

Maintaining and enhancing our local road network in a safe and cost-effective manner is an important community responsibility. Our Town Highways are generally in good condition and adequate to accommodate current traffic volumes. An ongoing program of maintenance and reconstruction is still necessary to maintain a high level of service and address minor deficiencies. The Town does not presently maintain a formal long-term road improvement program, however the

Selectboard, Town Manager, and Public Works Department work closely together to plan and schedule road maintenance projects in a cost-effective manner that minimizes year-to-year fluctuations in the municipal property tax rate. To support these efforts, the Town uses a pavement management system to guide road maintenance and improvement projects.

Since the Mayo Farm Road was constructed in 1994, and the Moscow and Barrows roads were designated as an alternative route from Route 100 to the Mountain Road, the Town has pursued a program of creating an interconnected network of minor collector roads as an alternative to major capacity increases to existing roadways. The most recent road connection was made when Depot Street was extended to Thomas Lane in 1998. Initially developed as a private road, the Town took over ownership in 2008. While the Town recognizes the need for additional and improved transportation infrastructure, such projects must be carefully designed and balanced to preserve our small-town character and avoid large-scale roadway widening or other projects that would diminish the unique qualities that make our community special.

The Town Highway Department maintains over 80 miles of local roads and bridges. Currently, the department is staffed with nine full-time positions and has a fiscal year 2026 budget of \$2,964,053, the largest of any Town department. The Town Garage located on the River Road, next to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, is the principle municipal transportation facility. The garage was constructed in 1979 and contains the Highway Department's vehicles and equipment, as well as providing office and employee areas. The space is limited because of the increasing number of municipal vehicles and equipment needed to provide road maintenance. The Moscow Garage, located on the Moscow Road, is used to store buses for the area's public transportation needs. The town dog kennels are also located here.

Regular maintenance activities of Town Highways include the grading and ditching of roads, replacement of culverts, and winter snow removal. Potential funding sources used for maintenance include the State AOT programs such as: Better Roads, District Class 2 Highway Paving, District Structure Assistance, Bicycle/Pedestrian Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Other sources that may have funding for eligible projects include the ANR Ecosystem Restoration Program and various State emergency preparedness and mitigation programs.

The Town has received emergency funding in recent years to address damage from multiple storm events and declared disasters. These flooding events have caused significant damage to the local roads, often requiring costly repairs or full replacements. As extreme weather events become more frequent and intense, a trend expected to continue with climate change, the Town recognizes the need to employ best management practices to ensure the long-term, sustainable maintenance. Such practices include constructing or replacing structures with: (a) bridges; (b) larger-diameter culverts; (c) culverts designed to handle a minimum VT Agency of Transportation (VTrans) design storm while allowing passage of sediment, ice, and debris; and (d) other road maintenance measures, such as properly graded ditches and slopes, in accordance with Town road and bridge standards outlined in the most recent VTrans Handbook for Local Officials. In addition to improving our resilience and reducing long-term repair costs, these measures provide ecological benefits by removing barriers to fish, aquatic organisms, and terrestrial wildlife along stream corridors intersected by roads.

The importance of road and bridge standards are also reflected by the ongoing rule making under Act 64, particularly the development of the Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP). The Town has maintained compliance with the MRGP since its initial adoption and, in 2019, hired a consultant to conduct a comprehensive inventory of hydrologically connected road segments. This inventory has guided prioritizing annual maintenance projects. Each year, the Town actively pursues grant opportunities aimed at maintaining these sensitive road segments, including the Grants in Aid and Better Back Roads programs. The State requires that each Town complete a re-assessment of their hydrologically connected segments by the end of October 2027. The Town has secured grant funding to support this effort. These coordinated actions demonstrate our continued commitment to sustainable road management, environmental protection, and long-term infrastructure resilience.

Scenic Roads

To preserve the scenic character of our community, the Selectboard adopted a Scenic Roads Policy in 2013 to guide the repair, maintenance, and upgrades of designated scenic roads. While the reasons for designating a road as scenic are specific to each individual case, common features that contribute to a road's scenic character, including stone walls and canopy trees, are often found within the right-of-way. As such, they are sometimes susceptible to damaging road maintenance practices, including removal, to accommodate widening, ditching and/or paving. The policy directs the Highway Department on routine maintenance activities, such as ditching, grading, and tree trimming, while ensuring that any work with the potential to substantially alter a road's distinctive scenic features is first reviewed and approved by the Selectboard at a public meeting. This approach balances the preservation of our scenic roads for current and future generations with the need for safe and effective everyday maintenance.

State Highways

Two state highways, VT Route 100 and VT Route 108, serve as our primary connections to neighboring communities and carry our highest traffic volumes. VTrans is responsible for the maintenance and management of these roadways and has the legal authority to regulate access. Certain portions of these state highways are classified as Class 1 Town Highways: Route 100 from the Stowe Police Department north to just before Shaw's grocery store, and Route 108 from its intersection with Route 100 north to the historic village boundary, near the Field Guide Lodge. The Town is responsible for maintaining these Class 1 road segments.

VT Route 100 runs north-south along the length of Vermont, roughly parallel to the Green Mountains, and passes through the heart of Stowe. It links the community southward to Waterbury and I-89 and northward to Route 15 in Morristown. This corridor has long served as a principal local transportation route, connecting the town to the region since the arrival of its earliest settlers.

VT Route 108, also known as Mountain Road, begins at its intersection with Route 100 near Stowe village center and extends northward through the valley, following the West Branch of the Little River, before climbing into Smugglers' Notch, a scenic mountain pass that connects Stowe to the northern towns of Cambridge and Jeffersonville. This two-lane roadway passes through residential and commercial areas, forested landscapes, and recreational areas, serving both local traffic and visitors accessing Stowe Mountain Resort and other outdoor recreation destinations.

Access Management

Access management is essential for maintaining safe, efficient, and reliable roadways. By carefully controlling the location, design, and number of driveways and intersections, it reduces traffic conflicts, improves travel flow, enhances safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and preserves the functionality of both local and state highways. Effective access management also supports thoughtful land development while preserving the character and livability of the community. Several techniques for managing highway access, most of which may be applied through the Town's land use regulations and road policies, include:

- Minimum sight distances at driveway or street intersections;
- Maximum number of driveways per lot;
- Mandatory shared driveways;
- Maximum curb-cut widths;
- Minimum on-site parking, shared-parking, and parking design;
- Minimum areas for loading and unloading; and
- Curbing and landscaping to visually define and enhance access points.

Approval by the Department of Public Works is required for access on Town Highways, and by VTTrans for access onto state highways. Ongoing evaluation and careful management of access through municipal ordinances and planning processes help balance the needs of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, while improving overall safety and roadway efficiency.

Regional Overview

The Town participates in regional transportation planning through the Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which includes representatives from all towns in Lamoille County. The TAC identifies and develops solutions to local and regional transportation challenges, promotes an integrated and sustainable transportation system, and helps prioritize projects with VTTrans for inclusion on the State Capital List for funding. It also oversees the LCPC's transportation program, serves as a liaison between local communities and VTTrans, and provides input on transportation issues important to the region.

Green Mountain Byway

The Green Mountain Byway is a scenic corridor that traverses Stowe, Morristown, Hyde Park, Johnson, Cambridge, and Waterbury, connecting travelers to Vermont's Green Mountains. First designated in 2009 and expanded in 2018, the Byway is recognized for its scenic, historic, cultural, and economic significance to the region. This scenic byway includes forests, rivers, farmland, mountain vistas, historic structures, recreational facilities, local businesses, and other popular attractions. While the Byway and its associated plans are non-regulatory, the Green Mountain Byway Corridor Management Plan (2018) highlights the importance of preserving these intrinsic resources and provides guidance to maintain the scenic, cultural, and recreational qualities of the corridor for current and future generations.

Traffic

Our heaviest traffic is primarily experienced along VT-108/Mountain Road, Stowe Village, and near our major recreational destinations during ski season, fall foliage, and summer weekends. These seasonal peaks, when visitor volumes far exceed our normal daily traffic, contribute to slower travel, increased vehicle idling, and safety challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. Congestion

affects emergency response, reduces public transit reliability, and diminishes the overall experience for residents and visitors. As traffic volumes grow with increased tourism and regional development, the Town faces mounting pressure to address these challenges in ways that balance mobility and safety while preserving the community's small-town character.

The recent Highway Capacity & Congestion Evaluation by Stantec used traffic modeling and capacity analysis to understand how much growth our local road network can handle. Capacity analysis estimates how much traffic a road or intersection can manage and how well it functions under different conditions. It compares the number of vehicles trying to use a road or intersection with the space available. Performance depends on factors such as the number of lanes, lane width, signal timing, and driver response times. Intersections are rated using a "Level of Service" (LOS), which measures the average delay drivers experience, from smooth, free-flowing traffic (A) to heavy congestion and long waits (F).

The capacity analysis documented that most intersections operate reasonably well (LOS D or better), except the following which experience significant delays:

- Moscow Road onto VT 100: LOS E in the afternoon peak
- Park Street onto VT 100: LOS F in the morning peak, LOS E in the afternoon
- School Street onto VT 100: LOS F in both morning and afternoon peaks
- Luce Hill Road onto VT 108: LOS F in both peaks
- Cottage Club Road onto VT 108: LOS E in the afternoon peak

The capacity analysis showed that even though overall traffic was lower during the study period (Presidents Day weekend 2023), several intersections still had very long delays during the late-day peak. This matches what we experience on many roads and highlights the problems that occur when large numbers of cars are leaving the Stowe Mountain Resort area, at the same time others are traveling around to shop, eat, or reach their lodging. It also points out the major choke points in the system, locations that will experience even worse backups when traffic levels return to what they were in 2019 and 2022.

Traffic modeling was also used to better understand how much growth our road network can handle during busy morning and afternoon periods. Several key intersections, along VT 100 at Park Street, School Street, Moscow Road, and VT 108 at Luce Hill Road and Cottage Club Road, already experience significant delays during peak hours. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to see how traffic would respond to increases of 5% up to 50%, with two scenarios that included planned improvements such as new traffic signals and a proposed roundabout. Results showed that even a small 5% increase in traffic could lead to failing movements at certain intersections. This does not mean development must stop, however it does highlight the need to plan for improvements at affected intersections, even if the new development is not immediately nearby. For growth focused along VT 108, the intersections at Luce Hill Road and Moscow Road will likely need upgrades to handle additional traffic. Once peak-hour traffic increases by about 15–20%, the intersection at VT 108 and Luce Hill Road may require more substantial improvements beyond signals to prevent serious congestion. Overall, cumulative development that adds more than roughly 173 peak-hour trips, especially along VT 108, should be carefully evaluated to ensure the road network continues to operate safely and efficiently.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming refers to roadway design strategies that reduce vehicle speeds, enhance pedestrian safety, and create a more comfortable and attractive streetscape in developed areas. Common traffic calming measures include narrowing travel lanes, widening or adding sidewalks, installing medians, on-street parking, roundabouts, raised or textured crosswalks, bulbouts, street trees, and street furniture. Traffic calming is particularly important at busy intersections where pedestrian crossings intersect with turning movements, on streets with high traffic volumes that also support pedestrian activity, and along neighborhood or rural residential roads where slower speeds improve safety and livability.

Parking

Ensuring adequate and well-managed parking in Stowe's village centers has long been a community priority. Public parking supports local businesses and village vitality, promotes efficient land use, reduces congestion by minimizing circling for spaces, and enhances pedestrian circulation. Parking supply and management directly impact residents, visitors, and businesses: excessive free parking can encourage unnecessary vehicle trips, while insufficient parking can frustrate users, increase traffic congestion, and discourage visitation.

The Highway Capacity & Congestion Evaluation assessed public parking in Stowe Village, assessing both supply and operations during summer and fall weekends. The study found that overall parking availability is sufficient, with ample on-street parking along Depot Street south of Park Street, and public off-street spaces behind the Green Mountain Inn. The parking area in Memorial Park was also lightly used. However, observations noted that some drivers experienced difficulty locating available parking spaces, with circulation between Main Street and Pond Street and confusion over whether the Post Office lot was available for public use. Based on these observations, the report recommended improving signage, wayfinding, and overall parking management in a village. These recommendations have been incorporated into the transportation policies and action tasks in this plan, supporting a more efficient and user-friendly parking system for the village.

Transportation Alternatives

The Town is committed to providing a transportation system that accommodates all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders. In alignment with Vermont's Complete Streets Act (Act 34 of 2011), the Town strives to ensure that all municipally managed transportation projects consider the needs of every traveler. These "complete streets" principles emphasize designing and constructing transportation improvements that safely and efficiently integrate multiple modes of travel, supporting mobility, accessibility, and community livability.

Public Transportation

Among the most important alternative traffic management strategies is the support of operation of the local public transportation network. The Chittenden County Transit Authority/DBA the Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) and Rural Community Transportation (RCT), provides the public transit service in Stowe and the surrounding Lamoille and Washington counties. Routes serving the Stowe area include:

Mountain Road Shuttle
Morrisville Shopper

Route 100 Commuter from Morrisville to Waterbury

The Mountain Road Shuttle is one of the most successful routes in GMTA's entire service area. The shuttle runs from November to April providing daily service from the Lower Village, through Stowe Village, to Stowe Mountain Resort. In 2005, the service was made free of charge, contributing to a significant increase in ridership, from roughly 30,000 riders per season to 108,420 in the 2023–2024 season. The route provides a valuable service to visitors and to our seasonal employees, many of whom do not have their own transportation. The shuttle is funded through a combination of state and federal subsidies and contributions from the Town's operating budget (\$38,659 in FY26) and Stowe Mountain Resort (\$243,792 in '25/'26 season). As mitigation for traffic impacts associated with the development of Spruce Peak, Stowe Mountain Resort was required under its Act 250 permit to contribute \$50,000 annually to the shuttle. Starting in November 2026, RCT will assume operation of the Mountain Road Shuttle.

The Morrisville Shopper is a weekday shuttle service run by RCT connecting Morrisville and Stowe. It makes stops at key locations including Hannaford Supermarket, Dollar General, Price Chopper, Big Lots, Copley Hospital, Lamoille Health Partners, and Stowe Town Hall.

The Route 100 Commuter, established in 2005 and operated by RCT, provides a valuable weekday commuter service linking Morrisville to Waterbury, with connections available to Montpelier and Burlington. This bus route includes stops at Stowe Town Hall and Moscow Road/Rt.100.

The RCT Rides Micro-transit program is also available to anyone within the service area in Lamoille County. Currently the program is available to those traveling within Morrisville, Hyde Park Village, Johnson Village, and Elmore. This service provides on demand transit service to all users in the service area for a fare-free taxi-style experience. Users can expect the service to make multiple pickups that are traveling in a similar direction. This service is not limited to medical appointments or restricted by Medicaid eligibility like other programs offered in Lamoille County. Due to the reduction in fixed route services in Lamoille County, Micro-transit provides a more targeted service in fuel efficient cars rather than buses. Through implementation of the RCT Transit Development Plan (2024) the service area of this micro-transit service area will first be expanded to include all of Cambridge, Johnson, Stowe, and Morristown. The expansion would then cover Elmore, Wolcott, and extend into Caledonia County. Finally, the Towns of Hyde Park, Eden, Belvidere, and Waterville will be included in the service area. Once the full transit development plan is implemented, all of Lamoille County will be served by RCT Micro-transit. This expansion process is anticipated to happen over a 10-year time frame. For more information on Micro-transit service in Lamoille County visit <https://www.riderct.org/>.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Circulation, Sidewalks & Paths

Expanding opportunities for improved pedestrian and bicycle travel provides substantial community benefits. Enhanced walkability and bike accessibility strengthen connections between residents, visitors, and local businesses; reduces traffic congestion and vehicle emissions; supports healthy lifestyles; offers valued recreational amenities; and reinforces historic, pedestrian-scaled settlement patterns. In Stowe Village, these patterns are evident in the traditional, compact center served by an extensive sidewalk network. Maintaining and upgrading this infrastructure is essential to sustaining our desired land use pattern of a walkable village core surrounded by a rural landscape. Recent investments have expanded pedestrian access, but continued attention to sidewalk conditions remains a priority.

In 2019, the Town strengthened pedestrian connectivity by adding more than 1,000 feet of new sidewalks and curbing along South Main Street (VT-100). This project was coordinated with municipal water main upgrades to improve fire protection and the VT-100 reconstruction, which included reconfiguring the River Road/South Main Street intersection. Together, these improvements enhanced pedestrian safety and reinforced the link between the Lower Village and Stowe Village.

In 2018, voters approved a \$3.4 million bond to construct sidewalks, curbs, and streetscape amenities along Main Street, paired with the relocation and removal of overhead utility lines and related infrastructure. Completed in 2020, the project significantly improved the aesthetics and walkability of Stowe's historic Main Street.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate the Town's ongoing commitment to improving safety and fostering a more walkable, community-oriented environment.

The Stowe Recreation Path provides an important bicycle and pedestrian transportation route from Stowe Village to the Topnotch meadow, providing access to the service establishments along Mountain Road. The Riverwalk path provides an important bicycle/pedestrian link from Stowe Village to the Lower Village.

Air Service

Stowe residents and visitors are served by the Burlington International Airport, approximately 45 miles away in the City of South Burlington, and the Morrisville-Stowe State Airport, immediately north of the Stowe/Morristown boundary.

The Morrisville–Stowe State Airport, located on VT 100 in Morristown between Morrisville and Stowe, serves area residents, businesses, and visitors. Owned by the State of Vermont and managed by VTrans with a private fixed-base operator handling daily operations, the airport is classified as a Regional Service facility supporting general aviation, charter, and air taxi services. It plays a vital role in connecting the local and regional economy to state and national markets and contributes to tourism and business revenue in Lamoille County.

Rail Service

Rail service is available in Waterbury, with lines running through the Winooski Valley, and Morrisville, where lines parallel the Lamoille River. Amtrak's "Vermont" service to New York and Washington D.C. is available in Waterbury.