



Demand for Biking and Walking in Vermont

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How many people are using our transportation system today for walking or bicycling?

Bicycling and walking are popular outdoor activities in Vermont and throughout the United States. UVM's Vermont Outdoor Recreation Demand Survey (2011) ranks walking and bicycling as two of the most popular recreational activities in Vermont. **42% of Vermont adults walk for recreation, 34% hike, and 23% bicycle.** Frequently our rural roads and streets in our downtowns and village centers are the locations where Vermonters and visitors walk and bike.

People don't just bicycle and walk for recreation in Vermont—in many cases people walk and bicycle for transportation—commuting to work, school and shopping. The National Household Travel Survey (conducted roughly every 10 years), found that **Vermonters took some 87.2 million trips on foot and 9.3 million trips by bicycle in 2009**, and the numbers are increasing. Burlington's bike mode share, which only counts trips to work, is at 6.8% compared to Portland, OR's 6.1%.

Today, Vermont **boasts the second highest percentage of walking commuters of any state** in the country (Alliance for Bicycling & Walking, 2012). **St. Johnsbury has the second highest walk commute rate of any City in Vermont.**

What is the value of walking and biking to the Vermont Economy?

A 2012 report commissioned by VTrans, lacking any comprehensive measure of bicycling and walking activity estimated the 2009 economic impact of walking and biking by looking at events, businesses and infrastructure projects. Together these activities generated a total of \$40 million output and 1,418 jobs. The state budget fiscal impact from bicycle and pedestrian activities in 2009 amounted to a net positive of \$1.6 million of tax and fee revenues for the State of Vermont.

What is the opportunity for more people to walk or bike in the future?

In a 2014 report, 'Where We Ride', from the League of American Bicyclists noted an average increase of 62.8% in bicycle commuting across the nation in the last 10 years. VT ranks 19th in bike commute mode share, and showed a 17% increase over last 10 years, far below the national average.

People for Bikes, is a relatively new organization focused on making biking safe and accessible for all riders. In Dec 2014 they surveyed 16,193 U.S. adults and found that **34% of all US adults ride bikes** at least once a year, and of these **32% ride moderately**. Of those who ride for recreation 31% ride moderately, and for transportation, 25% ride moderately. (Moderately, between 25 and 103 days per year)

Few reports exist to evaluate the opportunity for biking at the state level. In October 2015 AARP published the 'Path to Livability' report. This citizen survey had a sample size of 500 respondents, ages 45 and older, drawn from a registered voters in Burlington. Findings include:

- Most (83%) Burlington residents get around by driving themselves or riding with others (33%); **many also walk (68%), ride a bike (41%), or use public transportation (27%).**

- Some Burlington residents say they would be **extremely to very likely to walk (43%) or ride a bike (37%)** if there were better sidewalks, crosswalks and separate lanes for bicyclists.
- 50% of Burlington residents believe there **are street safety issues for bicyclists (51%) and pedestrians (27%)**. The good news is they also believe conditions can be improved!

Studies consistently show that rates of walking and biking are higher among younger age groups, this study focused on those 45+.

Why are people not walking and biking more today?

Bicycling is perceived as a convenient way to travel and many adults say they would like to ride more but concerns about safety pose a significant barrier (People for Bikes, Dec 2014).

52% are worried about being hit by a motor vehicle.

Rates of biking tend to be similar across the socio-economic spectrum, what differs is the reason why people bike, out of need and necessity or by choice.

How safe is Vermont, and how do we compare to other states?

In the last 10 years annual fatalities from traffic accidents in Vermont ranged from 44 to 77. **In 2015 there were 57 fatalities, including 4 bicyclists and 5 pedestrians.** Nationally 2% of all fatalities are bicyclists. Vermont had only 1 bicyclist fatality in the last 10 years, in 2010.

NHTSA publishes traffic safety statistics annually. Statistics currently available online are for 2013. Vermont and five other states are at the top of the list for bicyclist safety, with zero deaths. **Florida is at the bottom of the list with 6.8 fatalities per million. When 2015 data is published Vermont will have a fatality rate of 6.4 per million, moving from the top to the bottom of the list.**

2015 VT Fatal Bike Crash Victims

April 14: Kelly Boe, 55.

April 26: Richard Tom, 47.

June 17: Dr Kenneth Najarian, 60.

Sept. 7: Dr. Robert Agne, 54.

How do we keep people safe on the roads?



For vulnerable users the consequences of any crash are much more severe than for drivers of motor vehicles. At 40mph only 10% of pedestrians will survive a crash.

Local Motion merged with the Vermont Bike and Pedestrian Coalition in 2015 and is now Vermont's statewide advocate for walking and biking.

To make our roads safer and more inviting for everyone we need to use all of the tools in our toolbox. Local Motion's programs include (i) bike skills education for adults and children, (ii) working to improve driver education and developing training for law enforcement officers, (iii) partnering with VTrans to deliver safe streets outreach and community safe-streets plans across the state, (iv) partnering in the development of the new Vermont State Standards for road design, and (v) working directly with communities in Chittenden county to provide walk/bike planning and community support.