

Chapter 8: Transportation

Road maintenance represents the largest portion of the Town budget, and the second largest use of property tax revenues. The location and condition of our roads can be an important factor in determining where people build new homes or start a business.

We can already see the effects of increased traffic. There has been discussion about the possibility of paving more roads. However, there is concern about travel speeds on rural roads, road widening & increased washouts.



The I-89 exit in Middlesex is along the most heavily traveled section of highway in the state and the Middlesex exit is one of the least commercially developed exits in central Vermont. Further commercial development of this area is possible.

With the new bridge to Moretown and the widening of Route 100B completed, we can expect an increase in traffic, especially commercial traffic, through the village.



In Middlesex today, cars are the primary means of transportation, and that means that the condition of our roads is important to all of us.

Middlesex has no Town-owned class one roads. We have 14.2 miles of class two, 33.8 miles of Class 3, an estimated 11.8 miles of Class 4, 3 miles of legal trails, 16.9 miles of State highways, and 19.5 miles of interstate highway. We also have two railroad sidings in the Town.

The key to solving our future transportation problems will be to anticipate and plan for the inevitable growth of the Town and to understand that decisions about our roads will be an important factor in determining if this growth will have positive or negative effects.

Goals, Objectives, & Implementation Strategies

Transportation Goals:

1. Our roads should provide the level of safe reliable access expected in a rural community.
2. Our roads should be safe for multiple uses.
3. The town should have a long-term capital budget for transportation based on established road conditions and annual maintenance costs which proactively plans for the town's future transportation needs.

Objective 1: To have detailed information, updated regularly, about the condition of its roads, its rights of way, and the types and volume of traffic using them.

Implementation Strategies:

- Continue using the mapping technology available through the Regional Planning Commission, the Selectboard and Road Commissioner should continue to gather necessary information to update the GPS Coordinates of town roads. Information should include the location of roads, culverts, private driveways, new housing starts and commercial growth, as well as traffic loads, road conditions, and the annual maintenance schedule. In addition, the areas where access for emergency vehicles and school buses are limited should be identified. An investment of State grant funds or Town funds in this resource will yield cost savings in years ahead.
- Records of public rights of way should be researched and the Town's documentation of all existing ROWs should be updated.

Objective 2: To keep select Class 4 roads available for public use and access.

Implementation Strategy:

- The Selectboard should oversee a survey of all Class 4 town roads and public rights of way and develop a plan to ensure public access for recreation, forestry, and to prevent further deterioration whenever practical.

Objective 3: To set road construction and maintenance standards to protect our investment, our environment, and to provide safe roads.

Implementation Strategies:

- The Selectboard with the recommendations of the Road Commissioner adopted road maintenance and construction standards prescribed by the State for road construction projects. Construction standards should include but are not limited to, road width, visibility, ditching and safety standards. This will provide a basis for estimating the cost of long-term upgrades, protect the Town's investment in its roads, and prevent erosion and damage to streams.

- Scenic vistas, roadsides, and bridges that are publicly owned should be maintained as part of the regular road maintenance program.

Policy:

- Every effort should be made to minimize erosion from roads, particularly near streams and wetlands. Chemicals, including salt, should not be used unless authorized by the Selectboard after consideration of potential damaging impacts on surface water, ground water, plants and animals. Scenic view sites located along public roads should be preserved.

Objective 4: To develop a capital budget to meet the current and future needs of residents.

Implementation Strategies:

- The Selectboard, through its Road Commissioner may, request traffic data and projections on State roads that are on file at the Agency of Transportation for the Center Road near I-89 and the Shady Rill Route 12 intersection. By requesting the most recent data along with past data the Road Commissioner can get an idea of the increases over that period and estimate the effect on our town roads over the next five years. When combined with the information on road conditions and annual maintenance costs the Town will have the information necessary to produce a five year plan with cost projections.
- The Selectboard may work with the Regional Planning Commission on regional transportation planning on identifying programs and funding available for local projects. Existing Agency of Transportation programs include a town bridge program, a culvert replacement program, and a program directed towards non-highway projects including scenic trails, roads, historical sites, and recreation pathways.

Policies:

- There should be ample commuter parking provided at the I-89 interchange.
- The Town's industrial and commercial areas should have adequate parking and well planned traffic flow.