**Vital Communities Upper Valley Transportation Management Association (TMA) and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Joint Stakeholder Workshop on Clean Transportation**

June 11, 2024
Hybrid Meeting: Kilton Library, West Lebanon, NH; Zoom

At their joint workshop on June 11, 2024, the Vital Communities Upper Valley Transportation Management Association (TMA) and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee (UVLSRPC TAC) engaged local transportation stakeholders on barriers to and opportunities for clean transportation. The hybrid session, which included eighteen participants from public works, local businesses, transit agencies, planning/municipal organizations, and non-profit organizations, asked attendees to reflect on three categories: electrification, active transportation, and public transit. Their input will help guide workforce training for the Community Transportation Transitions project, detailed at the end of the summary.

Attendees participated in three activities: 1) personal reflection on barriers to electrification, active transportation, and public transit, 2) small group discussion identifying the top one or two barriers to the three categories, and 3) small group discussion on actions that various sectors (public works, local businesses, transit agencies, planning/municipal organizations, and non-profit organizations) can take to improve clean transportation.

Both the first and second exercise asked participants to identify key barriers to clean transportation. For electrification, TMA and TAC members' responses centered on negative perceptions of electrification fostered by politicization and misinformation. All small groups mentioned distrust of or apprehension toward electrification by employees or the public. Additionally, several attendees mentioned a lack of infrastructure, the cost of electrification, weather dependency, range anxiety, and network design as issues impacting regional electrification.

Participants likewise identified a lack of reliable, safe infrastructure and cultural attitudes as top barriers to active transportation. Infrastructural problems included deficient safety measures, a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, distances between destinations in rural areas, and the need for continual political interest in active transportation. The normalization of being able to drive immediately to and from destinations, the "romance of cars," unwillingness to try new things, and unwillingness to make "last mile" trips comprised the cultural barriers to active transportation. Multiple members noted that many people may have driving networks but not active transportation networks, creating and/or exacerbating willingness to make trips via walking, biking, or wheeling. Several participants highlighted restrictive zoning ordinances as preventing active transportation infrastructure from being built.

Similarly, for public transit use, attendees underscored land use and convenience as top barriers. Regarding land use, participants identified a lack of sidewalks and other key, safe infrastructure necessary to access transit stops as a major issue throughout the region. Convenience, particularly transit hours and stop frequency, emerged as another main topic. A few participants also noted that access to and from rural areas is typically non-existent and when extant, not

necessarily convenient. Other barriers mentioned include a lack of on-demand transit, contractor availability for public transit projects, and a lack of employer-supported transit (which, in itself, can be problematic).

The third exercise asked participants to put on five different "hats" (one from each of the five workforce sectors) and identify solutions to the barriers discussed. Potential solutions, by category, included:

- Public works — procuring increased staff and equipment, having dedicated funding sources, improving grant management, improving and maintaining infrastructure, designing for complete streets, standardizing benches, raising intersections, separating and delineating paths, and implementing tools that make it easy for the public to communicate issues.

- Local businesses — creating commuting incentives, electrifying fleets, offering e-bike subsidies, supporting transit, incentivizing van pools/carpools, charging for parking, promoting e-bike sharing, promoting home/work colocation, installing e-chargers, and allocating resources toward public health.

- Transit agencies — identifying local match sources, working with local employers, working with foundations/the public to fund bus stops/infrastructure, expanding frequency, implementing station standards, promoting safety, including bike racks, increasing rider/potential rider education, beautifying transit, implementing on-demand transit, and improving maps.

- Planning/municipal organizations — utilizing regional plans, working across municipalities, regional entities working with municipalities to achieve grants, hiring/maintaining dedicated advisory staff, improving zoning regulations for mixed use, smart growth, and eliminating parking minimums, regularly connecting with public works, planning for infrastructure prior to development, and improving communications with and providing education for the public.

- Non-profit organizations — advocating and lobbying for clean transportation, engaging with entities that support clean transportation, supporting efforts via means such as data collection including surveying, and traffic counts, and connecting the organization and/or volunteers to entities that could use support.

TMA and TAC members' input from this joint session will help Vital Communities and UVLSRPC design and identify future partners for workforce training sessions. These training sessions serve as a part of the Community Transportation Transitions project, which aims to audit communities on barriers to clean transportation and provide resulting clean transportation implementation plans for these communities. The project sits amongst a cohort of project partners across New England, led by Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships and funded by the Department of Energy.