

Succeeding with Commuters after Intercity Failure

*19th National Rural Public and Intercity Bus
Transportation Conference*

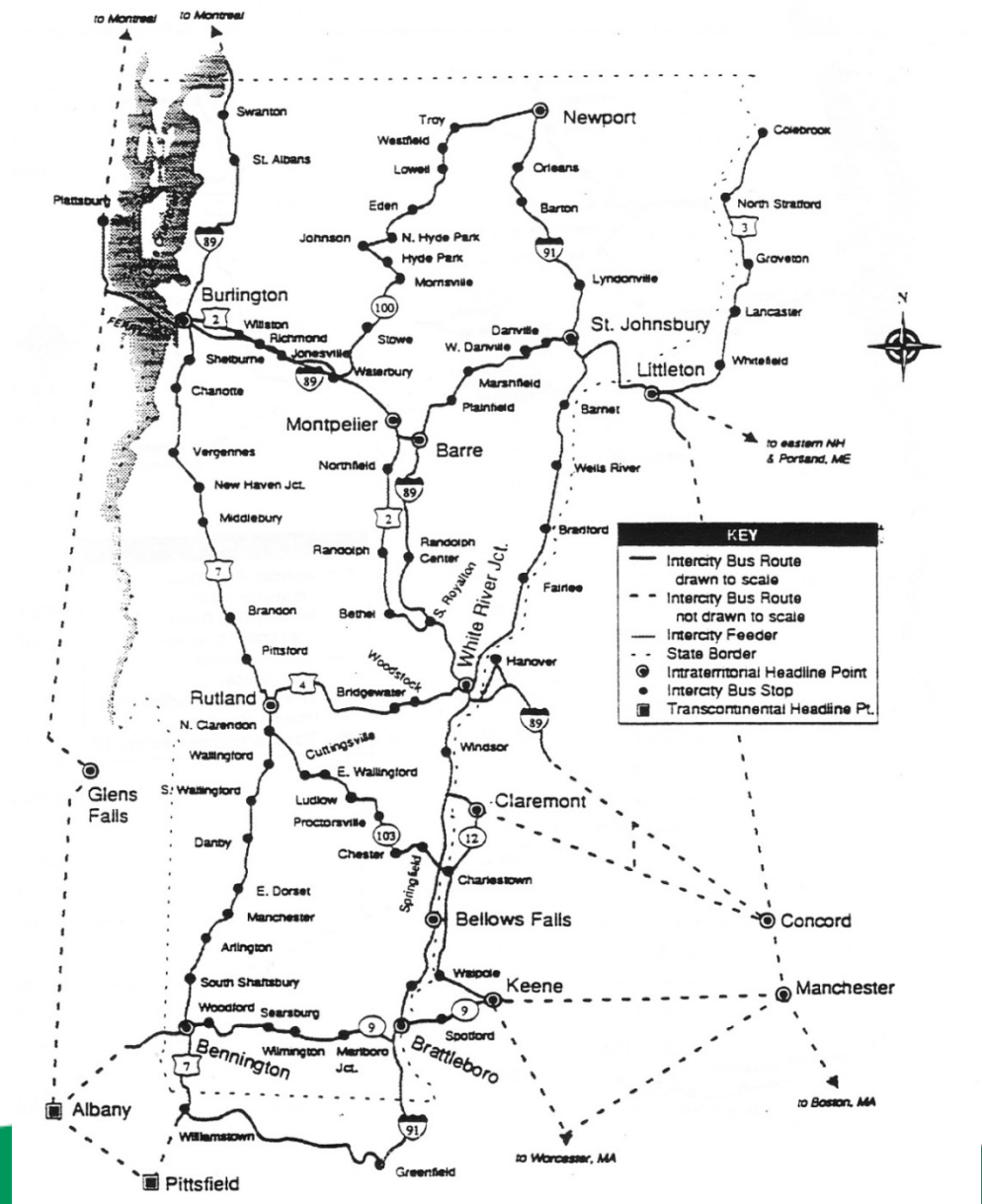
October 25, 2010

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Historical Background

- Period of decline in Intercity Bus service in Vermont began in early 1990s
- Vermont Transit Lines (primary operator)
 - Bought by Greyhound in 1993
 - Subsumed by Greyhound in 2008

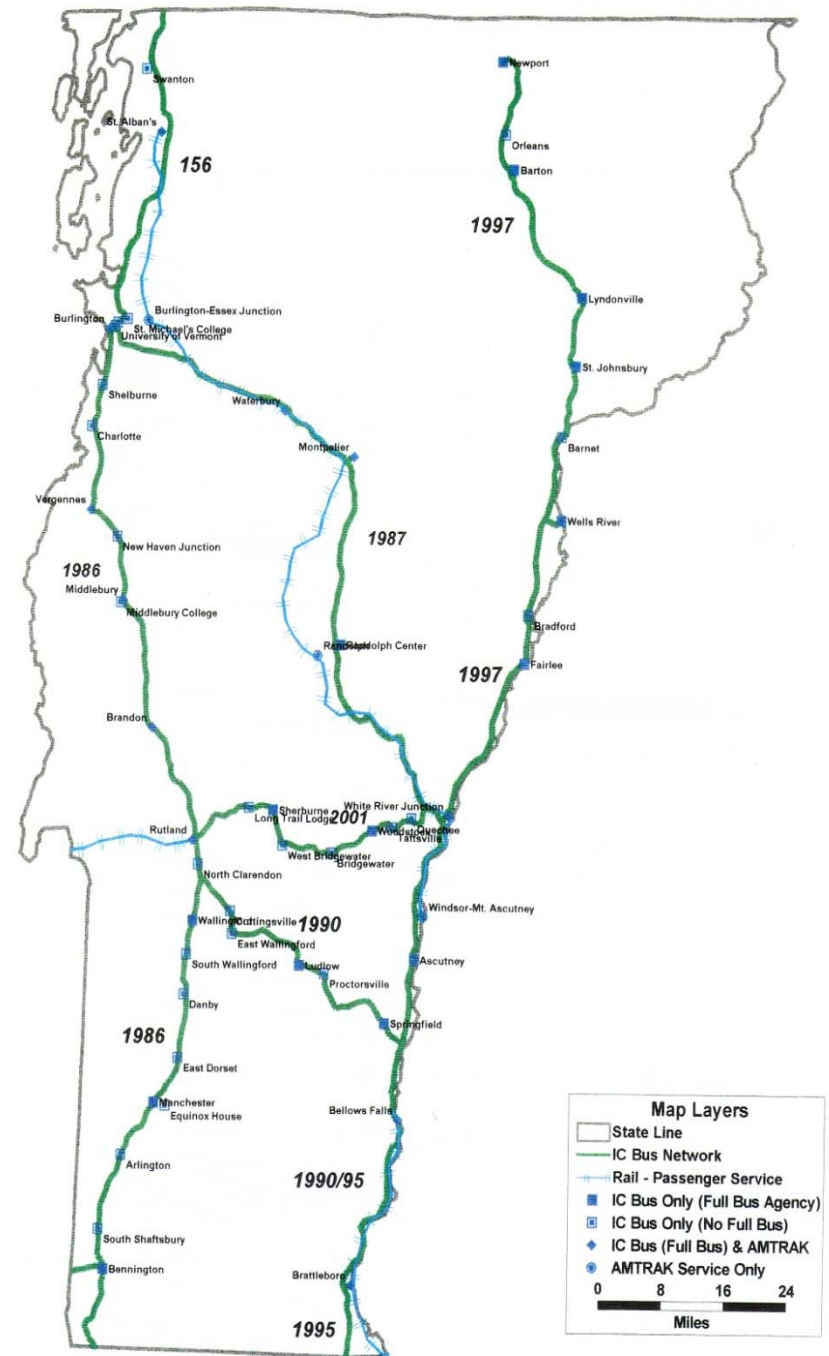
Intercity Service in 1989



Intercity Service in 1996

Dropped Segments

- Waterbury - Newport
- Barre - St. Johnsbury
- Montpelier - Bethel
- Bennington - Brattleboro



Intercity Service in 2010

- Down to three routes with limited service
 - I-89 corridor Montreal to Boston – 4 trips
 - White River Jct. to New York via I-91 – 1 trip
 - Bennington to Albany (Yankee Trails) – 2 trips
- Dropped segments
 - Burlington - Bennington
 - Rutland - Springfield
 - Rutland - White River Junction
 - White River Junction - Newport

Intercity Market Outlook

- Growth is in point-to-point expresses connecting large metro areas (Megabus)
- Other markets flat, at best
 - Remaining routes focus on Interstate highways corridors and park & ride access
 - Largely bypass town centers (unless very convenient to highway)

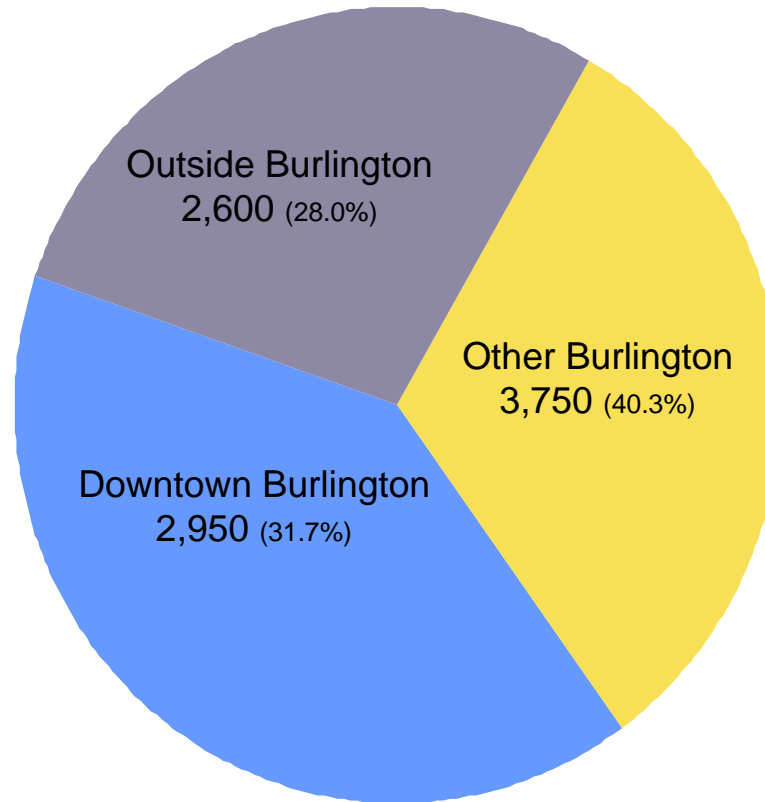
Chittenden County

- Economic engine for state
 - One quarter of Vermont's population
 - One third of Vermont's employment
- City of Burlington
 - Population: 39,000 Employment: 35,000
 - Walk-able, Bike-able,
 - Dense Employment Centers: downtown and hill

CCTA

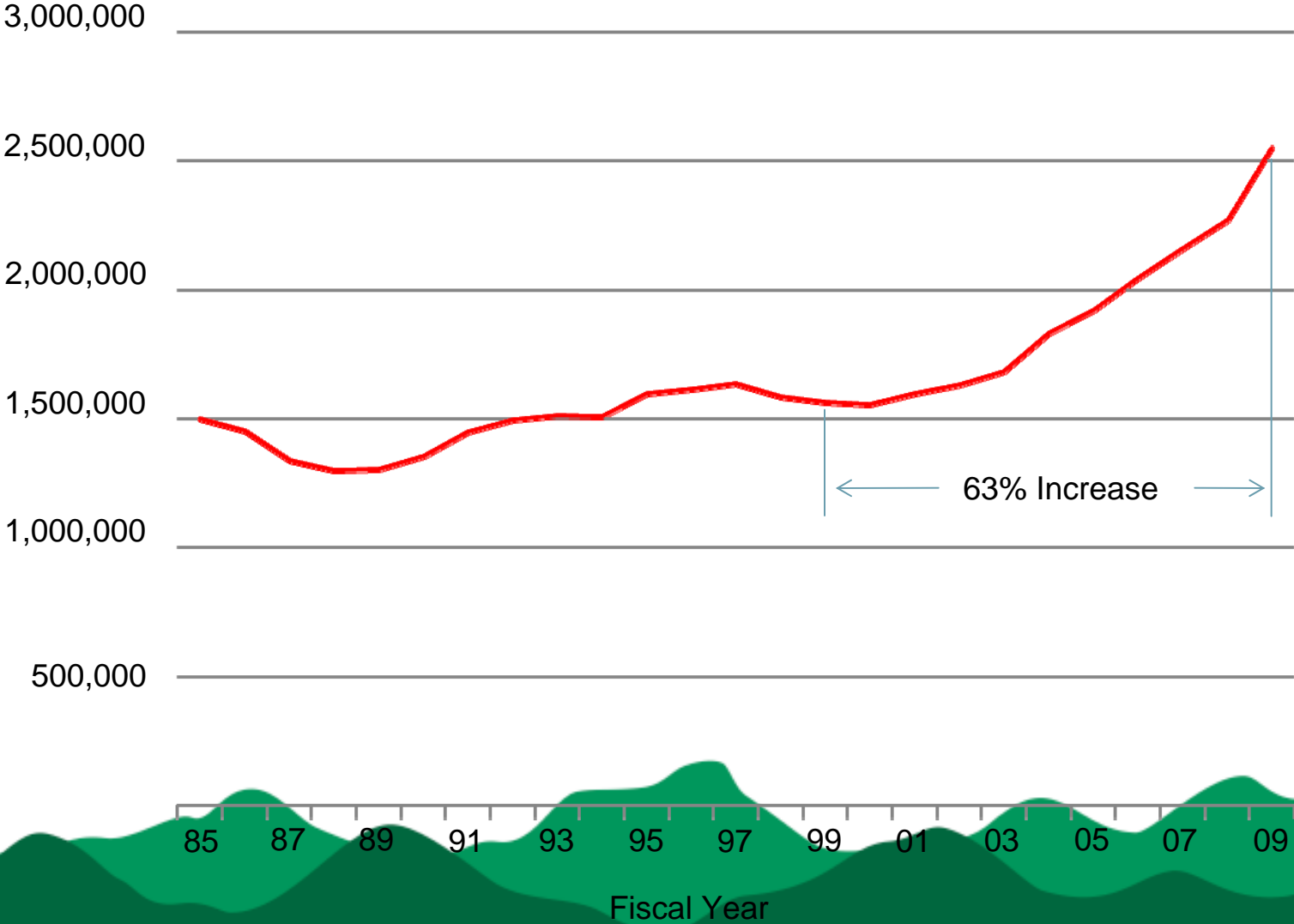
- Chittenden County Transportation Authority
 - Formed in 1973
 - Period of sustained growth since 2001
 - Current peak pullout: 45 buses
 - Annual ridership: 2.5 million

CCTA Average Weekday Total System Boardings = 9,300



CCTA BUS RIDERSHIP

(Annual Ridership)

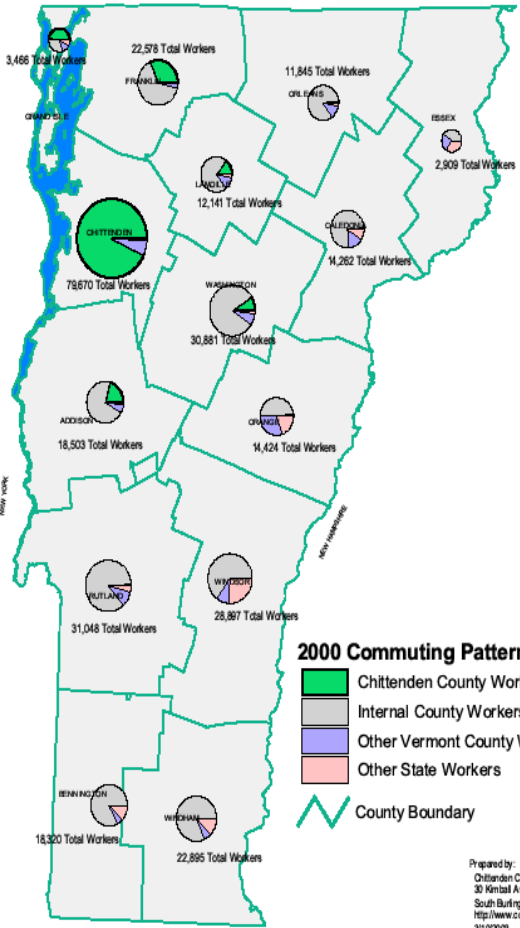


LINK Express

- New type of service for CCTA
- 2003 Short Range Transit Plan laid out commuter express routes between Burlington and surrounding counties
- State of Vermont “new starts” start-up
 - New emphasis in State transit policy on commuter-oriented services

Vermont Residence Based Worker Commuting Patterns

2000 Census Transportation Planning Package Data

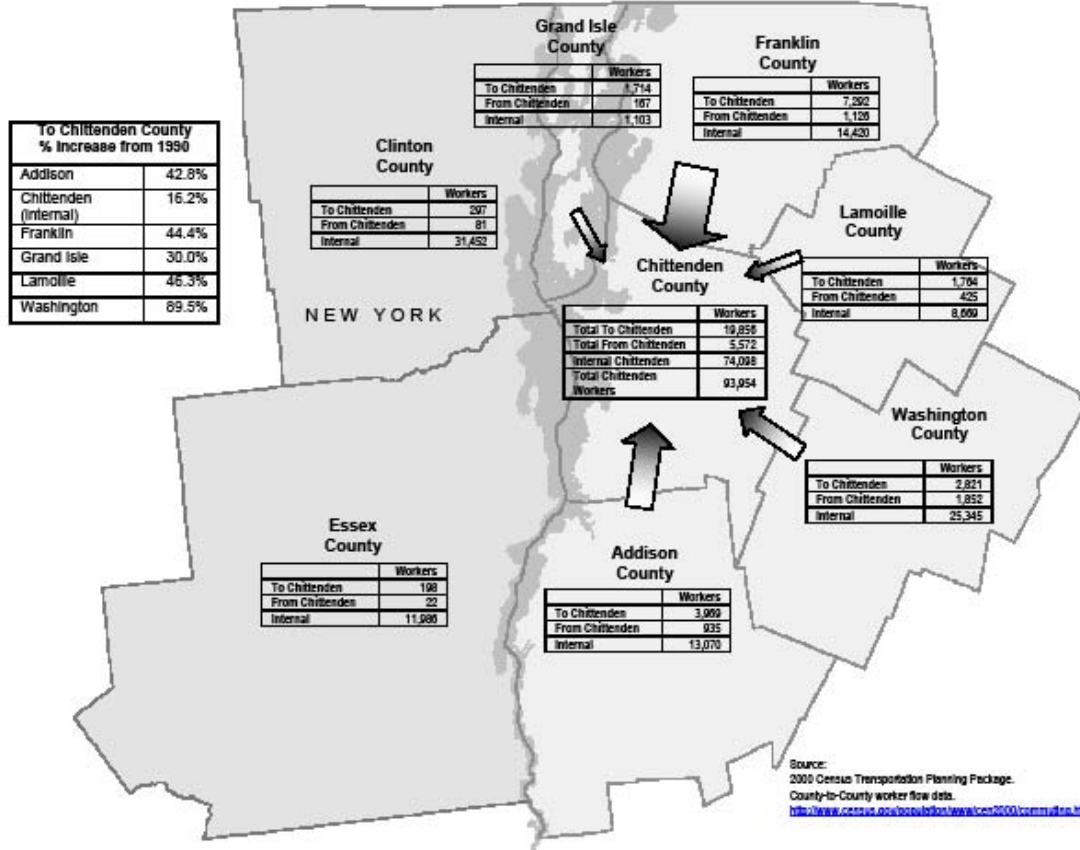


2000 Commuting Patterns

- Chittenden County Workers
- Internal County Workers
- Other Vermont County Workers
- Other State Workers
- County Boundary

Prepared by:
 Chittenden County MPO
 30 Kimball Ave, Suite 206
 South Burlington, VT 05403
<http://www.compo.org/>
 3/18/2008

Chittenden County 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package Worker Flow Data



Source:
2000 Census Transportation Planning Package.
County-to-County worker flow data.
<http://www.census.gov/ipeds/www/cen2000/cmmr/cmmr.html>



Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization

Prepared by:
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3/11/2003

LINK Service Design

- Attract choice riders
 - Minimize travel time
 - Choose convenient trip times
 - Use comfortable vehicles
- Maximize efficiency
 - Serve bidirectional corridors (demand in both directions)

Market Tradeoff #1

- First route: Burlington east to I-89 corridor
- Montpelier and Waterbury?
 - Cannot serve both while maintaining competitive travel time
- Montpelier or Waterbury?
 - Census Journey-to-Work data indicated that WATERBURY was the larger market

Market Tradeoff #2

- Limited funding available → few trips
- Focus on State workers?
 - 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. workday
 - Single largest employer in Montpelier
- Private sector closer to 8-to-5
- Chose private sector as it is a larger market in total

Vehicles



LINK Marketing

- Obtained list of all employers in service area (from Dun & Bradstreet)
- Ongoing outreach to encourage usage
- Special brochures printed for LINK service
- Service upgrades to respond to demand
- Sponsored Give Aways
 - Green Mountain Coffee
 - **Lake Champlain Chocolates**

LINK Riders

- Surveys demonstrate differences from local route riders

| Route | % of Riders with Personal Vehicle Available for Trip | Median Household Income | Cars Owned by Household (per capita) |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Montpelier LINK Express | 77% | \$58,000 | 0.61 |
| CCTA Local Routes | 19% | \$21,000 | 0.31 |

Current LINK System

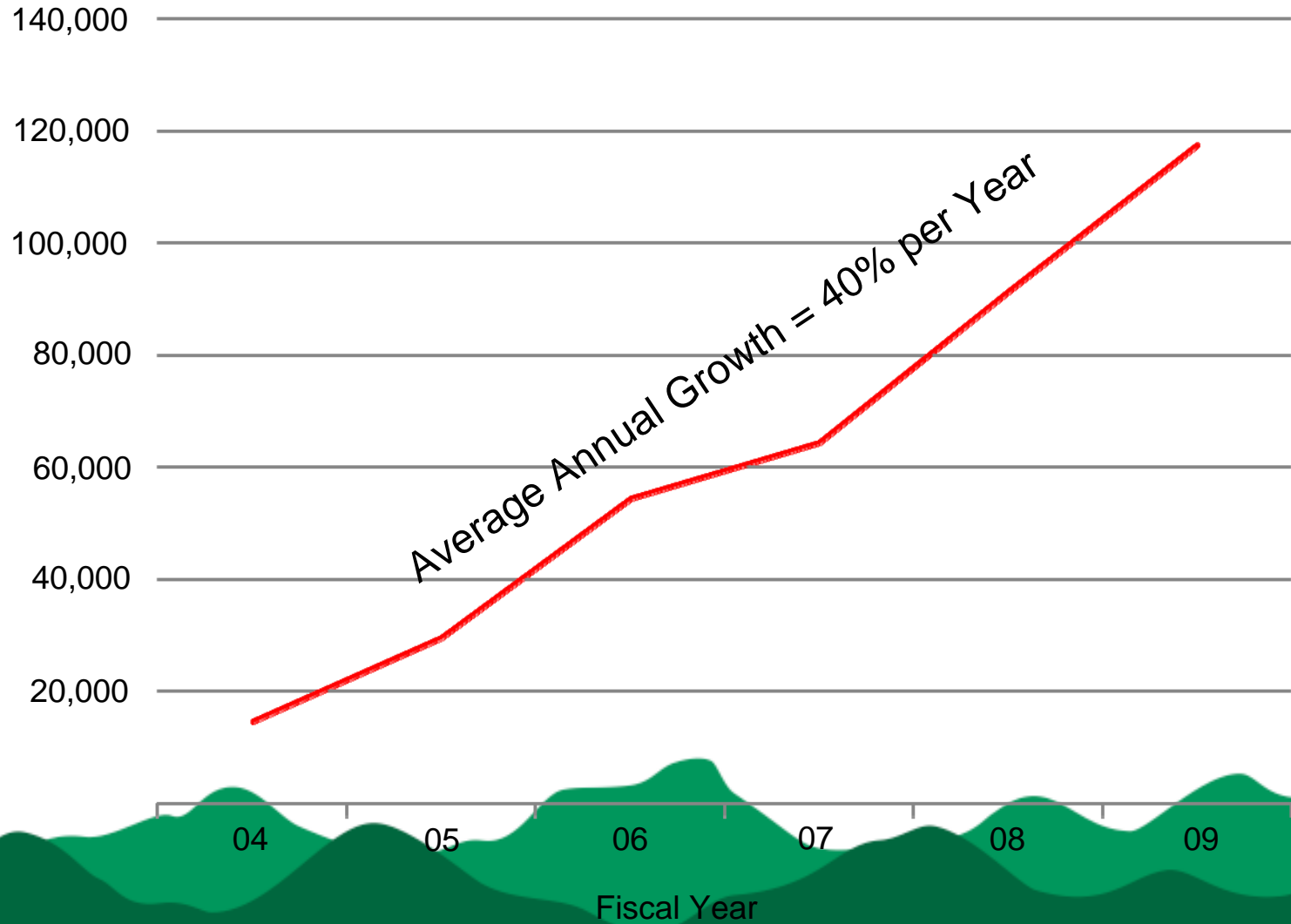
- Three routes

| Route | Start Date | Weekday Round-trips | One-way Length (mi.) | Annual Riders (FY10) |
|------------|------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Montpelier | Sept. 2003 | 9 | 42 | 73,500 |
| Middlebury | Oct. 2004 | 4 | 38 | 20,400 |
| St. Albans | Oct. 2005 | 4 | 33 | 16,300 |

- Intra-county commuter route to Milton began in February, 2010

LINK RIDERSHIP

(Annual Ridership FY 04 to FY09)



Inter-Regional Commuter Routes Statewide

- Upper Valley (to Hanover & Lebanon NH)
 - I-91 south (Conn. River Transit)
 - I-89 N. to Montpelier (Stagecoach)
 - I-89 S. & I-91 north (Stagecoach)
- Bellows Falls-Brattleboro (CRT)
- Bellows Falls-Rutland (CRT)
- Western Corridor (US 7) services
 - St. Albans to Burlington (CCTA)
 - Burlington to Middlebury (CCTA & ACTR)
 - Rutland-Middlebury (ACTR & MVRTD)
 - Williamstown, MA-Bennington-Manchester-Rutland (GMCN & MVRTD)
- Brattleboro-Wilmington (DVTA)
- US 2 Corridor
 - Burlington to Montpelier (CCTA)
 - Montpelier to St. Johnsbury (RCT and GMTA)

Connections and Disconnects

- Some intercity segments were restored through inter-regional commuter routes
 - Schedules don't necessarily coordinate
 - Multiple transfers necessary for long trips
- Remaining intercity services do not work for commuters
 - Schedules not oriented to regular workdays
 - Fares too high for daily use

Markets

- Intercity
 - Younger, less affluent riders
 - Generally no car available for trip
 - Occasional riding for leisure, visits
- Commuter
 - Older, more affluent riders
 - Riders have option to drive
 - Daily riding for jobs

Western Corridor

- Desire for better connections
 - Burlington to Rutland, Bennington, Albany
 - Now takes 16 hours with 4 transfers
- Was available via Greyhound until 2005
- No future here with private sector
 - Insufficient density of demand in largely rural area to justify frequent service
 - Infrequent service drives away all choice riders, limiting market to transit-dependent riders

Intercity Needs

- Vermont certifies annually that there are no unmet needs (5311(f))
- Needs will be examined during upcoming Public Transit Policy Plan
- Service within Vermont is minimal
- Parking needs
- Statewide Inter-regional Map/Schedule
 - Challenges

Access to Intercity Routes

- Many Park & Ride lots at capacity
 - Additional capacity needed for commuters
- Coordination with local transit
 - Difficulties of schedule coordination
 - Limited market, given limited service and ridership on Intercity routes

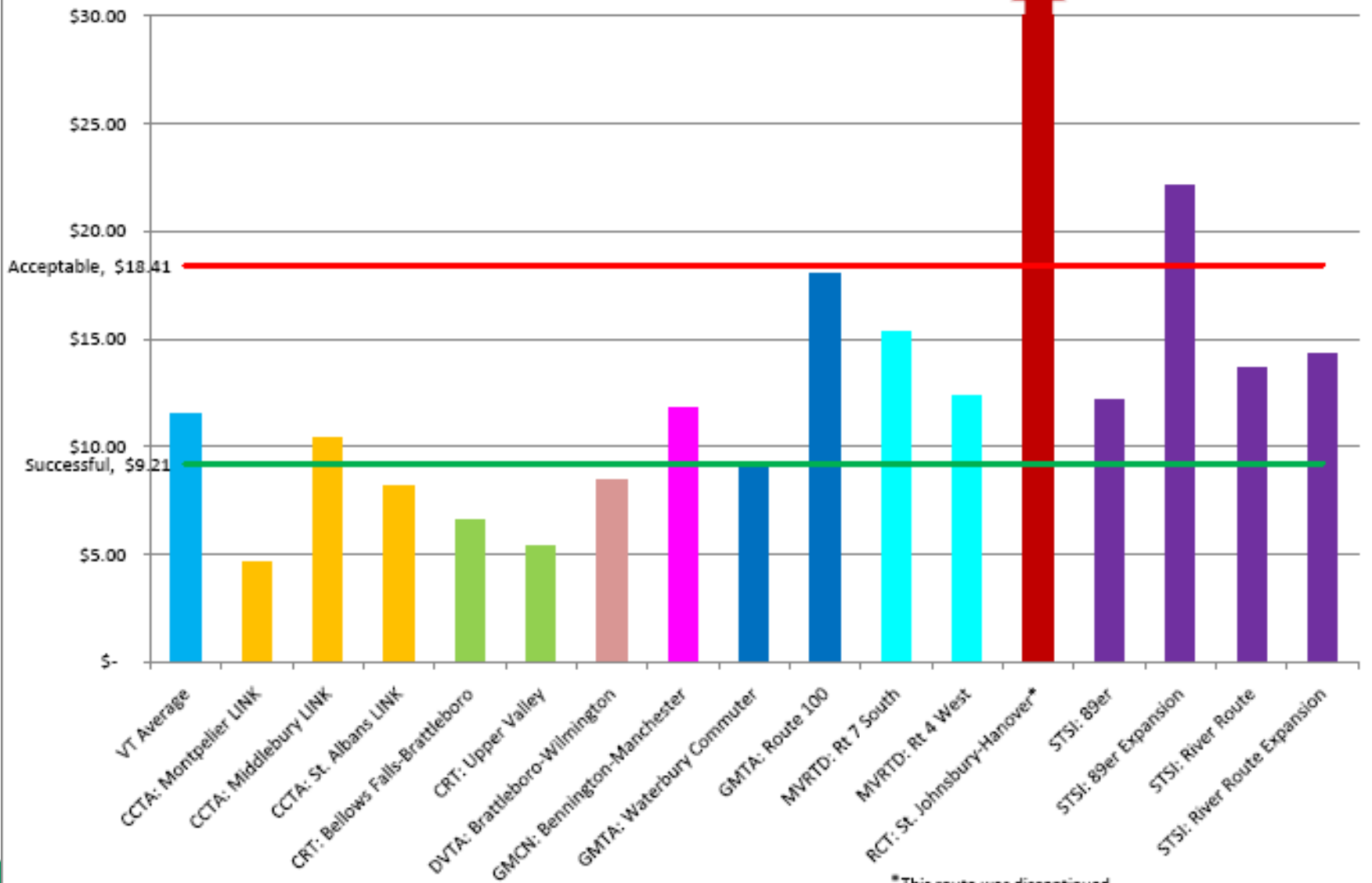
Outlook

- Which intercity service will remain in Vermont without subsidy?
- Can supporting infrastructure be provided?
- How well can inter-regional commuter routes substitute?

Conclusions

- Commuter routes can offer partial replacement for intercity routes
- Subsidies for failed intercity routes need to be considered among overall public transportation needs, not alone.

2009 Commuter Cost per Passenger



*This route was discontinued after 5 months of service