

**For Immediate Release**

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

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**THREE VERMONT TOWNS RECEIVE *BETTER CONNECTIONS* TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

*Grants will increase transportation options and support economic development in Fairlee, Middlebury and Northfield*

Montpelier, Vt.— The Better Connections program, a nationally-recognized grant program from the Agency of Transportation (AOT) and Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), today announced that three Vermont towns will receive project funds to increase transportation options, improve water quality, support public health and strengthen economic vitality in downtowns and village centers.

“This collaborative approach to expanding and improving transportation systems is a great example of how we can make our communities more livable and enjoyable for Vermonters,” said Governor Phil Scott. “These funds will support projects to strengthen the local economies and improve quality of life for their residents.”

The Town of Fairlee will create a Route 5 corridor plan to improve walking and biking infrastructure, better connecting the village and the Connecticut River and its recreational assets. The Town of Middlebury will develop a downtown master plan to enhance the streetscape through green stormwater infrastructure and identify steps to improve the connection to Otter Creek and revitalize the designated downtown. The Town of Northfield will create a master plan to better connect Northfield’s villages to each other, Norwich University and their recreational centers by enhancing the streetscape and improving the water quality of the Dog River.

“Vermonters depend upon their transportation system to provide access to work, school, shopping and other activities,” said AOT Secretary Joe Flynn. “This interagency collaboration allows communities to plan and grow in a way that integrates transportation and land-use planning with economic development decision-making.”

“This interagency partnership engages local stakeholders long before a shovel ever hits the ground,” said Housing and Community Development Acting Commissioner Josh Hanford. “This empowers communities to design transportation projects that are more equitable to all users, improve public health, revitalize communities and clean our waters.”

In 2019, the Better Connections partnership expanded to include the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Health. Municipalities compete annually for approximately \$280,000 in grant funding. For a complete list of current and past projects, visit the program's [story map](#) at [the Better Connections website](#).