

**Scoping Project: Linking Mount Philo State Park and the West Charlotte Village
To the Completed Sections of the Charlotte Town Link Trail**

(Not more than 3 pages)

1. Describe how the project addresses a pedestrian or bicyclist need identified in local or regional planning documents. Describe the need and briefly what the existing conditions are.

The Need:

The need within the Town of Charlotte and Chittenden County is to provide a shared-use, off-road path for alternative transportation. Route 7, a very high auto traffic route, bi-sects the town and county, making biking, skiing, and walking to parts of the community and county difficult. These two sections of the Charlotte Town Link Trail will provide links to vital neighborhoods and significant community destinations within Charlotte. With these two sections completed, there will be a shared-use path from Mt. Philo State Park, under Route 7 (via the underpass slated to be built in 2016-17 when Route 7 is widened through Charlotte), to the Charlotte Little League ballfields, the Charlotte Berry Farm, the Charlotte Village Winery, the Co-housing neighborhood, the Wildwood West neighborhood, then through to the Town Hall, Post Office, Library, Senior Center and two stores, all in the center of town.

The Charlotte Town Plan (readopted in 2013), Section 4.7.4 (attached entitled “Public Trails and By-Ways”) describes the Town’s vision for an integrated trail network, the progress that’s occurred, and the work that remains. The Charlotte Town Link Trail is the main shared-use path that connects side trails and creates alternative transportation within the town.

As indicated in the letter of support from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, the project is supported by several sections of the regional plan (aka “ECOS Plan”). Please see the attached letter.

The Charlotte Selectboard has also voiced support for this project at the July 13th, 2015 open Selectboard meeting and provided a letter of support for the continued work on the Town Link Trail. Please see the attached letter.

The State of Vermont has shown support for the Town Link Trail over the last five years by awarding two Vermont State Forests, Parks, and Recreation grants to fund the Co-Housing section of the path. And the residents of Charlotte have shown their support by allocating and donating over \$40,883 during the past four years to our Trails Fund, which was created by the town at the 2011 Town Meeting.

Existing Conditions:

There are two completed sections of the Charlotte Town Link Trail – the Melissa & Trevor Mack Section on the east side of Route 7, and the Co-housing Section on the west side of Route 7. When the underpass on Route 7 is completed in 2016-17, these two sections will be joined into a two-mile completed path.

We are requesting funding for the scoping of two sections that would extend these completed sections of the path on either end to the important destination points of the west Charlotte village and Mt. Philo State Park. The scoping work would look at 1.) the section from Common Way to the west Charlotte village (approx 1.5 miles) and 2.) Mt. Philo State Park to the beginning of the Melissa & Trevor Mack Trail along State Park Rd. (approx .5 miles).

A Trails Committee was established in 2003 in Charlotte. In addition to creating a trail system, the Trails Committee also maintains the town trails. The committee organizes work-days several times a year to perform trail maintenance and upkeep. The Trails Committee’s ongoing strong commitment and the Town’s continued financial support are indicative that the Town has the resources and commitment to protect the durability and accessibility of the trail, and ensure its long-term maintenance.

2. Describe how the project area being studied relates to a complete network of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities.

The Town Link Trail connects important community locations within the town of Charlotte – Mt. Philo, the Charlotte Berry Farm, the Ball Fields, the Co-housing and Wildwood West neighborhoods, the Charlotte Village Winery, the village facilities: Library, Post Office, Senior Center, and Town Hall. This shared-use path will take bikers and walkers off of Route 7, a busy main road, and provide a shared-use path for transportation within the town for visitors and residents alike. These destinations along the path, and at either end, will be starting and ending points for pedestrians and bikers using the path.

This trail also links to the Champlain byways and regional paths and bicycle routes. An eventual potential link to Shelburne beach and the existing and future shared-use path through Shelburne, linking to South Burlington, which then links to Burlington, on to Colchester, then the Cut bike ferry in Mallett's Bay, across to South Hero and the Champlain islands.

The Charlotte Town Link Trail can become part of a commuter route for the many people who work in and around Burlington. With the connection of shared-use paths, busses, and trains in and around Chittenden County, people can have alternative transportation for daily commuting and getting to and from town and county activities.

3. Describe how the area being studied is one which would provide access to likely generators of pedestrian and/or bicyclist activity.

Mt. Philo State Park is the most visited state park in Vermont. Many people come to camp for several days and also for day visits to the park. Even when the park is closed in the late fall, winter, and early spring, many people use Mt. Philo State Park to walk, ski, or snowshoe. The Charlotte Town Link Trail, which will begin directly across the road from the Mt. Philo State Park, provides an additional opportunity for visitors to the Park to walk, bike, ski or snowshoe in another direction, enjoy breathtaking views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains, and access the Charlotte Berry Farm, the Charlotte ballfields, the Charlotte Village Winery.

Most people who ride the ferry from Essex, New York to Charlotte go through the west Charlotte village after getting off the ferry. Using the parking lot behind Town Hall, visitors to Vermont could bike or walk to the Charlotte Village Winery, the Charlotte Berry Farm, and Mt. Philo State Park using the shared-use path.

Visitors who are staying at the Old Lantern Inn, the Charlotte Inn and the Mount Philo Inn will be able to safely walk, bike, ski or snowshoe to Mount Philo State Park and the west Charlotte village without getting into their cars.

Families and commuters will be able to get on the path from their homes in the Wildwood West and Co-housing neighborhoods and go to the Library, the Post Office, the Town Offices, the Senior Center, the Old Brick Store, the Little Garden Market, the Charlotte Berry Farm, and to ballgames at the Little League ballfields all by using alternative transportation...walking, biking, skiing, or snowshoeing depending on the time of year.

There are parking lots at the northern terminus of this path at the Charlotte Town Hall; at the southern terminus at Mt. Philo State Park; at Common Way near the Co-housing and Wildwood West neighborhoods and at Lower Old Town Trail Road. (where the trail meets Route 7 on the East side). Pedestrians and bikers can access the trail at any of these locations.

The State Park Road section of the Town Link Trail is the southernmost terminus section that will link Mt. Philo State Park to the two miles of completed trail. The Common Way to west Charlotte village section will link the two miles of completed trail to the village on the north side. These .5 mile and 1.5 mile sections of trail are vital links that will help complete the first four miles of the Charlotte Town Link Trail.

4. Is the project located within a Designated Downtown, Village Center or Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) recognized by the VT dept. of Economic, Housing, and Community Development.

The Town plans to apply for Village Center designation in the coming year.

5. Is the application complete, well-written, internally consistent, and realistic; does it describe a single, clearly defined project? (NOTE: Applicants do not need to respond to this criterion)