

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Strong Communities, Better Connections Grants Awarded**

MONTPELIER, Vt.—February 19, 2016—In an exciting partnership to support vibrant community centers and increase transportation options, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) are pleased to announce the Strong Communities, Better Connections (SCBC) Grant Program has funded 3 projects that help align land use planning and community revitalization efforts with transportation investments.

#### Grant Winners:

The Town of Chester will develop an action plan for the designated village center and create strategies for streetscape enhancements, economic development and village revitalization. (Julie Hance, Town of Chester, [jhchester@vermontel.net](mailto:jhchester@vermontel.net))

The City of Montpelier will develop complete street design guidelines in order to more effectively plan for and accommodate multi-modal transportation. (Mike Miller, City of Montpelier, [mmiller@montpelier-vt.org](mailto:mmiller@montpelier-vt.org))

The Town of Springfield will create a downtown streetscape plan for Main Street and identify strategies to connect to the river and improve parking and bike/pedestrian improvements in downtown. (Tom Yennerell, Town of Springfield, [tosmanager@vermontel.net](mailto:tosmanager@vermontel.net))

“Transportation investments in our downtowns and villages can provide a platform for investment from the private sector that leverages that public investment to grow our economy,” said Transportation Secretary Chris Cole. “ This grant program recognizes that state agencies working together can have a greater impact to the communities we serve”.

“This exciting agency partnership is helping our transportation system serve the needs of more people while fostering economic vitality for our businesses and communities,” said Housing and Community Development Commissioner Noelle MacKay.

Annually, the program grants approximately \$200,000 in funding to help Vermont municipalities outside of Chittenden County (Chittenden County has a similar program administered by its regional planning commission). The state received 10 applications, requesting over a half a million in funding. Program Managers Jackie Cassino (VTrans) and Richard Amore (ACCD) said the communities submitted strong proposals, making the second round of the grant program extremely competitive. The grants are reviewed by a five-member selection committee comprised of representatives from state agencies and regional planning commissions.

For more information, contact Jackie Cassino, at 802-272-2368 or Richard Amore at 822-828-5229 and visit the grant website <http://vtransplanning.vermont.gov/programs/scbc>.