

19 February 2010

Memo to: Transportation Study Committee  
From: Vee Gordon and Kate Rader  
Subject: Interview with Karen Glitman, UVM Transportation Research Center

The Transportation Research Center (TRC) is a free-standing interdisciplinary entity, whose mission is research, education and outreach related to sustainable transportation. The TRC serves as the host of the [National University Transportation Center \(UTC\)](#), funded by the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), as well as the [Vermont Clean Cities Coalition](#), funded by the US Department of Energy and the Vermont Department of Public Service. The center was founded in 2006 and designated a UVM Matrix Center in September 2008. Not associated with any college at the university, it is under the administration of the university's Vice-President for Research. The TRC's overlapping areas of interest include public health, geography, land use, energy, the environment and public advocacy. Their research staff includes graduate students from seven different colleges in the university.

Their stakeholders and sponsors include the USDOT, the DOT's of ME and NH; they have worked with AARP, the Research Systems Group, VTrans, VT ANR, federal agencies, the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, VT Gas and other utilities, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and others.

Glitman told us that the goal of any transportation system is to provide mobility and access. In the last century, in this country that has meant the individual automobile. This mode is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Issues are: energy (availability and cost), climate change (how to minimize the impact and make adaptations); and aging demographic and the mobility needs of those no longer driving. Public health is also an issue, from lack of activity and poor air quality resulting from private auto use.

We are now in a transitional era. The questions are, how long will it last, and how do we minimize the impact of coming necessary changes. New technology can help, as carpool websites and social networking tools can help smooth the transition from our single-occupancy cars. There are also third-world solutions that could be adopted, such as “jitney” cabs that pick up multiple passengers, taking them to their desired locations.

When asked about how to pay for transportation needs, Glitman said the Highway Trust Fund is going broke; gas taxes are not adequate; taxes on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are regressive; and VMT and congestion pricing don't work in rural areas. TRC transportation funding and efficiency reports can be found at <http://www.uvm.edu/~transctr/>.