In accord with Irasburg’s planning principles of respect for the environment, sound economics and regard for community values, the Transportation Plan outlines a path to achieve safe, cost-effective and energy-efficient transportation for Irasburg residents to commute to work and to meet the needs of daily life. It prioritizes the improvement of safe options for walking and biking in the village center and along Irasburg’s roadways, and it minimizes the impact of road construction on natural resources.

**Existing Transportation**
Currently, most transportation in Irasburg is by single-person automobile. Census data indicate that 77 percent of Irasburg’s workforce commutes to work by automobile.

According to NVDA’s Energy Profile, Irasburg residents collectively drive almost 14 million miles annually, at a cost of $1.4 million. Irasburg’s greatest single use of energy, 42.4 percent, is for transportation.

The main highways to and through Irasburg are Vermont State Highway Routes 14 and 58, U.S. Route 5, and Interstate 91. Interstate 91 links the town with Newport to the north and Lyndonville and St. Johnsbury to the south. Route 14 links the town with Albany and Montpelier to the south and Coventry and Newport Center to the north. Route 58 provides access to Barton and Orleans to the east and Lowell to the west. State Highways are maintained by VTrans District 9 out of Derby.

The town of Irasburg maintains 8.09 miles of Class 2 Town Highways; 27.44 miles of Class 3 Town Highways; and has 8.48 miles of Class 4 Town Highways or ‘legal trails’. The town is in the process of completing a Road Erosion Inventory with NVDA. When complete, this plan will enable Irasburg to schedule improvements. Combined with their Bridge and Culvert Inventory, the information will enable simplified capital budgeting for

---

**Figure 3.1 How Irasburg Residents Commute**
Source: American Community Survey

---

In this Chapter:
- Existing Transportation
- Proposed Transportation
- Goals & Actions
highway expenditures. The town has signed 
Town Highway and Bridge Standards from 
the VTrans Orange Book. The town of 
Irasburg supports the VTrans initiative for 
hydrologically connected road segments.

Railroad tracks carrying freight trains run 
through Irasburg with the nearest freight 
facility located in the village of Orleans. 
The operator of the line is the Connecticut 
River Subdivision of the Washington County 
Railroad. The rail right-of-way is owned by 
the State of Vermont. There are currently no 
rail sidings located in Irasburg.

There are no fixed public transit routes in 
Irasburg. However, Rural Community 
Transportation (RCT) operates an on-demand 
transit service through its Elderly 
and Disabled Transportation 
Program, a volunteer driver 
service that is available to 
residents of Irasburg. There are 
informal Park and Ride lots in 
Orleans at the intersection of U.S. 
Route 5 and VT Route 58 and 
along the Irasburg Common that 
are used for carpooling.

The nearest airport is the 
Northeast Kingdom International Airport 
(formerly the Newport State Airport) in 
Coventry. There is currently no scheduled 
passenger air service at this facility.

Irasburg participates regularly in the regional 
road foreman meetings, facilitated by NVDA 
and VTrans District 9. These meetings 
provide training to assist the highway 
department in providing the town with cost-
effective best-management practices.

Irasburg has limited sidewalks and multi-use 
paths. Residents use road shoulders and the 
path around the Common for jogging, biking, 
walking, and getting around town on foot.

Proposed Transportation

Irasburg’s roads are upgraded and maintained 
to meet standards commensurate with the 
classification of highways by state statute (VSA Title 
19, Chapter 3, subchapter 302).

In the 2016 Community Survey, residents indicated 
dissatisfaction with available transportation options 
and 29 percent indicated a need for improved 
bicycling and walking facilities.

The Vermont Legislature passed a “Complete 
Streets” bill in 2011 as part of its transportation 
policy. Complete Streets is the concept that all 
users are considered in transportation projects, 
including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, public 
transportation users, and those of any age and 
ability. Implementing Complete Streets in rural 
communities can be challenging 
but not impossible. When 
State Highways are repaved 
or widened, shoulders should 
be added to accommodate 
pedestrians. Crosswalks, signage, 
and additional opportunities 
for footpaths or trails are 
encouraged with other state 
road improvements. Irasburg 
intends to pursue Village Center 
designation. One goal of such 
a designation will be to improve options for 
pedestrians and bicyclists within the village center.

Two of the biggest transportation problems in 
Irasburg are the heavy truck use of Routes 14 and 
58 through town and lack of a safe pedestrian/bicycle route to the elementary school from the 
Common. The heavy flow of traffic, especially 
at peak morning and afternoon times, makes it 
difficult for pedestrians to cross the state highway. 
There are no designated pedestrian crossings. A 
sidewalk ends in front of Leach Public Library, 
and there is no formal path from the town 
Common to the Irasburg Village School. A 2003 sidewalk study assessed current conditions and 

Transportation consumes 47 percent of 
Irasburg's energy use.
challenges to building a five-foot-wide sidewalk to the school. The sidewalk would require storm drainage infrastructure, but grants could help the town defray costs of construction. The town is considering exploring options for a multi-use trail to connect the school to the library and the village center, including pedestrian-level lighting.

Providing adequate Park & Ride spaces for carpoolers is key to reducing the energy impacts of commuting. With more than 75 percent of Irasburg’s population working out of town, this plan encourages the development of new and creative options to share driving. Over the past few years, many commuters have begun using areas around the Common as an informal Park & Ride, principally opposite Ray’s Market and the Post Office, but increasingly along the south side of the Common. While carpooling is encouraged, this use of spaces around the Common creates a number of challenges. At peak hours, commuters’ parked cars leave limited spaces for daytime use by people who need to park around the Common; parked cars interfere with snowplowing and create an increased need for maintenance. The town should pursue development of an official Park & Ride location supported by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Any proposed Park & Ride location should be safe, central, easily accessible, well lit, visually appealing and able to accommodate enough cars to meet demand. A goal of Village Center Designation will be to develop a dedicated Park & Ride facility.

Irasburg can achieve further reductions in transportation energy use by fuel switching during the coming decades by the increased use of plug-in electric vehicles. As in all other areas, the cost of fuel switching will be an important factor in achieving these efficiencies. State- and utility-sponsored incentives, as well as technological advances that help to lower costs, will help to make these targets achievable.

Fig 3.2 Fuel Switching Targets for Transportation
Source: Irasburg Energy Profile from NVDA
The projected number of electric vehicles in the area is estimated to be roughly commensurate with projections of population and households. Estimates assume a gradual increase in EV fuel economy from 3 miles per kWh to 4 miles per kWh by 2050. The switch to EVs in Irasburg will be challenging, requiring performance improvements in cold temperatures and on steep and often wintry terrain and improved battery storage for long distances between charging stations. Currently, the paucity of plug-in charging stations in the Northeast Kingdom is one deterrent to the spread of EVs. The confluence of heavily traveled state and local routes in Irasburg’s village center makes it a promising potential location for a charging station.

**Goals**

- Irasburg residents have safe, affordable and energy-efficient transportation for commuting to work and to meet the needs of daily life. Irasburg has safe and accessible routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Any new roads are built according to most recently adopted town standards and have minimal adverse impacts on forests, wildlife habitat, water sources and other natural resources identified throughout this plan. Logging roads use Best Management Practices to minimize erosion and effects on wildlife habitat.

**Actions**

- Pursue Village Center Designation and Vermont Agency of Transportation grants as a means to facilitate improved pedestrian and bicycle access including a walking/bike path from the village center to the Irasburg Village School; develop a designated Park & Ride facility; and investigate a vehicle charging station.
- Maintain all roads to their current classification as represented in the most recent Town Highway Mileage Certificate submitted to VTrans and shown in the most recent Town Highway map provided by VTrans Mapping unit.
- Build any new roads to meet all town standards and specifications and minimize impact on natural and scenic resources identified throughout this plan.
- The Road Commissioner and the Selectboard continue to maintain the priority list and repair schedule for roads most in need of repair or upgrade.
- Continue to participate in Road Foreman Meetings. The town should also monitor via email and participate in person when appropriate in the regional Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). All towns are members and representatives are appointed by the Selectboard to represent the interests of the town as well as provide regional feedback from the town’s perspective.
- Continue town budget support for Rural Community Transportation.
- With the Selectboard, pursue methods to slow down traffic through the Village Center, including school zone signage, designated crosswalks, or other engineering solutions including the use of deterrence technology such as stand-alone speed monitors.