



Vermont League  
of Cities & Towns

# Eclipse Planning Check-In

January 25, 2024

[Katie Buckley](#), *Federal Funding Assistance Program Director*

[Bonnie Waninger](#), *Federal Funding Assistance Program Specialist*

# Today

- Eclipse Event Overview
- State Planning Efforts
- Resources
- Q&A

# Event Overview: April 8, 2024

How many people will go see the Great American Eclipse in Vermont?

A total solar eclipse crosses North America on April 8, 2024. This is easily the most beautiful sight you will see in the sky! Try to arrive early and stay late to beat heavy traffic.



Total Solar Eclipse  
April 8, 2024



GreatAmericanEclipse.com

We've applied an analytic method to estimate how many people will come on eclipse day. The estimate is based on these assumptions:

- People nearby are more likely to drive to the path of total solar eclipse than people far away.
- People will take the shortest drive to the closest destination in the path of totality.

Learn about the details of our model at [greatamericaneclipse.com/statistics](https://greatamericaneclipse.com/statistics)

Low estimate of eclipse visitors to Vermont: 52,000  
High estimate of eclipse visitors to Vermont: 208,000  
People in Vermont living inside the path: 399,000

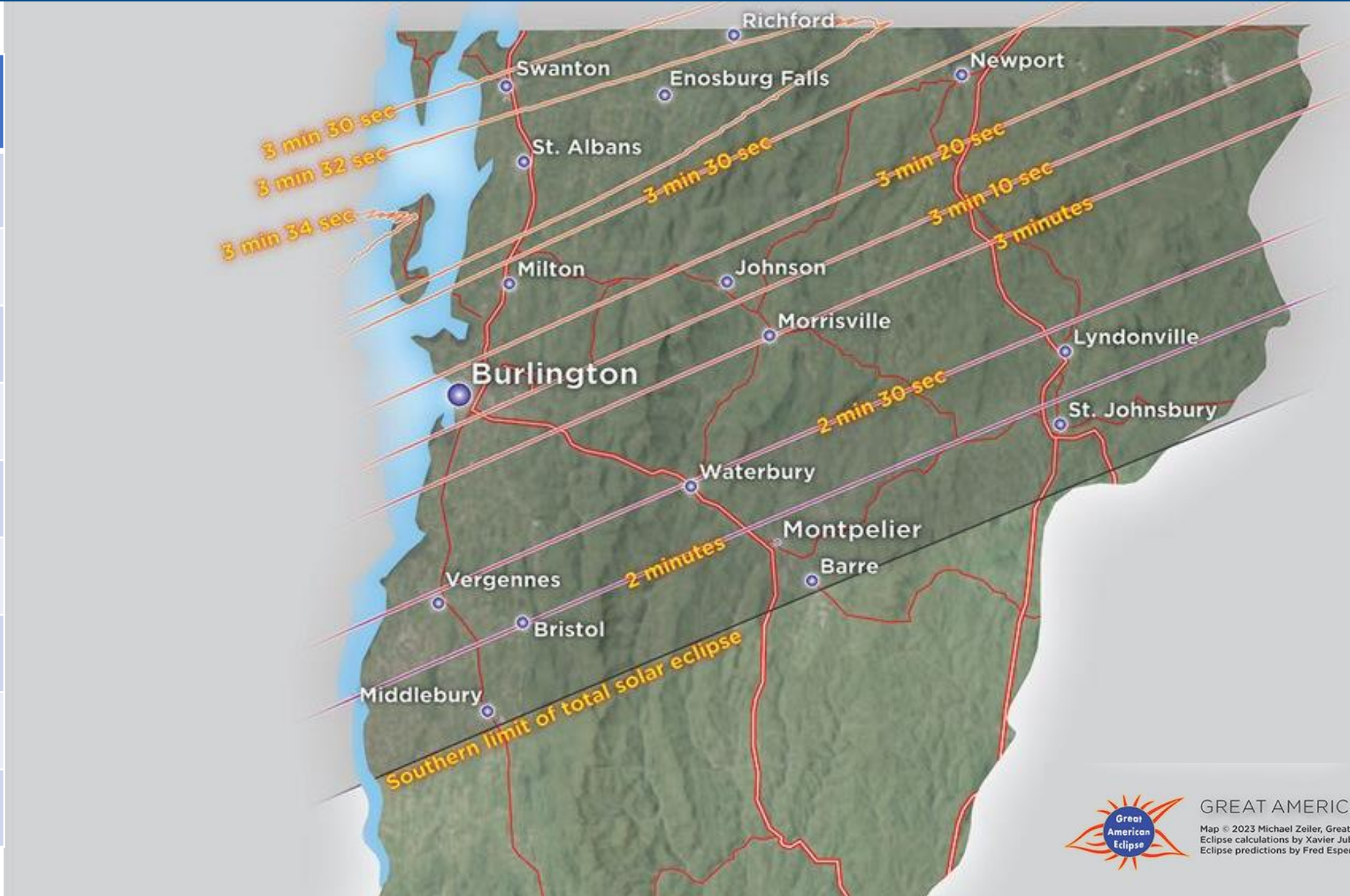
- On April 8, 2024 at 2:14 p.m., a *partial solar eclipse* will begin
- At 3:26 p.m., a **total eclipse** will darken Vermont's daytime sky, lasting about **3 minutes**. The phenomenon will continue as a *partial eclipse* until 4:37 p.m.
- The path of totality is 40 miles wide, 20 miles of which are in northern Vermont



# Event Overview: April 8, 2024

## IMPACTED COUNTIES:

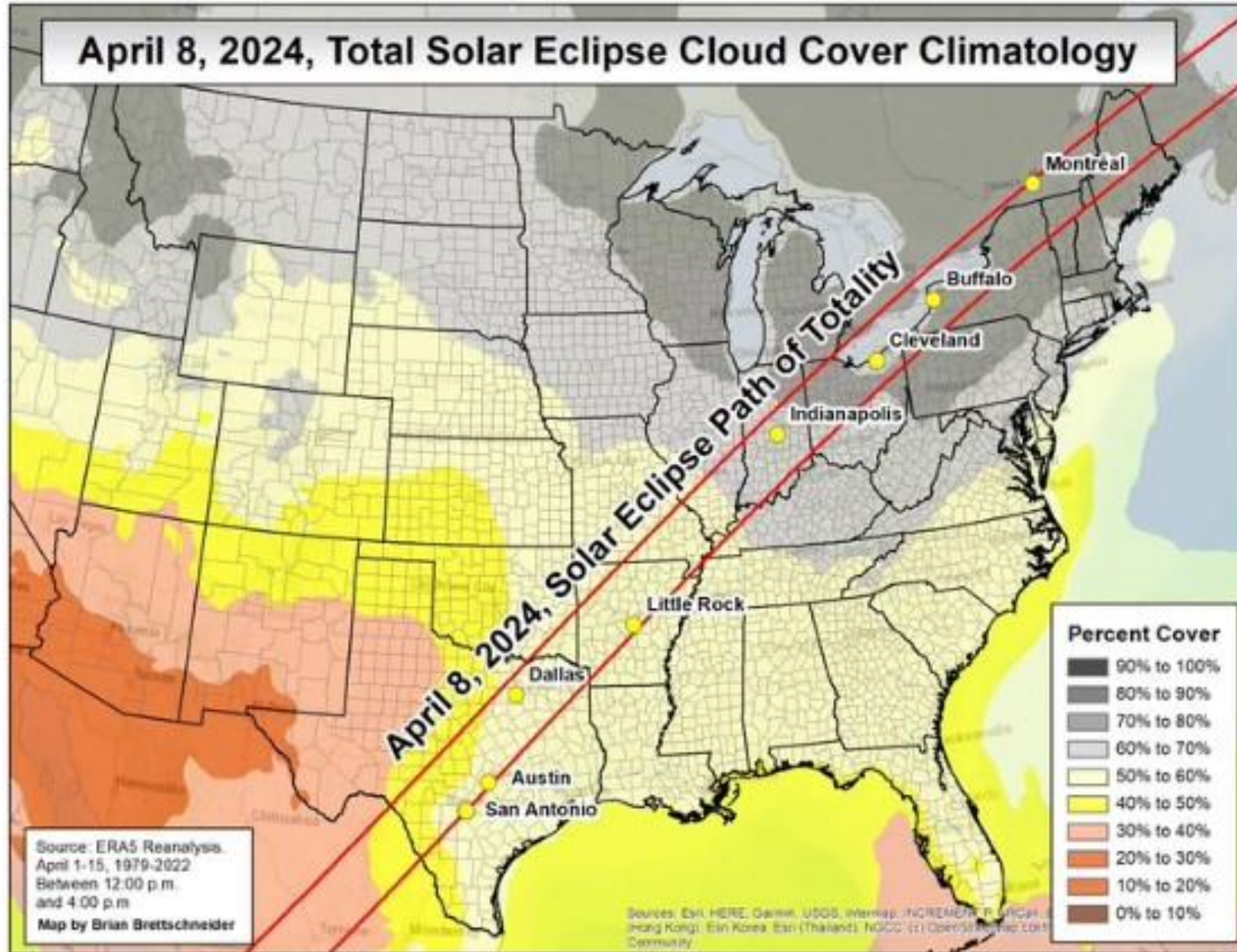
- Addison
- Caledonia
- Chittenden
- Essex
- Franklin
- Grand Isle
- Lamoille
- Orleans
- Washington



GREAT AMERICAN ECLIPSE.COM

Map © 2023 Michael Zeiler, GreatAmericanEclipse.com  
Eclipse calculations by Xavier Jubier, xjubier.free.fr  
Eclipse predictions by Fred Espenak, eclipsewise.com

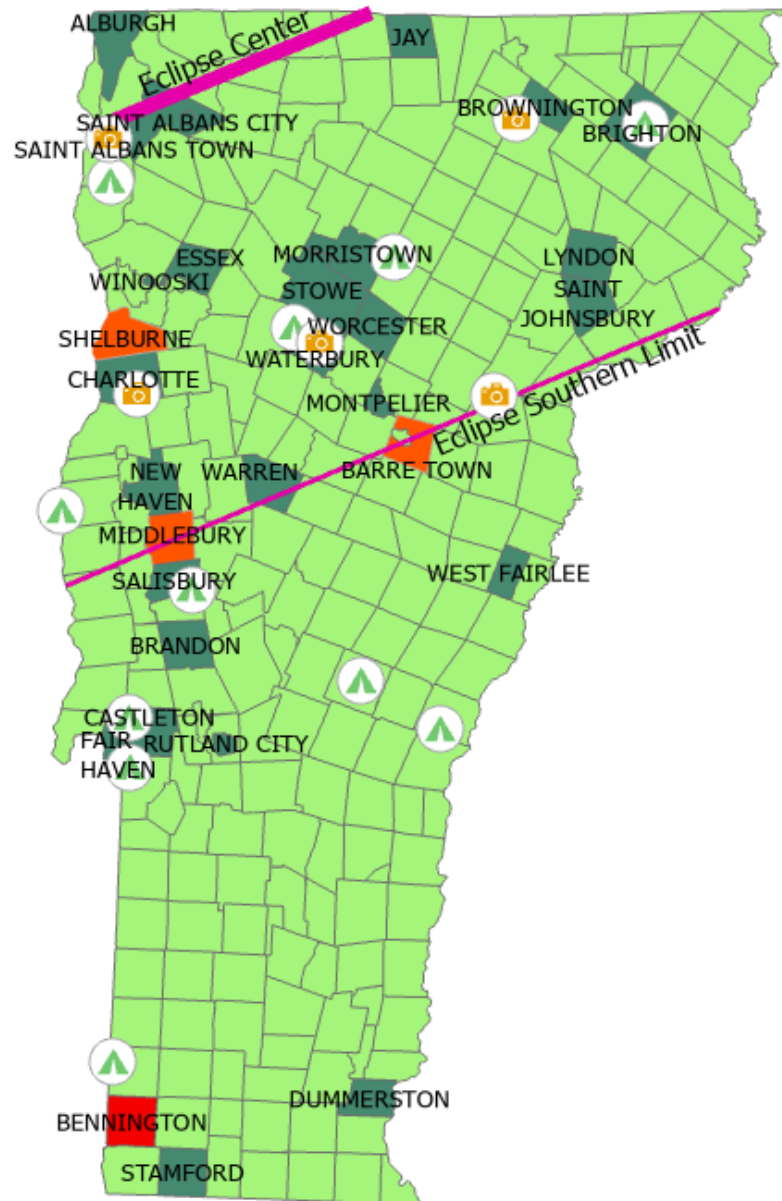
# Event Overview: April 8, 2024













# State Planning - Vermont Status Map

as of January 8<sup>th</sup>



**LEGEND**

-  Centerline for Path of Totality
-  Southern Edge of Path of Totality
-  0 Reported Events
-  1 Reported Event
-  2 Reported Events
-  3 Reported Events
-  State Park Recommended for Camping
-  State Park Recommended for Viewing

# State Planning - Agency/Dept. Participation

- **AAFAM** - Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
- **ACCD** - Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- **ADS** - Agency of Digital Services
- **AHS** - Agency of Human Services
- **ANR** - Agency of Natural Resources
- **AOE** - Agency of Education
- **AOT** - Agency of Transportation
- **BGS** - Building and General Services
- **CBP** – Customs and Border Protection
- **DEC** - Department of Environmental Conservation
- **DFR** - Department of Financial Regulation
- **DFS** - Division of Fire Safety
- **DHR** - Department of Human Resources
- **DOL** - Department of Labor
- **DPS** - Department of Public Safety
- **FPR** - Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation
- **NWS** - National Weather Service
- **PSD** - Public Service Department
- **RTS** - Radio Technology Services
- **VDH** - Vermont Department of Health
- **VEM** - Vermont Emergency Management
- **VIC** – Vermont Intelligence Center
- **VSP** - Vermont State Police
- **VTNG** - Vermont National Guard

Others added as needed...

- Vermont Emergency Management hosts bi-weekly planning calls with involved State agency/department staff points of contact
- Fridays following VLCT's Check-Ins
- Agencies/departments are organized into work groups: Safety & Security, Mass Care, Economy, Public Messaging, Communications, Education
- Each work group lead reports out during bi-weekly planning calls:
  - Updates to running estimates (concerns, questions, facts, assumptions)
  - Strategies to mitigate identified concerns
  - Resource or information needs/gaps

# State Planning - Eclipse Facts and Assumptions

## FACTS

- Total Solar Eclipse is occurring on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Maximum duration of totality in VT is **3 min 36 seconds**
- 109 miles of Vermont is in the path of totality
- ACCD has 108k glasses
- Two path crosses two interstates: I89 & I91
- 399k Vermonters live within the path of totality (VT pop. ~647k)
- People WILL come to Vermont to view the eclipse
- Majority of schools are doing half day
- Some parks will be open early to accommodate visitors
- VAST trails are open until April 15<sup>th</sup>

## ASSUMPTIONS

- 50-200k people will come to VT to view
- Traffic will be heavy
- Majority of visitors will arrive over the weekend and leave shortly after the eclipse
- Weather will likely be cloudy, temps in 40s. Ranging from low 30s to high 50s
- Fire risk for this time of year
- Events are led locally; the State is not the lead for any events
- Variable conditions, ice, weather, etc.
- Eclipse visitors are likely to relocate last minute based on weather and cloud coverage
- Private jets will be less likely to surge to VT due to climatology
- Border will see some increased traffic, but many will view event from their side of the border



# State Planning – Identified Concerns

- **Public messaging, coordination, and consistency**
- **Inclement weather**
- **Knowing where there are gathering locations / events**
- **Traffic Management**
  - Congestion in rural Vermont in mud season – People stuck on roads or fields
  - Hospital access
  - EMS Coordination / transportation support
  - Border crossing impact
  - Impact to Milk and Maple
- **Schools (all-levels)**
  - Closures
  - Activities
- **Cell coverage, telecommunication**
- **Health care surge**
- **Lack of sanitary facilities**
- **Environmental Impact**
- **Resource availability: Fuel, Food, Sanitation**
- **Glasses availability**

# State Planning – Planning Resources



- <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/eclipses/2024/apr-8-total/where-when/>
- <https://www.greatamericaneclipse.com/vermont-2024-eclipse>
- [Recording of the presentation by Brook Kaufman](#) *Preparing your Community for an Eclipse: 13 All-Too-Real Truths* from 16NOV presentation

# State Planning - Assets For Eclipse

- ACCD: Vermont Vacation Eclipse Site with Event Calendar with filter for Eclipse specific events:  
<https://vermontvacation.com/plan-your-visit/events/2024-total-solar-eclipse-in-vermont>
- VEM: Obtained the “community Engagement” feature for VT Alert - will allow users to text a keyword and anonymously be signed up to receive information from the State.
- RTS: five mobile cell systems



# State Planning – Vermont Specific Resources

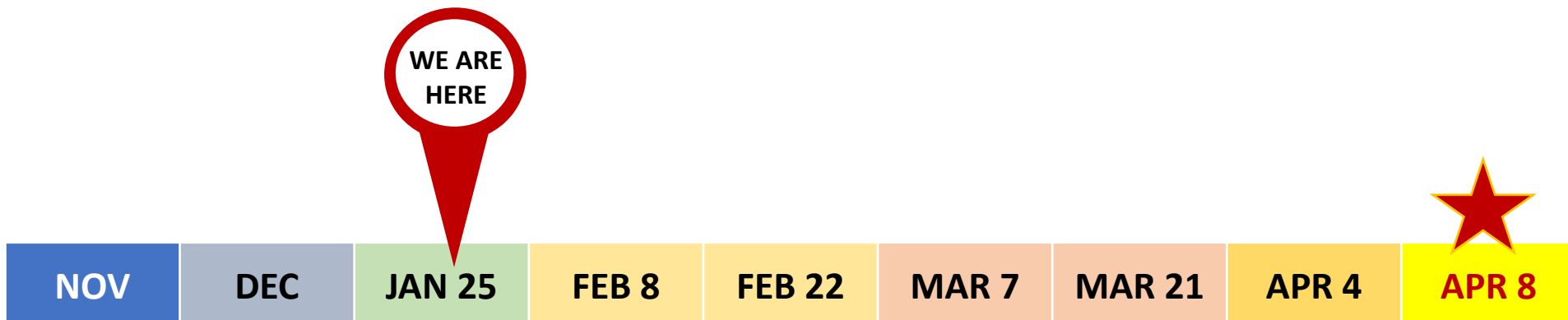
- <https://vermontvacation.com/plan-your-visit/events/2024-total-solar-eclipse-in-vermont> (including sign up for the eclipse specific newsletter)
- [Event Calendar with filter for Eclipse specific events.](#)
  - [How to register your event.](#) (you will need to create a log-in. Anybody having trouble can follow up with Katerine Ingram at VDTM [katharine.ingram@vermont.gov](mailto:katharine.ingram@vermont.gov))
- [Order form for eclipse glasses.](#) (These are not to be used for resale and should be for a specific event. They will ship the first week of March and the State will confirm your amount request as soon as we have a feel for community demand)
- [Sign up for the VDTM Industry newsletter.](#) (This newsletter is for updates and information sharing to the tourism industry, rather than visitors, and how we will be communicating with the industry)
-  Vermont Emergency Management – Large Event Planning Index: <https://vem.vermont.gov/document/large-event-planning-annex>
-  Vermont League of Cities and Towns - Eclipse Planning Check-In Recordings and Resources: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/eclipse-planning-check-recordings-and-resources>

# What is Next

## Next Eclipse Planning Check-In: February 8th, 10:00 AM

What you can expect:

- VLCT will share information learned from the *State bi-weekly planning call* (next one is January 26<sup>th</sup>)
- Municipalities:
  - Share local information that the State should be aware of
  - Identify needs and resources
- Visit (and bookmark): <https://www.vlct.org/resource/eclipse-planning-check-recordings-and-resources> for any updates or new info learned in between check-ins
- If questions arise in between calls, contact Katie or Bonnie through [MAP](https://www.vlct.org/login) (<https://www.vlct.org/login>)



# VLCT Eclipse Planning Check-In Recordings and Resources:

<https://www.vlct.org/resource/eclipse-planning-check-recordings-and-resources>

[Katie Buckley](#), *Federal Funding Assistance Program Director*  
[Bonnie Waninger](#), *Federal Funding Assistance Program Specialist*





# Eclipse Planning Check-In

01/25/24

Much of northern Vermont is within the path of totality for the April 8 solar eclipse, making this an ideal place to witness the rare natural event. State agencies are planning for thousands of people to visit Vermont to view it (see [2024 Total Solar Eclipse in Vermont](#)), and towns and cities of all sizes as well as tourism-focused organizations are planning [local events](#).

VLCT is hosting webinars every two weeks from January 25 to April 4 to keep municipalities informed about State plans and to learn about community-level plans, so municipalities can anticipate how all these plans might intersect (or conflict!).

[State-Identified Concerns](#) | [State Planning Efforts](#) | [VLCT Resources](#) | [Check-in Q&A](#)

---

## Identified Concerns from State Planning

- Public messaging, coordination, and consistency
- Inclement weather
- Knowing where there are gathering locations and events
- Traffic management:
  - congestion in rural Vermont in mud season; people stuck on roads or in fields
  - Hospital access
  - EMS coordination / transportation support
  - Border crossing impacts
  - Impact to milk and maple
- Schools (all levels): closures and activities
- Cell coverage and telecommunication
- Health care surge
- Lack of sanitary facilities
- Environmental impact
- Resource availability: fuel, food, sanitation
- Eclipse viewing glasses availability

## State Planning Efforts

Eric Forand, VEM Director, noted that the State is not the lead for any events. Municipalities can host local events and are responsible for any associated logistics and costs incurred. The State's goal is interconnectedness among events. The State has looked at indicators such as flight and lodging information. Currently, its estimate is 150,000 visitors.

Katharine Ingram, Department of Tourism & Marketing (VDTM) Trade and Partner Relations Manager, highlighted VDTM' Solar Eclipse Viewing webpage: <https://www.vermontvacation.com/plan-your-visit/events/2024-total-solar-eclipse-in-vermont>. Communities can list their events on the State event calendar (see question 2 below for link and information).

The State is assessing occupancy rates for short-term rentals using people who rent all the time. Currently, not much lodging is available north of Montpelier. At the end of December 2023, lodging was 40% filled.

There is a trend of new people starting to rent to capitalize on the event. The Vermont Short Term Rental Association is hosting a webinar for first time rental hosts on February 12. The goal is to help new rental hosts think through what it is like to have people in your house or on your property for the first time. Pre-registration is not required. Join the event at <https://vtstra.org/engage>.

The Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) will open some state parks for viewing and overnight stays (see Slide 6 in the [presentation slides](#)). FPR also intends to open some trails for viewing opportunities. VDTM webpage has a button people can push for [viewing from trails](#). Follow [FPR's webpage](#) for information (search "Solar Eclipse"). VDTM is messaging trail etiquette. Katharine advised that any community messaging be succinct as tourists don't read much.

VDTM has purchased branded eclipse glasses to be distributed to Vermont municipalities, community organizations, and state entities planning events for the eclipse. A limited number of glasses are available, and order fulfillment is not guaranteed. The glasses will be provided free of charge and may not be resold. All orders will be shipped by March 1, 2024. If you have any questions, please email Katharine Ingram at [Katharine.ingram@vermont.gov](mailto:Katharine.ingram@vermont.gov). Place your order for glasses at [https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=O5O0IK26PEOcAnDtZHVZxvNV\\_-0pmtxLmdAIJv-JuLFUNE1VSTVaTDAwMk9OUFMzTTJSVVdSVVJMJS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=O5O0IK26PEOcAnDtZHVZxvNV_-0pmtxLmdAIJv-JuLFUNE1VSTVaTDAwMk9OUFMzTTJSVVdSVVJMJS4u).

## VLCT Resources

- Visit <https://www.vlct.org/resource/eclipse-planning-check-recordings-and-resources> for check in slides and notes, updates, and new information.
- Email Katie Buckley ([kbuckley@vlct.org](mailto:kbuckley@vlct.org)) or Bonnie Waninger ([bwaninger@vlct.org](mailto:bwaninger@vlct.org)) from VLCT's Federal Funding Assistance Program if you have questions after the call.

## Q&A Report

**Q1.** Can we learn from short-term rental companies what the demand for that weekend looks like?

**A1.** VEM is working with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to obtain those numbers. We know hotels occupancy and short-term rentals are high. One concern is day trippers who make decisions to travel at the last minute. If they haven't planned their trip, they may not find lodging, etc. The State is messaging information about weather preparedness, trail and road conditions (mud season), gas and supplies, traffic jams on interstates and other roads, etc.

**Q2.** Where can municipalities list their events?

**A2.** Events can be added to the State's calendar at <https://plan.vermontvacation.com/>. Users must

create an account before they can list an event. If you have challenges creating an account or listing your event, you can email [Katharine.ingram@vermont.gov](mailto:Katharine.ingram@vermont.gov).

**Q3.** Where will the slides from this event be posted?

**A3.** The slides are posted on VLCT's [Eclipse Planning Check-In Recordings and Resources webpage](#).

**Q4.** Has the state created any written materials that can be shared with people asking questions?

**A4.** This question was not answered during the webinar.

**Q5.** Where are the COWs (Cells On Wheels) the State has acquired going to be placed?

**A5.** This question was not answered during the webinar.

**Q6.** Is anyone communicating with VTrans to assure Maidstone bridge and the Mt. One Bridge in Lunenburg are open before the eclipse?

**A6.** VEM will take these questions to the State planning meeting.

**Q7.** If we produce content from a town, should it be shared with this group in case they could be used in other areas?

**A7.** VEM noted that town-specific information does not need to be shared.

**Q8.** Is there any thought about moving some ambulances from south to north?

**A8.** The State has a workgroup focused on medical response.

**Q9.** Should we be reaching out to our local Sheriff's office for traffic assistance?

**A9.** Municipalities can reach out to the entity they normally work with for police response. VEM noted that most states have trouble with locals having too much fun, rather than criminal activity. The Vermont Intelligence Center (VIC) is running a synopsis of potential threats. Any potential threats will be shared with VEM and potentially affected towns.