



**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**WRC Transportation Committee**  
**March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**4:00 p.m.**

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*Members Present:* Stephan Chait, Chair, Nick Morgan, James Bressor, Rick Cowan, Georgianne Mora, Christine Howe

*Absent:* Andy Coyne, Erik Moses

*Guests:* Senator Wendy Harrison, Representative Mollie Burke

*VTrans Staff:* Abe Koffman

*Staff present:* Colin Bratton

*Public:* none

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Meeting convened at 4:01 p.m.

**Changes to Agenda:** A discussion of availability for an in-person encouraged Committee meeting with VTrans staff in the coming months will be added at the end of the agenda.

**Minutes:** Approval of minutes from 2/10/25. Motion by Commissioner Mora, 2<sup>nd</sup> from Commissioner Morgan. Minutes approved unanimously.

**Vermont Rail Plan Update:** The Committee discussed the ongoing update to the Vermont Rail Plan. The Vermont Agency of Transportation Released a draft list of rail policy priorities in February and a public meeting was held in Brattleboro on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Several initiatives directly related to rail service and infrastructure in Southern Vermont are identified in the draft policy list, including but not limited to extension of the existing 'Valley Flyer' service north from Greenfield, Mass to Brattleboro, Bellows Falls and ultimately White River Junction, track improvements to increase maximum speeds on the Vermonter corridor, improved intermodal connectivity and/or first mile last mile service, as well as improvements to station infrastructure, in particular the Bellows Falls Rail Station. Additionally, while not located within the Windham Region, the extension of the Ethan Allen service from Albany, NY to Bennington and Manchester, VT would improve multi modal connectivity for Windham Region residents in the western part of the region and the Route 100 corridor.

The Committee reviewed the draft list of initiatives as well as a statement from the Windham Regional Commission prepared for the public meeting held March 10<sup>th</sup>. The committee recommended that staff draft a letter of support outlining priority passenger rail and freight initiatives in the Windham Region to be approved and sent to the Executive Board for final review.

**Vermont State Legislature Transportation Topics:** The Transportation Advisory Committee was joined by State Senator Wendy Harrison and Representative Mollie Burke to discuss the ongoing work of the House and Senate Transportation Committees as well as discuss ongoing transportation challenges facing Vermont towns.

Both the House and Senate Transportation Committee are in the process of voting bills out of Committee. Once advanced, bills will be assigned a # and sent to the Transportation Committee of the opposite chamber for review.

Currently, the State Legislature is expected to propose several transportation bills relevant to Vermont towns. One priority is clarification of the status of Legal Town Trails. An ongoing lawsuit in Turnbridge challenges municipal authority to maintain and regulate use of legal trails. The proposed bill would address any existing ambiguity on the status of legal trails and affirm their status as municipal right of ways and the legal authority of the municipality to maintain and regulate acceptable use of such right of ways. Additionally, the Senate Transportation Committee is expected to advance a bill exempting trucks used for logging from certain tax requirements under Act 46 as well as one addressing vehicle noise concerns, specifically from motorcycles and large trucks by expanding muffler requirements for motorcycles and engine brakes. The Senate is additionally considering revisions to a proposed law intended to limit municipal salt usage on town highways in order to address water quality concerns in Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River watershed. These revisions would scale back requirements for municipal salt usage monitoring in response to concerns from municipalities.

Members of the Committee raised a variety of transportation topics relevant to Vermont towns. One area of particular concern is the impact the adoption of the California Advanced Clean Truck standards will have on the municipal truck market. Orders for town plow trucks are already delayed 2 to 3 years on average with only two suppliers fulfilling all municipal plow truck purchases in Vermont. There are significant concerns that the 10% electric truck requirement imposed on dealers will have significant negative impacts on the already stressed municipal vehicle market and could reduce the number of diesel trucks available for towns in Vermont. California and Massachusetts, among others, have temporarily exempted certain vehicles, including those used for snow removal, from the Low and No Emissions vehicle rules. Vermont currently has no such exemption.

Commissioners also raised concerns related to safety on state highways and the lack of a clear mechanism for towns to raise concerns related to state highways in their community with state authorities. Currently, there is no clear, consistent process for towns to raise local concerns related to state highways with VTrans. Marlboro, in particular, has major concerns related to safety on VT-9 in the area of Hogback Mountain after a pedestrian was struck and killed in the area in the summer of 2024. Londonderry, located at the intersection of Routes 100 and 11, similarly has concerns about safety for all users on state highways, as well as the impact of high levels of medium and heavy-duty truck traffic on quality of life for residents and visitors of Londonderry village.

**Scheduling of Future Meeting:** The Committee discussed hosting an in-person participation encouraged meeting in the coming months. This would include an invitation for VTrans Planning Coordinator Abe Koffman to attend. Scheduling this meeting will be revisited next month.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Cowan, seconded by Commissioner Mora. Passes unanimously.

**Next Meeting Scheduled:** April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Meeting adjourned approximately 5:25 p.m.

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*Respectfully submitted, Colin Bratton, Staff*