

Vermont Traffic Committee
Approved Minutes of Meeting Held
March 20, 2019

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Thursday September 27, 2018. Committee Chair Joe Flynn called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm in the VTrans Board Room, Davis Building, Montpelier, Vermont. The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm.

Attendees:

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair

Capt. Mike Manley, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member

Not Present: Commissioner of DMV, Traffic Committee Legal Advisor

Ian Degutis, VTrans Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Marguerite Ladd, Town Administrator, Cambridge VT

Tim Scoggins, Selectboard Chair, Shaftsbury VT

Renae Marshall, Town Administrator, Hinesburg VT (by phone)

Marcos Miller, VTrans Traffic Operations

Joe Kelly, VTrans Traffic Operations

Tyler Guazzoni, VTrans Traffic Operations

Kristin Driscoll, VTrans Traffic Operations

Lt. Tara Thomas, Vermont State Police

Joshua Schultz, OSB Bureau Director, VTrans

Amy Bell, Planning Coordinator, VTrans

Joe Segale, Policy and Planning Bureau Director

Agenda Items Discussed

- **Cambridge VT-15 and VT-104, Speed Limit:** Mr. Degutis explained that the request for these items were outcomes of a Road Safety Audit performed at this location last year, and that some other improvements recommended by that report were in progress or completed, but outside of the Traffic Committee, which is only looking at the Speed Limit requests. Mr. Degutis explained Traffic Operations' recommendation to extend the 35 mph speed zone on VT-15 to a point just west of VT-104, near the bottom of the hill, based on the results of the speed study performed in that area, and their recommendation to retain the speed limit of 50 mph on VT-104 based on the limited effectiveness of a very short speed zone in the acceleration/deceleration area at the intersection, and the results of a speed study approximately 0.4 miles up from the intersection not supporting a longer zone of reduced speed limit. Mr. Degutis also shared an email from the chair of the Selectboard indicating no comments or testimony on the recommendations. The Traffic Committee voted to accept Traffic Operations recommendations, extending the 35 mph zone to the west and retaining the 50 mph zone on VT-104.

- Shaftsbury VT-7A, Speed Limit:** Mr. Degutis explained that the engineering study did not support reducing the speed limit based on a speed study finding 85th percentile speeds of 54 and 56 mph in this area, generally good sight distance and limited crash history. Capt. Manley asked for additional information on the crash history and Mr. Degutis and Mr. Kelly provided more detail on the five crashes in the five-year period- three non-reportables, and two that were not attributed to speed. He also shared information on the two reported crashes that have occurred in the period after the five-year window, one of which was a deer strike and the other loss of control during inclement weather. Mr. Scoggins shared that it is ‘common knowledge’ in the community that this is an unsafe area, and he has personally witnessed a vehicle lose control on a slushy road here and leave the roadway. Sec. Flynn indicated that perhaps other measures, which could be undertaken by the Agency outside Traffic Committee purview, might be more appropriate. Mr. Scoggins inquired why the Agency was reluctant to reduce the speed limit when it would only cause a few seconds delay; Sec. Flynn explained that reducing the speed limit would likely not produce a meaningful reduction in speeds. Radar Speed Feedback carts from the State Police were suggested as a potential solution. Sec. Flynn asked that VTrans continue to work with the Town on potential other solutions, such as permanent Radar Speed Feedback Signs, and that VSP work with the local Sheriff to supply a speed cart. The Committee voted to accept Traffic Operations recommendation and retain the 50 mph speed limit.
- Hinesburg VT-116, Speed Limit:** Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to shift the 50-40 mph and 40-30 mph transition zones to the south, on the southerly end of Hinesburg village. He discussed the results of the speed study just south of the current 50-40 transition, and the 85th percentile speed not supporting shifting the transition to the south, but the site conditions and traffic patterns supporting shifting the 40-30 mph transition slightly to the south so it occurred before the curve rather than after. The only crash in this area was a double-fatal at very high speed, far exceeding posted limits. Ms. Marshall (by phone) asked clarifying questions about the locations of the proposed and existing transitions and voiced support for shifting the 50-40 mph transition to the south, so that they could enforce the lower limit. The Committee voted to accept Traffic Operations recommendation to shift the 40-30 mph transition to the south, and retain the 50-40 transition as-is.
- Canaan VT-253, Speed Limit:** Mr. Degutis explained the recommendation to create a new 30 mph zone approaching Beecher Falls in keeping with the changing character of the roadway. He shared with the Committee that the chair of the Canaan Selectboard had voiced support for this change by phone, and that this request has been on hold awaiting completion of the adjacent bridge to NH, to allow a representative study be completed. The Committee voted to establish the 30 mph zone.

Additional Agenda Items:

- Mr. Degutis gave a brief explanation of the minor adjustments to existing certificates on VT-133 in Middletown Springs and Tinmouth, which are updates to reflect revisions to Town lines and milemarkers and do not reflect a change in field conditions.
- Joe Segale, Director of the Policy and Planning Bureau at VTrans spoke to the Committee regarding proposed Connected and Autonomous Vehicle legislation, which is likely to be voted

on this week. The legislation would allow testing of autonomous vehicles in Vermont, and would grant the Traffic Committee authority to issue permits for this testing on state highways. Municipalities would need to authorize testing on local roads. Mr. Segale gave a brief overview of levels of automation and what types of vehicles this legislation would apply to. He explained why testing in Vermont is desirable; that the legislation would require a human to be able to control the vehicle, but that control could be remote; that in the event of a crash the tester would be required to share their data with both law enforcement and the Agency; and that the vehicles would be required to be clearly marked. There was discussion about how law enforcement could 'pull over' an autonomous vehicle. Mr. Segale's presentation to the Committee was informational, with no action taken.

Other Committee Items:

- Sec. Flynn shared an update regarding a tabled Traffic Committee item from May 2018, regarding a No Parking Zone in Williamstown. The item had been tabled pending a property owner undertaking some voluntary changes once VTrans identified the limits of the highway ROW. Sec. Flynn indicated that it is his understanding that when VTrans ROW arrived to mark the ROW line, the business owner indicated he was not going to perform the changes he had agreed to at the Committee meeting in May. He asked whether the Town needed to formally request this item be put back on the Committee's agenda; Mr. Degutis opined that since the item was tabled, the Committee could bring it back up for discussion at its discretion. Mr. Degutis agreed to reach out to the Town and put this item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Traffic Committee.