

**Vermont Traffic Committee  
Final - Minutes of Meeting Held  
August 23, 2021**

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Monday August 23, 2021. Committee Chair Joe Flynn called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on a virtual Microsoft Teams call. A physical location was also available and open for anyone to attend in person at the VTrans Dill Building in Berlin, VT. The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 pm.

**Attendees:**

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair  
Wanda Minoli, Commissioner of Dept. of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee Member  
Lt. Tara Thomas, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member  
Jenny Ronis, Assistant Attorney General, Traffic Committee Legal Advisor

Ian Degutis, VTrans Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Alexandra Glass, Dorset  
Justin Rabidoux, South Burlington  
Margie and Andrew McBurney, Dorset  
Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager, Dorset  
Rob Ramrath, Barnard  
Craig White, Resident, Dorset  
John Nassivera, Resident, Rupert  
Ken Mitchell-Eby, Selectboard Chair, Barton

Kristin Driscoll, VTrans Traffic Operations  
Joe Kelly, VTrans Traffic Operations  
Stephanie Lemieux, VTrans Traffic Operations  
Marcos Miller, VTrans Traffic Operations  
Josh Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations  
Eric Eby, VTrans Traffic Operations  
Todd Sears, VTrans Operations and Safety Bureau  
Josh Schultz, VTrans Operations and Safety Bureau

## Agenda Items Discussed

- **Barnard VT-12, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to review the speed limit on VT-12 and evaluate the 30 mph zone through the village. There is a 40 mph transition on the southern end and no transition on the northern end. Three speed studies were conducted in the 30 mph zone showing the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds to be 42, 35, and 34 mph which indicates moderately good compliance in the 30. Mr. Degutis explained that 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed below which 85 percent of vehicles are moving, which is a standard measurement used in engineering review of speed limits. There have been 4 crashes in the past 5 years, none of which have descriptions. This tends to mean they were all relatively minor crashes.

The town has recently installed two Radar Speed Feedback Signs (RSFS) on either end of the village, so Traffic Operations' recommendation is to retain the current speed limits and submit a work order for some brush cutting on the westerly side of VT-12 across from the Barnard General Store to increase sight lines. Rob Ramrath spoke with the selectboard who are satisfied with the speed study as well as the recommendation. People in the town would like to see the speed limit lowered but the selectboard doesn't think that will affect the speeds, they are seeing some behavioral changes from the RSFS. Mr. Ramrath asked if the tree trimming is in the State right of way and if the state will be doing the work. Marcos Miller confirmed that it is in the right of way, but they will also be working with property owners as well as the district and the town to complete it. He also commented on how professionally the RSFS are installed and would be open to moving them to more suitable locations in the future, pending further discussion. The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to accept Traffic Operation' recommendation for no change at this time.

- **Barton US-5, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to review the speed limits along US-5 in Barton and to create a seasonal 35 mph speed limit along Crystal Lake on the state-owned section. Mr. Degutis informed the committee that Traffic Operations is trying to reduce or eliminate these seasonal speed limits because they can be confusing to drivers. There are houses and camps along US-5 whose lake access is across the road. Also note that the request would eliminate the current passing zone because VTrans does not install passing zones on segments where the speed limit is less than 45 mph.

As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted three speed studies, which found the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed to be 55 mph in the 50 mph zone near the boat ramp, 52 mph on the 50 mph side of the 40/50 transition, and 43 mph approaching the 30 mph zone. There has been a total of 1 crash in the past five years along this segment of road.

Mr. Degutis explained Traffic Operations' recommendation is to reduce the speed limit to 40 mph for approximately half of the requested section adjacent to the current 40 mph zone. On behalf of the Selectboard, Mr. Mitchell-Eby voiced concern because the request came from the community located south of the boat ramp which is not included in the recommended speed reduction. Mr. Degutis explained that the roadway character in that location does not indicate that the speed limit is too high which is shown by good speed limit compliance there. Based on the character of the road he doesn't believe changing the speed limit near the boat ramp would change drivers' speeds. Mr. Mitchell-Eby doesn't like that some sections invite drivers to drive faster than others because the greatest difficulty is pulling onto the road, which is a concern

everywhere. The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to accept the recommendation proposed by Traffic Operations.

- **Dorset VT-30, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to extend the 40 mph zone for about a half mile to the Rupert town line. The traffic investigators expanded the study zone about .75 miles to include Rupert as well. Mr. Degutis explained that the engineering study measured the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds to be 49 mph in the 50 mph zone for both locations in Dorset. In Rupert the speeds were measured to be 53 and 57 mph in the 50 mph zone. Based on the one crash in this location, Mr. Degutis explained Traffic Operations' recommendation is to retain the current speed limits. Although this is the only 50 mph zone in Dorset, which was a concern of the town, he says that while following the road there is no change at the town line that necessitates a speed limit change.

Rob Gaiotti, Dorset Town Manager, asked if the speed study is based on both directions which was confirmed by Joe Kelly who did the study. Mr. Gaiotti stated that he believes the intersection with VT-315 is dangerous and the 2 stop signs cause trouble for motorists and even though it is located in Rupert, functionally this location is a neighborhood of Dorset. As you approach the village of Dorset the speeds do drop down but in his opinion 49 mph through the village setting is still too fast, drivers are also expected to slow down to 30 mph within a mile and a half. The school bus says they will not stop in this location, even with flashing lights, because it is too dangerous because of the speeds. Mr. Gaiotti identified the exact location between speed study 1 and 2 and he noted that there is also a nursery here which sees significant turning traffic.

Margie and Andrew McBurney have been at their home for 30 years and they say there have been lots of accidents here. Mrs. McBurney says that cars are stopped and backed up at the nursery waiting to turn left and described several accidents that occurred in the vicinity.

Craig White, who lives near the location of speed study 2, would like the committee to reconsider because he said the school bus will not stop but even if it did, they don't think they would want it too because it is dangerous. They are located very close to the road and would like the speed limit reduced. Alex Glass says the challenge is that this section is between two curves, is downhill and is a busy residential section. When you pull out onto the road even cars come up very fast so there is no time to get up to speed. Traffic is also not prepared for a stopped vehicle waiting to turn. She also voiced concerns about the school bus stop. Mr. Gaiotti says they contract 40-50 hours a week for the Bennington County police and when there are police present the traffic follows the speed limit but traffic speeds back up once the police leave. Mr. Nassivera says that there is little visibility on the corner and has seen 3 near accidents here. He feels that the speed limit needs to change north of the intersection with VT-315 and says it is a very bad intersection and added that this is a common location for bicycles.

Commissioner Minoli asked if there is a better transition location. Mr. Degutis explained that Traffic Operations tries to reduce the number of transitions and place them in a way that people naturally drive so it's important that they are in locations where it makes sense to change speed and far enough apart to allow acceleration and deceleration. He would encompass the whole area with a single speed limit whether it be 40, 45 or 50, but he recommends keeping it at 50. There would be a single speed limit from the current 40/50 transition through the curves and there would be no transitions.

Lt. Thomas stated her concern with the proximity of the nursery in relation to the corner and would like to extend the current 40 mph zone with Commissioner Minoli's support. Secretary Flynn suggested school bus stop signs could be considered to add awareness and Ms. Glass would also like to consider other alternatives to the "watch for turning vehicles" sign, both of which Joe Kelly can help address outside of the Traffic Committee Meeting. Commissioner Minoli asked if Rupert has been involved in any conversations because that seems to be where the speeding traffic is coming from, and Mr. Gaiotti says they reached out but did not receive a response.

The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to extend the 40 mph zone from the existing 40/50 transition, to a point just north of the intersection with VT-315, with the precise location to be determined in the field by the Traffic Investigations team.

- **Hyde Park VT-100, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to extend the 35 mph speed limit in North Hyde Park further north to encompass the fire station and Locke Avenue which is about a quarter mile so not a significant change. Lowering the speed limit would also eliminate the current passing zone. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted speed studies, which found the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed near Locke Ave to be 51 mph in the 50 mph zone and 44 mph in the 35 mph zone.

Mr. Degutis explained that Traffic Operations' recommendation is to extend the speed limit as requested, which is more a transition adjustment than speed limit change and the town has indicated their support for the recommendation.

The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to accept Traffic Operations' Recommendation.

- **Killington VT-100, No Parking:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is from VTrans DTA Rob Faley with support from the Town Chief of Police, and is to create a legal No Parking zone in the vicinity of an existing shooting range located on the westerly side of VT-100 to discourage parking on the shoulder and bringing in large items. There is an error in the available packet and the traffic investigator informed everyone that there has only been a total of 1 crash in the past five years along this segment of road.

Mr. Degutis explained Traffic Operations' recommendation is to create a No Parking zone of about a quarter mile along VT-100. The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to create a No Parking zone as recommended.

- **Marshfield US-2, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to review the speed limit on US-2 near the Plainfield/Marshfield town line and Hollister Hill Road. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted 1 speed study in the 40 mph zone, which found the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed to be 43 mph. There has been a total of 17 crashes in the past five years along this segment of road, which is considered a High Crash Location.

Mr. Degutis explained Traffic Operations' recommendation is to extend the 30 mph zone to the east to encompass the curve by moving the 30/40 transition to the current location of the 40/50 transition. This will also require shifting the 40/50 transition approximately 700 feet east. This is more of a transition relocation to find a better location. He explained that selecting locations where signs could be installed in visible locations was a significant factor in the proposed transition locations.

The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation.

- **Poultney VT-30, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the initial request from the Town was quite expansive and included a significant area within the town of Wells, but based on earlier conversations about the concern in the area, and subsequent discussions with the Town Manager about the specific request, Traffic Operations is making a much more modest recommendation at this time, as this could be presented to the Committee more quickly. Mr. Degutis explained that Traffic Operations recommendation is to make a small transition adjustment to move the 40/50 transition about 575 feet north to include the busy parking lot at Otto's store and ice cream stand within the 40 mph section. There were no speed studies conducted for this transition adjustment. The town has given their support of this plan.

The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation.

- **South Burlington VT-116, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to review the speed limits along the entirety of VT-116 in South Burlington. It begins at the Williston town line with a speed limit of 50 mph, drops to 45 mph just south of Van Sicklen Road, drops to 40 mph further north, and finally drops to 35 just prior to the bridge over the interstate and continues past Kennedy Drive to US-2.

As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted seven speed studies using pneumatic tubes, which found the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds, from south to north, to be 60 mph in the 50 mph zone, 53 and 54 mph in the 45 mph zone, 52 mph in the 40 mph zone, and 45 43 and 42 mph in the 35 mph. This shows generally poor compliance with existing posted speed limits, which would not support reducing the speed limits.

There has been a total of 152 crashes in the past five years along this segment of road which is quite high, but it is also a high traffic location and a larger section than the Traffic Committee normally looks at.

Some changes currently being made in this area include a traffic signal being installed at Tilley Drive as well as 3 new crosswalks between installed between Kennedy Drive and US-2.

Traffic Operations recommends creating a 30 mph zone from Kennedy Drive north to US-2, in consideration of the new crosswalks installed in that segment, and recommends slight transition adjustments elsewhere along the route, generally retaining the existing speed limits.

Mr. Rabidoux shared that he had presented to the city council and the public to see how he should be responding in today's meeting. The City just received VTrans approval for the 3 new crosswalks and a 4<sup>th</sup> which will receive some enhancements, all between Kennedy Drive and Williston Road. The city is also trying to create a city center along Market St and this area along VT-116 has been targeted as a growth area. The population here is already dense and will be

becoming denser. They are trying to create a more walkable and drivable street and are requesting a 25 mph zone in the north end of this study. Mr. Rabidoux also noted that too many speed limit changes are not good and suggests a 35 mph zone from Kennedy drive to Van Sicklen Rd and the remainder could be 45 mph until it exits the community where it could become 50 mph. There have been several developments already and there will be more community developments in the area, ultimately adding hundreds of new houses. Mr. Rabidoux states that what is there today will be drastically changing in the coming years.

Mr. Degutis noted the lack of compliance along this road and hopes that the better pedestrian facilities will help to change the character of the road and cause drivers to reduce their speeds. He doesn't believe that changing the speed limit will reduce speeds that are being driven without the changes in character and increased enforcement.

Commissioner Minoli asked if Traffic Operations has looked at this exact proposal from South Burlington and Mr. Degutis says that similar things have been considered but he hadn't heard the details of the proposal until today. The speed studies were significantly higher than he expected, and he wouldn't feel comfortable recommending the proposal from South Burlington. Lt.

Thomas says that based on the current speed, it would be a safe bet to go with Traffic Operations recommendation. Secretary Flynn reminded Mr. Rabidoux that we can always revisit this in a few years when there have been some changes. He restated that Traffic Operations' proposal is to reduce the speed limit from 35 to 30 in one location and change a few transition locations by a few hundred feet but that it is a relatively minor change.

Mr. Rabidoux said that he presented the speed studies to the city council who believe that people will always drive 9-12 mph over the speed limit so lowering the speed limit will have an effect because drivers will then be going 10 mph over the 25 mph speed limit instead of 10 mph over the 35 mph speed limit. They say that the police aren't stopping anyone for going 10 mph over the speed limit because the courts are not supporting those tickets.

The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to accept Traffic Operations' recommendation to reduce the speed limit from 35 mph to 30 mph from Kennedy Drive north to Williston Road, and make a few other minor changes to transition locations. Sec. Flynn reiterated that this doesn't mean that there will never be any changes at this location, because it can always be revisited and is always open to be discussed in the future as further development occurs.

- **Waterville VT-109, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request was to extend the 30 mph zone south on VT-109 to encompass Hogback Road. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted speed studies, which found the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds to be 47 mph in the 50 mph zone and in 40 mph zone they were measured as 43 and 40 mph in the vicinity of Hogback Rd. There were 4 crashes in the area, 1 in the rain and none other had any info.

Mr. Degutis explained Traffic Operations' recommendation is to make no change at this location and the town had provided written support of this recommendation. There are other improvements which are outside the purview of the Traffic Committee specific that Traffic Operations is working with the Town on. The Traffic Committee unanimously voted to accept Traffic Operations' recommendation.

### **Additional Agenda Items:**

Mr. Degutis introduced and briefly explained the following minor adjustments to certificates being placed before the Committee. There were no additional questions from the Committee on these items and voted unanimously in favor.

- Lyndon, US-5, Speed Certificate adjustment: This item is an administrative update to the speed certificate due to some development and because of a driveway.
- Shrewsbury, VT-103, Speed Certificate adjustment: This item is also an administrative update to the speed certificate which is to correct a typographical error on the existing certificate.

Secretary Flynn adjourned the meeting at 3:06 pm.

Minutes prepared by Joshua Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations, and submitted via Ian Degutis, Traffic Operations Engineer/Traffic Committee Coordinator. Approved by email 8/26/2021.