

Vermont Traffic Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held
October 22, 2015

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Thursday October 22, 2015. Committee Chair Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm in the 5th floor Transportation Board Room, Davis Building, Montpelier, Vermont. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Attendees:

Chris Cole, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair

Robert Ide, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee Member

Capt. Timothy Clouatre, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member

Thomas McCormick, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Amy Gamble, Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Michael Golden, AOT Traffic Operations

Marcos Miller, AOT Traffic Operations

Joe Kelly, AOT Traffic Operations

Tyler Guazzoni, AOT Traffic Operations

Corinne Moulton, resident, Warren

Brian Moulton, resident, Warren

George Morehouse, Select Board, Concord (by phone)

Connie Quimby, State Representative, Concord

Neil McIntire, Flood Brook School, Londonderry (by phone)

Linda Lavalley, resident, Barton

Agenda Items Discussed

Concord US 2: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, based on the town's request to reduce and extend the existing 35 mph zone in the village of Concord. Due to 85th percentile speeds near the posted speed, low crash history, and relatively low AADT's, the engineering recommendation was to retain the existing speed limit as is. Mr. McIntire and Rep. Quimby explained various local concerns, including poor sight distance from side streets due to curves on either end of the village, events like town meeting that cause significant on-street parking and pedestrian crossing activity, and significant numbers of higher speed through truck traffic. Mr. McIntire stated that there has not been an issue with drivers disregarding pedestrians in the crosswalk. The town currently contracts with the sheriff for enforcement. During video review, Ms. Gamble offered several sign improvements, including addition of W3-5 warning signs for the 35 mph zone and gateposting the initial speed limit signs for better visibility. The Traffic Committee voted to reduce the existing 35 mph zone to 30 mph in keeping with other similar village speed limits, but to retain the existing transition points with no extension.

Londonderry VT 11: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, based on the town and school's request to establish a reduced school speed limit for Flood Brook Elementary School, near the Londonderry/Landgrove town line. Due to the lack of pedestrian activity along or crossing the highway, relatively good sight distance, lack of observed queuing to turn into the school drive, lack of school related crashes, and the setback of school outdoor activity areas from the highway, the engineering recommendation was to retain the existing 50 mph speed limit. Mr. McIntire stated that there was recently a rear-end collision of a parent waiting to enter the school and that queuing does happen sporadically. He also stated that the school has a "Safe Routes to School" committee, and one of the main deterrents for the 20 or so students that live nearby in the Sherwood Forest housing development to walk or ride to school is the short distance they would have to walk along and then cross VT 11. There are currently no pedestrian paths along any of the roadways or on the school property. The Traffic Committee advised Mr. McIntire that a reduced speed limit could be considered in a "package" with pedestrian facilities but not before. In the meantime, the Traffic Committee instructed Traffic Operations to install programmable flashing beacons on the School Advance Warning signs, to flash during school arrival and departure periods. The school will be required to enter into an MOU with VTrans to operate the flashing beacons according to the school calendar.

Warren VT 100: Ms. Gamble explained that VTrans District 5 had requested that the "No Parking on Travelled Lanes" signs in the vicinity of the parking lot for Warren Falls swimming hole be changed into a legal "No Parking" zone. Mr. and Mrs. Moulton, who live across the road from the parking area, brought photos showing up to 40 vehicles parked on both sides of the highway on Labor Day weekend because the parking lot was full. Many of these vehicles were parked over the white line, and even those that managed to park off the white line left no room for pedestrians to walk along the shoulder. This is a serious safety concern because there is very little sight distance in the curvy section of VT 100. This is also a popular bicycling route, and the parking activity forces cyclists to use the travel lane rather than the newly widened shoulder. The Traffic Committee was concerned that creating a no parking zone may not affect driver behavior, but if it did, that the problem might simply be pushed down the road. The Traffic Committee requested that discussions continue with the stakeholders (including the National Forest Service, Town, and District) and a proposed solution brought back to the Traffic Committee at their next meeting.

Barton US 5: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, based on the town's request for an extension of the existing 40 mph speed limit southerly along Crystal Lake due to summer recreation activities. Due to excellent sight distance, low AADT's, lack of crash history, and relatively good compliance with the existing speed limit, the engineering recommendation was to retain the existing speed limit. Ms. Lavalley, a resident and hotel owner, explained that her guests must cross the road to get to the lake, and that many have small children or are elderly. She also noted that the boat launch is on a curve and does not have as good sight distance and can be difficult to pull out of while towing a boat. She also stated that logging trucks tend to gather speed coming down the hill toward her property and are often exceeding the speed limit by 10 or 20 mph. The Traffic Committee voted to retain the existing speed limit.

Eden VT 100: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, based on the town's request for a safety study and possible reduction of speed near the intersection of VT 100/VT 118. Due to this being a "spot hazard", the engineering recommendation was to add intersection warning signs rather than reduce the speed limit, and for the town to work with the general store owner to create specific access points in the open frontage across from the intersection. In a letter, the town and business owner stated that they agreed with the addition of warning signs, but stated that access management would not be pursued. The Traffic Committee voted to retain the existing speed limit.

St Albans VT 104: Ms Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, based on the town's request for a reduction in speed and permission for a crosswalk on VT 104 in the vicinity of the Northwest Counseling Services. Due to relatively good compliance with the existing speed limit, the engineering recommendation was to retain the existing speed limit, although there is a relatively high crash rate. Warning signs will be added to the Congress St intersection. The crosswalk does not meet pedestrian volume warrants. The Traffic Committee voted to retain the existing speed limit.

Williston VT 2A: Ms Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, based on the town's request for a reduction in speed limit from Industrial Ave to the Essex town line. Due to the relatively low crash rate and the relatively good compliance with the existing speed limit, the engineering recommendation was to retain the existing speed limit. The Traffic Committee voted to retain the existing speed limit.

Other Agenda Items:

Ms. Gamble gave brief explanations of the remaining agenda items, including certificate adjustments that were identified as part of an effort to re-establish an electronic database of traffic regulations. Many obsolete no parking zones were identified, and speed limit site descriptions outdated due to changes in town highway numbers or route mileage since the speed zone was established. There will be more of these to come in upcoming meetings.

The Traffic Committee approved staff recommendation on all other agenda items, including certificate adjustments.