



# VERMONT FREIGHT PLAN & RAIL PLAN UPDATES

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## Fast Facts: Intercity Passenger and Freight Rail

Vermont’s rail system is a vital component of the state’s multi-modal transportation system. This State Rail Plan provides a framework for maintaining and enhancing the rail system – both intercity passenger service and freight rail. From visiting a friend in New York City or welcoming skiers on the *Ethan Allen*

*Express* and *Vermont*, to importing hops for craft beer or exporting granite for harbor projects around the U.S., rail plays an integral role in improving sustainability and vibrancy for Vermont’s residents, places, and businesses.

### DID YOU KNOW?



Amtrak’s 11 stations in Vermont (plus one in Claremont, NH) had more than **95,000** passengers in FY2019.



Vermont’s **16** transload sites provide businesses with a way to move goods between rail and road.



The area around Brattleboro’s station (Vermont’s 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest) is a “Walker’s Paradise” according to Walkscore.com.



Rail carried approximately **15%** of all goods (by weight) moving in to, out of, within, or through Vermont in 2018.

## Rail Projects Take Shape

These days, we can barely envision what next month will bring, let alone next year. However, long range planning can anticipate, and even help to shape, a range of future scenarios. Planning establishes a vision and high-level policy and program needs.

In addition, specific projects identified in past Freight Plan (2012) and Rail Plan (2015) efforts are moving forward. For example:

- Continued safety improvements for highway-rail crossings (25 funded over the next three years)

- Extension of *Ethan Allen Express* to Burlington (2021) and *Vermont* to Montreal (Pending)
- Middlebury Tunnel/Bridge Replacements (Underway, to be completed in 2021; learn more [here](#))

Visit the VTransparency [project map](#), with details and status for statewide modal improvements, focusing on roads and highways.

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In addition to new ideas put forth by stakeholders and identified through analysis of data, we will consider relevant ideas from prior plans. Examples include the initiatives below from the Freight Plan.

Type	Description	2012 Cost Estimate
Highway Project	The primary existing routes, such as US Route 2, US Route 4 and US Route 7 and Vermont Routes 9, 22A and 103, offer occasional truck climbing and passing lanes, but are primarily two-lane rural highways. Improve the efficiency and reliability of these routes by adding truck climbing lanes where steep grades exist, reducing curb cuts in commercial districts, and coordinating signal phases in urban areas.	High
Highway Program/ Policy	Consider issuance of annual permits, acceptance of credit card payment of permit fees in lieu of an escrow account, provision of information on the permitting process, routes and requirements, improved coordination with towns/villages (for notification and potential permitting) and other steps to improve the efficiency of oversize/overweight truck movements.	Low
Rail Program/ Policy	Assume an advocacy role, working with local economic development authorities and planners, to communicate the importance of preserving rail-served industrial land.	Low
Multi-modal Program/ Policy	Develop a "dashboard" that can be displayed on the VTrans website. The dashboard would show the past history, current levels and anticipated trends in key freight performance measures.	Low

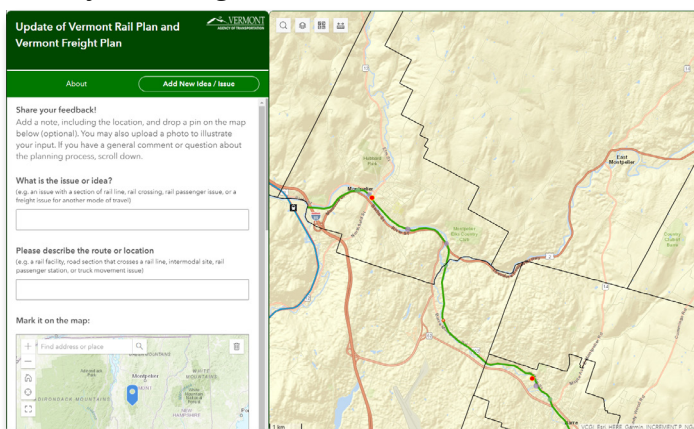
## Online Tool Collects Your Feedback – With Perks!

Imagine dropping a pin on a virtual AOT-hosted map to easily provide feedback. Now you can.

We are pleased to share a new interactive map for planning initiatives. By compiling several resources into one dynamic tool, this map provides access to useful information (such as Amtrak station locations or freight rail transload facilities) and solicits geographically-based ideas for improvement.

While we may have grand visions for the future of freight and rail, the reality is Vermont is limited by funding. Regardless, smaller investments in operations and software can make big impacts.

Visit <https://bit.ly/VTFreightRailMap> to explore and share your thoughts.



## Join the Virtual Town Hall Meeting

Public outreach looks and feels a bit different during these plan updates. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our team is pursuing an engagement strategy completely online – at least through 2020.

This Fall, we are hosting a series of presentations with Vermont’s diverse Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). In October, we will host the first of two virtual Town Halls. These are opportunities for all stakeholders to participate.

The first Town Hall will include a short project briefing, followed by a question and answer session. Please save the date and see [here](#) for details.

**Tuesday, October 6 | 4:00-5:00 PM**

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

### Connect with the Team

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