

**Vermont Traffic Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held
May 15, 2018**

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Tuesday May 15, 2018. Committee Chair Joe Flynn called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm in the VTrans Board Room, Davis Building, Montpelier, Vermont. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Attendees:

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair
Wanda Minoli, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee Member
Capt. Tim Clouatre, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member
Tom McCormick, AAG, Traffic Committee legal advisor
Amy Gamble, Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Marcos Miller, VTrans Traffic Operations
Joe Kelly, VTrans Traffic Operations
Tyler Guazzoni, VTrans Traffic Operations
Chris Mercon, VTrans Traffic Operations
Joshua Schultz, TSMO Manager, VTrans
Ian Degutis, Traffic Mobility Engineer, VTrans
Cos Gardner, Project Manager, VTrans Rail
Jon Kaplan, Bicycle & Pedestrian Engineer, VTrans
Amy Bell, Planning Coordinator, VTrans

Donald Hull, Chief of Police, Stowe

Tom Marsh, Town Manager, Windsor

Jacqueline Higgins, Town Manager, Williamstown
Scott Vaillancourt, Select Board Vice Chair, Williamstown
Chris Deseureau, Owner Green Mountain Auto, Williamstown
Alyson Codling, Manager Green Mountain Auto, Williamstown

Agenda Items Discussed

Stowe VT 108, No Parking: Ms. Gamble explained that the requested no parking zone is intended to improve pedestrian safety along VT 108 in the vicinity of the Bingham Falls parking pullouts. There is a narrow bridge just north of the pullouts with narrow shoulders that could force pedestrians to walk in the travel lane, so parking is proposed to be prohibited on both sides of the road. District 8 personnel requested that the proposed no parking zone be extended 350 ft north of the town's initial request due to winter parking activities near the campground access which inhibit snow removal. South of the pullouts, the shoulder is wide enough for pedestrian and bicycle use as long as vehicles are not parked on it. For this reason, parking is proposed to be allowed on the wide grass roadside on the northbound side of the road, but prohibited southbound where there is no space for vehicles to park off the pavement. Chief

Hull indicated that the town was in favor of the revised proposal. The Committee voted to establish the no parking zones as recommended.

Williamstown VT 14, No Parking: Ms. Gamble explained that the town requested a no parking zone along the frontage of Green Mountain Auto in order to improve corner sight distance from Depot St. Mr. Deseureau explained that he has met with the town and Agency employees on multiple occasions, and that while he was initially told that the VT 14 highway ROW is 3 rods, he recently received notification from VTrans permitting section that the ROW is 4 rods, which would essentially eliminate all use of the lot in front of his building, making it impossible to run his business. In the meantime, he has engaged a lawyer who found court records showing a 1988 judgement that the ROW is indeed 3 rods. Mr. Deseureau stated that if the Agency agrees that the ROW is 3 rods and marks where the line is, he will install a 3 ½ ft high planter along the ROW line for 15 feet parallel to VT 14 to prevent parking on his lot near the intersection corner. Additionally, he will install concrete curb stops along the rest of his frontage where his cars are displayed, positioned such that no portion of the vehicles will overhang the ROW. He will do this within 30 days of VTrans marking the ROW line. He also stated that he is going to sign and mark two customer parking spaces on the side of his building.

Given these assurances, Secretary Flynn explained to the town that he was going to table their request for a no parking zone and see if these actions adequately mitigate the sight distance issues. If not, then the issue will be opened again, but will be extended to look at sight distance issues in both directions at the intersection, since Mr. Deseureau pointed out that the sight distance to the north is similarly compromised by the parking activities on the lot on the opposite corner.

Windsor US 5, No Parking: Ms. Gamble explained that this is a request to make an existing town installed No Parking zone legal. The town installed signs in order to prevent cars from blocking corner sight distance at Eddies Place, a private road that is used for recreational access to the town forest. The Traffic Committee voted to legally establish the existing no parking zone.

Statewide, Bicycles on Partial Control Limited Access Highways: Ms. Gamble explained that there is a disconnect between 23 VSA 1139(d), which allows bicycles to use the shoulders of partially controlled limited access highways unless prohibited by the Traffic Committee, and Traffic Committee Regulation Article 1.8(c) which prohibits bicycle use on partially controlled limited access highways unless allowed by the Traffic Committee. In order to clear up any confusion, a certificate was drafted including all partially controlled limited access highway segments with one table for those segments where bicycle use is allowed and one where bicycle use is prohibited. Traffic Operations reviewed each segment in consultation with Jon Kaplan, VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Engineer. Segments were recommended for prohibition where there are interstate style high speed merge areas where cyclists would be at risk. The Traffic Committee reviewed the recommendations and made one change to allow bicycle use on VT 63 between the VT 14 intersection and East Road intersection, with a prohibition from East Road to I-89. The Traffic Committee voted to approve the revised certificate.

Dorset US 7, No Parking: Ms. Gamble explained that the no parking zone extension was being recommended due to corner sight distance restrictions when large trucks park on the shoulder of US 7 to access the convenience store across the road. The Traffic Committee voted to approve the extension.

Elmore VT 12, Speed Limit: Ms. Gamble explained that the town requested an engineering review of the speed limits (50 and 35) between the cemetery south of Lake Elmore and the state park campground entrance to the north of the lake. She explained that the engineering study did not support a reduction in the speed limit. Secretary Flynn asked whether radar speed feedback signs might improve compliance with the 35 mph zone, since the 85th percentile speed at the northern end was found to be 47 mph. Ms. Gamble advised that it could, and that the town could install RSFS under an 1111 permit from VTrans if it wanted to pursue that option. The Traffic Committee voted to retain the existing speed limits.

Fairfax VT 104, No Passing: Ms. Gamble explained that a no passing zone was requested due to safety concerns at a private road within an existing marked passing zone. Sight distance is good at this location (it is a marked passing zone). Ms. Gamble advised that Traffic Operations intends to install “Watch for Turning Vehicles” warning signs at each end of the passing zone. The Traffic Committee voted to retain the marked passing zone.

Ferrisburg/Charlotte TH-60/TH-34, Rail Road Crossing: Ms. Gamble explained that the VTrans Rail Section is working to signalize the subject crossing, but in the meantime plans to upgrade the signs for the existing stop condition, for which there is no legal certificate on file. The Traffic Committee voted to legally establish the stop condition at this rail road crossing.

Colchester US 2/7, Speed Limit follow-up: Ms. Gamble explained that following the November 3, 2017 Traffic Committee meeting at which a 40 mph speed zone was established on US 2/7 between Rathe Road and VT 2A beyond the boundaries of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted speed studies both before and after the signs were installed. The “after” studies were conducted following robust public outreach (TV, radio, facebook) and concentrated speed enforcement efforts, and the new speed limit signs had orange flags attached for conspicuity. The speed studies show a slight reduction in the 50th and 85th percentile speeds (0-3 mph), and a decrease in the percentage of vehicles in the 10 mile pace, indicating a greater variation in speeds.

Ms. Gamble explained that speed limits that are set too low can cause variation in speeds because most drivers continue to drive at the speed they feel safe, and a minority adhere to the speed limit, and that this variation can lead to a higher risk of crashes, when higher speed drivers come upon lower speed drivers. In the southern part of the new zone, fewer than 5 percent of drivers were driving at or below 40 mph. In the northern part of the new zone in the curvy wooded section, compliance with the 40 mph speed limit was somewhat better 33 percent, but the 85th percentile speed was still 48 miles per hour. This indicates that 50 mph is the appropriate speed limit – that most drivers are driving at or below this speed, which is the desired condition, keeping in mind that a speed limit is the maximum allowed speed and not the recommended speed.

Ms. Gamble explained that as this and other previous studies have shown, reducing the speed limit in places where it is not supported by engineering study has very little effect on driver speeds and may actually increase crash risk.

Traffic Committee Regulations: Ms. Gamble explained that as Traffic Committee coordinator she has been tasked with determining whether four Traffic Committee rules (14-053-001 through 004) should be retained, amended or repealed. After discussion it was decided that AAG Tom McCormick would further research 14-053-002, which pertains to the Municipal Loan Equipment Fund, because while it

happens to be administered by the three persons who make up the Traffic Committee (in coordination with the Treasurer's office) it is not a "Traffic Committee" function. The other three rules were determined to be necessary and in need of updating.

Remaining Items: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the remaining agenda items, two of which were Certificate updates with no physical changes to the actual regulated zones, simply updates of location descriptions and milepoint references, and two of which were minor extensions of existing speed limits for signing visibility purposes. The Traffic Committee voted to accept the staff recommendations for Items C, D, F and G