

Vermont Traffic Committee
DRAFT - Minutes of Meeting Held
June 8, 2022

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Wednesday June 8, 2022. 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 2:49 pm.

Attendees:

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair
Anthony Facos, DMV Dir. of Enforcement and Safety, for Commissioner of Motor Vehicles
Jenny Ronis, Assistant Attorney General, Traffic Committee Legal Advisor

Ian Degutis, VTrans Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Don Wexler, Selectboard, Moretown
Laura Gans, Citizen, Moretown
Greg Duggan, Town Manager, Essex
Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director, Essex
Trisha Gelineau, Resident, Essex
Brian Story, Town Administrator, Johnson
Victoria Paquin, Selectboard, Royalton
Matt Murano, Chief of Police, Wilmington
Joyce Manchester, Moretown (?)

Kristin Driscoll, VTrans Traffic Operations
Jon Kaplan, VTrans Traffic Operations
Joe Kelly, VTrans Traffic Operations
Stephanie Lemieux, VTrans Traffic Operations
Marcos Miller, VTrans Traffic Operations
Josh Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations
Todd Sears, VTrans Operations and Safety Bureau
Amanda Holland, Planning Coordinator, VTrans
Bob Kleinfelter, Structures Project Manager, VTrans
Amy Bell, Planning Manager, VTrans
Gordon Landrigan, Assistant Attorney General, VTrans/DMV

Agenda Items Discussed

- **Duxbury-Moretown US-2, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request came in from the town of Moretown and there is a small section of Duxbury that is included, the request is to reduce the existing 40 mph speed limit on US-2 to 25 mph. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted 2 speed studies and measured the 85th percentile speeds to be 35 mph to the west of the traffic signal with VT-100 and 40 mph to the east of the signal, the speed limit is 40 mph. Mr. Degutis explained that 85th percentile speed is the speed below which 85 percent of free-flowing vehicles are moving, which is a standard measurement used in engineering review of speed limits. Speed limits should be set within 5 mph of the 85th percentile. There were a total of 5 crashes in a 5 year period from 2016-2020, 4 were non reportable and 1 was a driver who appears to have fallen asleep with minor injuries. Traffic Operations' recommendation is to reduce the entire current 40 mph speed zone to 35 mph, which goes from approximately Gallagher Acres to the bridge into Waterbury. Mr. Wexler is excited to see the speed limit reduction and told the committee they will be having a sidewalk study done in the same area, but he would like it if reducing the speed limit was easier. Laura Ganz conveyed her concern and wants to know what the harm would be in lowering to 25 mph. Secretary Flynn noted that when choosing speed limits more must be considered, like transition zones, and not just that location. Mr. Degutis said that transitions are chosen based on the characteristics of the road to create a natural transition in character and speed. Secretary Flynn reminded everyone that we are more than happy to revisit any stretch of road when the characteristics change. Mr. Degutis also suggested that we can look at signs and additional pedestrian features outside of Traffic Committee, which can help to create a bigger character change. The Traffic Committee voted to accept Traffic Operations recommendation to reduce the speed limit from 40 mph to 35 mph in this area.

- **Essex VT-128, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is on VT-128 in Essex, about 0.75 miles north of VT-15 near Weed Rd and the town would like to reduce the 50 mph speed limit to 40 mph from Irene Ave to a point about 500 ft north of Weed Rd. This is a revisit of a request from 2003. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted 2 speed studies, one south of Weed Rd which found an 85th percentile of 53 mph and the other was north of Weed Rd which found speeds of 51 mph which shows good compliance. The curve has a 25 mph advisory speed which Mr. Degutis says he finds to be more appropriate than a speed limit change for the curve because the signage also shows why the speed is advised. There have been 18 crashes in the study area from 2016-2020 but it is not a High Crash Location, 5 crashes resulted in a total of 8 injuries and there are no fatalities. 13 of these 18 crashes were within the curve and the data shows that snow is a factor in many but there are no other patterns. Based on the data and this being a point specific speed concern, Traffic Operations recommends retaining the speed limit, updating signage in both directions and removing brush to make the signs more visible. Sec Flynn asked about chevrons or arrows on the outside of the curve which will be considered during a field review. The town would like to see improved signage, more visible and more information to drivers about the curve. The town also conducted their own 7 day study showed the speeds to be 53 mph to the south of the curve but to the north of the curve their study showed

an 85th percentile of 42.2 mph which is a significant difference to the VTrans study which showed 51 mph. Mr. Degutis guessed that since the Essex data was taken closer to the intersection with Weed Rd and the curve, it might not capture free flow speed and also might show people slowing down coming into the curve. Since the towns speed study was done with a RSFS which captures all traffic including cars turning off Weed Rd while the VTrans study was done by hand and is only free flowing traffic.

Ms. Gelineau expressed her concerns with the speeds as well as the sight distance when turning left onto Weed Rd and recounted several trucks that have tipped over. She believes others feel the same as her which can be seen from the petition to address concerns with this corner.

Secretary Flynn suggests using Radar Speed Feedback Signs (RSFS) to inform drivers of their speeds due to the very high outliers. He acknowledged the concern with safety but if there is no enforcement then even a regulatory 25 mph zone is not effective without compliance. Mr. Facos says they have had great success with RSFSs. VTrans encouraged the town to reach out to District 5 or the Williston barracks, who might have a trailer-mounted unit available to collect more data. Secretary Flynn suggests making the recommended sign changes today by addressing the vegetation and making some signage upgrades and collecting more data to help make a better decision. The town of Essex is welcome back to continue the conversation at a later date. Mr. Degutis suggested reviewing other enhancements like flashing beacons and gate posted signage might also help. The Traffic Committee voted to accept the Traffic Operations recommendation.

- **Johnson VT-100C, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is for a speed reduction and a study of signage and pedestrian safety in the area of the twin bridges. As part of the engineering study, three speed studies were conducted which measured the 85th percentile speeds for northbound traffic to be 41 mph in 2021 and 40 mph in 2022, and 40 mph in the southbound direction in 2022. There are also a number of advisory speeds around here which were all reviewed and determined to be appropriate, the signs are all in good condition. The crash history shows 3 crashes from 2016-2020, which means this is not a high crash location. Mr. Story noted a side street where it is very hard to see cars heading southbound and VT-110C is a main route for some trucks. It's a difficult intersection because some of the trucks stop and its hard to see around them to see oncoming traffic. Sec Flynn suggests some tree or brush cutting to help improve sight distance if possible; there is a tree which appears to be on private property, and a lilac shrub which may be within the Town's right-of-way. The Traffic Committee voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation to retain the existing speed limit.

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

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is to reduce speed limit from 40 to 25 mph near the Catholic church, and from 40 to 35 mph near the park. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted speed studies in the 40 mph zone which showed the 85th percentile speed to be 42 mph in from of the church, 48 mph just south of Dorr Oil and 47 just north of the rec field access, which is not very good compliance. Part of this area was part of a study done in 2021 that yielded similar speed results which shows the speed limit adjustment that was done had very little effect on the speeds. There were 6 crashes with 2 injuries and no fatalities. Traffic Operations' recommendation is to retain the existing speed limit and increase enforcement to get better compliance. Mr. Degutis noted the recreation facility has had some expansion including a new track but there is a shared use path coming in the back, so the road is just a vehicle entrance.

The Traffic Committee voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation to retain the existing speed limit in this area.

- **Orwell VT-22A, No Parking:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is to create a legal No Parking zone on VT-22A. There were 4 crashes with 1 injury from 2016-2020 and one recent fatality near here. While parking here doesn't seem like an unreasonable behavior it does create an obstruction to sight distance. State statute restricts parking within 50 ft of an intersection and delineators have been installed since the request. Traffic Operations recommends creating No Parking zones on 3 of the 4 corners. The slope on the 4th corner has a ditch that effectively prevents people from parking here and other signs restrict No Parking signs from being installed. The Traffic Committee voted to create a No Parking zone as recommended by Traffic Operations.

- **Royalton VT-14, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is on VT-14 on the north end of the village by the railroad bridge and came in as a joint request from the Town Selectboard and VTrans project team. The request is to reduce the existing 45 mph speed limit to 40 mph, which goes from the northern bridge to the 35 mph zone through the village. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted five speed studies which showed the 85th percentile speed in the 45 mph zone to be 48 mph and outside the request zone in the 35 mph zone the speeds were found to be 34, 41, 43, and 41 mph through the village. There was a total of 13 crashes from 2016-2020, 6 were in the 45 zone and 5 of which were at the underpass with the other 7 in the village. There is a future project which hopes to fix some of the issues with the bridge height and alignment. Mr. Klinefelter gave some background about the bridge project which will improve the vertical clearance to 14'6" from 12'1" and increase the horizontal width from the existing 1 lane to two 11' lanes with 4' shoulders with a design speed of 30 mph. Mr. Degutis stated that the 45 mph zone doesn't make sense and there is a change being made at the bridge so, despite the 85th percentile, Traffic Operations recommends reducing the speed limit from 45 to 40 and retaining the existing speed limit in the village. Traffic Operations also identified some improvements that can be made on the southerly end of the study area which includes fixing the transition and signing the 35 mph speed limit before the bridge instead of after. The Town Selectboard is in support of the recommendation. The Traffic Committee voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation.

- **Rutland US-7, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request is from Rutland Town on US-7 both south and north of Rutland City. On the southern end there is a lot of lanes and traffic and there have been a number fatalities over the years with one last year. Since this road is very wide and high-traffic, Traffic Operations could not do a typical speed study with a radar gun or pneumatic tubes, so an ITS trailer was deployed which uses a radar sensor.

The request on the southern end is for a reduction from 40 mph to 35 mph from the Rutland City class 1 limit to Seward Rd. There were 47 crashes from 2016-2020 with a total of 1 injury, there was also a fatality in 2021. The 85th percentile speed is 42 mph in the 40 mph zone. The speed limit is more of a concern in off peak hours when traffic is more free flowing. Traffic Operations recommends retaining the existing speed limit because traffic at off peak times will be unlikely

to obey the lower speed limit. The town would also like to see some pedestrian improvements, there is an upcoming project which adds in pedestrian signals at Cold River Rd.

The request on the northern end goes from the Class 1 limits to the signal at Post Rd and is 4 lanes wide. Volumes here are about 2/3 of the southern portion and the speed study found the 85th percentile to be 48 mph in the 40 mph zone. There were 23 crashes here with a variety of types and causes. There is a desire for improved pedestrian facilities such as a path to the elementary school which is being studied right now. Based on the 85th percentile speed Traffic Operations recommends retaining the existing speed limit. The Traffic Committee voted to accept Traffic Operations' recommendation to retain the existing speed limit.

- **Wilmington VT-9, Speed Limit:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the request included several components, in this meeting we are only looking at the speed limit related portion and we are working with the town on the other parts of their request separately. The request is to extend the 25 mph zone west along VT-9. As part of the engineering study, Traffic Operations conducted three speed studies. In the 35 zone the 85th percentile speeds were 42 mph in the vicinity of Haystack Rd and 43 mph just east of the sharp curve which shows there is not good compliance. Within the 25 mph zone coming into the village, the 85th percentile speed was 33 mph approaching the first crosswalk. There were 9 crashes from 2016-2020, including 2 injuries and no fatalities. Traffic Operations' recommendation is to retain the existing speed limit and continue to work with the town on the other improvements to make the village safer. The Traffic Committee voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation. It was noted by Joe Kelly that the current 35 mph sign location does not align perfectly with the existing certificate and the speed certificate will be updated to reflect the current sign location. The Traffic Committee voted to accept Traffic Operations recommendation to retain the existing speed limit.

Additional Agenda Items:

- **Pownall US-7, Rescind No Parking:**

There is an existing No Parking zone on US-7 in the vicinity of the old Green Mountain Racetrack, which has not been active for a number of years. Traffic Operations is recommending rescinding the No Parking zone and removing the signs as part of an upcoming sign project. This is an Agency originated request and we have reached out to the Town but there has been no response. Traffic Operations recommends rescinding the No Parking zone. The Traffic Committee voted to approve Traffic Operations' recommendation.

Secretary Flynn adjourned the meeting at 2:49 pm.

Minutes prepared by Joshua Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations, and submitted via Ian Degutis, Traffic Operations Engineer/Traffic Committee Coordinator. Approved by email [x-x-2022](#)