

**Vermont Traffic Committee  
Minutes of Meeting Held  
October 15, 2020**

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Thursday October 15, 2020. Committee Chair Joe Flynn called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on a virtual Microsoft Teams call. The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 pm.

**Attendees:**

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair

Wanda Minoli, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee Member

Lt. Tara Thomas, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member

Sven Fedorow, AAG, Traffic Committee Legal Advisor

Ian Degutis, VTrans Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Zac Conaway, Select Board Member, Groton

Harold, Road Commissioner, Groton

Josh Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations

Kristin Driscoll, VTrans Traffic Operations

Logan Perron, VTrans District 7

Kevin Gadapee, VTrans Northeast District Transportation Administrator

Shauna Clifford, VTrans District 7

Steffanie Lemieux, VTrans Traffic Operations

**Agenda Items Discussed**

- **Groton US-302, No Parking:**

Mr. Degutis explained that the Town of Groton had requested parking be restricted on both sides of US-302 from Tannery Brook Road to the west edge of the town cemetery. Parked vehicles create a safety hazard and winter maintenance issue due to the constricted width in this area. Traffic Operations has conducted a review of this area and consulted with VTrans Maintenance District 7, who supported the request. Traffic Operations' recommendation is to create a no parking zone in this area. Groton Select Board Member Zac Conaway says that he agrees that parking in this area constricts the roadway and appreciates that the Traffic Committee is considering the request. Kevin Gadapee, VTrans NE District Transportation Administrator, reiterated his support of the request and indicated that parked vehicles in this area create a winter maintenance challenge.

The Traffic Committee voted unanimously in favor of this request.

## **Automated Vehicle Testing Guidance and Application**

### **Attendees:**

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair

Wanda Minoli, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee Member

Lt. Tara Thomas, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member

Sven Fedorow, AAG, Traffic Committee Legal Advisor

Ian Degutis, VTrans Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Joe Segale, VTrans Policy, Planning and Research Bureau Director

Mike Obuchowski, VTrans Principal Assistant

Katharine Otto, VTrans Planning Coordinator

Greg Rodriguez, Stantec (Project consultant)

Josh Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations

Dan Currier, VTrans Public Transit

Christopher Falcos, Massachusetts DOT

Marie Horbar, Assistant Attorney General, VTrans

Rebecca White, State of Vermont, Director of Risk Management

Devon Neary, Rutland RPC

Pat Murray, State of Vermont, Department of Financial Regulation Analyst

Robert W Lincoln, Rutland resident

Steve Pouliot, Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

### **Joe Segale gave a presentation to outline Guidance and Application.**

### **Questions and comments from the audience**

- Robert W Lincoln (resident of Rutland) asked how does this build public confidence? In the guidance when the AOT made the change to the crash reporting period from 12 hours to 24 hours. His second question/ statement – It is customary for testing to be for the public good of Vermont so changing established protocols should not be taken lightly. This is particularly true with blanket indemnity. I have consulted with experts. I strongly urge the committee to maintain the current practice of blanket indemnity when applying protocols. Do not give everything away in the candy store, just because they ask for it, in this case the AV testers
  - Joe Segale clarified that the normal protocol for crash reporting is 72 hours and we did shorten that. Industry comments said that 12 hours may not provide enough time to respond, especially if a crash happened at night. We have balanced protecting Vermonters, and balancing towards practical considerations to gathering information if a crash occurs.
  - Greg Rodridgez. Initial notification within 24 hours is more to let the State know that something happened and to enable coordination and investigation to start to be aligned. It is also important to remember this is an application process. It is not approving any permits yet. It is setting the stage for how it can move forward.
  - Joe Segale. To build upon what Greg said, the Traffic Committee is reviewing the application process, not approving any permits at this point

- Mike Obuchowski. The word “Familiar” may work better than “confidence”. We are hoping that familiarity with Automated Vehicles builds confidence.

### **Questions and comments from the Traffic Committee**

- Tara Thomas – With the 24- hour reporting, does it say regardless of the amount of property damage? Usually there is a \$3,000 threshold of property damage before a crash report is submitted. We should be notified of an issue regardless of the amount of property damage
  - Wanda Minoli – The guidance is aligning with current statute requirements. The Committee could make the threshold lower or require notification. I believe that immediate suspension/ cancellation of the permit will occur until the crash is investigated
  - Joe Segale. No threshold (i.e. no minimum property damage value, injury or fatality) is required for the 24-hour notice. The applicant must contact AOT for “any” crash that occurs, as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours. The law and guidance allows the law enforcement to suspend the testing permit immediately.
  - Greg . The 72 hour notification requirement is the standard per statute and does have the property damage value, injury and fatality threshold. Another useful item of note is that the permit reporting also includes monitoring of any unplanned disengagements, so that will also be helpful to understand where there are vulnerabilities, and prevent crashes before they happen.
- Joe Flynn. Procedurally, if a law enforcement officer can suspend the test, what is the procedure to reinstate the permit? Would the company have to go back before the Traffic Committee? Is each vehicle permitted separately? Or all vehicles by company?
  - Joe Segale - Permits are issued for all vehicles operated under the permit. That means that suspension of the permit due to one vehicle crash would affect all vehicles operated by that company. The Traffic Committee would evaluate reinstatement and evaluate severity of the crash before reinstating a permit. If it is a smaller crash like a fender bender the Traffic Committee may wish to act fast to reinstate.
- Wanda Minoli would like to acknowledge the work of the project team. I really appreciate the work and outreach to all the partners. The detail of balancing safety, usability, and partnership with communities is clear in the guidance. It aligns with the directive by the legislature. And it is also a reasonable place to start.

The Traffic Committee voted unanimously to adopt the Vermont Automated Vehicle Testing Guidance and Application (dated September 1, 2020).

Minutes prepared by Joshua Taylor, VTrans Traffic Operations and Katharine Otto VTrans Planning Coordinator, and submitted via Ian Degutis, Traffic Operations Engineer/Traffic Committee Coordinator