

**Vermont Traffic Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held
November 3, 2017**

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on Friday November 3, 2017. 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 2:30 pm.

Attendees:

Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair
Robert Ide, 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

Wayne Symonds, Deputy Chief Engineer, VTrans
Amy Bell, Planning Coordinator, VTrans
Joshua Schultz, TSMO Manager, VTrans
Josh Martineau, Project Manager, VTrans Rail

Jennifer Morrison, Chief of Police Colchester
Dawn Francis, Town Manager, Colchester
Bryan Osborne, DPW Director, Colchester
Sarah Hedd, Planning and Zoning Director, Colchester
Kathi O'Reilly, Economic Development Director, Colchester
Pat O'Brien, Project Manager SD Ireland, Colchester

Brian Story, Town Administrator, Johnson
(3 residents who did not sign in), Johnson

Jeff Shulz, Town Manager, Northfield

Agenda Items Discussed

Pittsford, Legal Trail 5, Rail Crossing Stop Condition: Ms Gamble explained that although a legal trail is not a public highway as defined in Title 19, it does meet the more inclusive definition in Title 23. Mr. Martineau explained that the Rail Diagnostic team recommended a stop condition at this crossing due to higher speeds of anticipated Amtrak service, and the recreational use of this area for fishing access. The Committee voted to establish the stop condition as requested.

Castleton VT 30, No Parking: Ms. Gamble explained that this no parking zone extension is needed to prevent roadside parking beyond the parking lot for a local restaurant, where there isn't sufficient shoulder for vehicles to safely park outside the travel lane. No Parking on Travelled Lane signs have not been effective. District 1 installed delineators in this area to discourage parking activity in the interim. The Committee voted to extend the No Parking Zone as requested.

Colchester US 7, Speed Limit: Ms. Gamble gave an explanation of the engineering study and safety analysis conducted in the vicinity of the US 7/Severance/Blakely Rd intersection. She explained that she had initially declined the town's request to study the entire New Town Center/Growth Center because it was future development and that the road is still largely rural in character with the exception of the intersection itself. Subsequently, she had a conversation with Public Works Director Osborne, and agreed to conduct an engineering study in the direct vicinity of the signalized intersection.

The 85th percentile speed was 48 mph on the south approach to the intersection, and 44 mph on the north approach. The crash data showed that the majority of the crashes near the intersection are related to failure to yield during the left turn permitted phase and during right turns on red, and are not related to speed and would not be mitigated by a reduction in the speed limit. Ms. Gamble recommended that the Agency move forward with upgrading the left turn permitted phase with a flashing yellow arrow instead of the green ball indication. District 5 staff has already upgraded the "right turn only" pavement markings in the northbound right turn lane to discourage its use as a passing lane, and trimmed trees on the southbound approach to improve sight distance. There are no existing pedestrian facilities and no on-street parking. The engineering study did not support a reduction in speed limit. Ms. Gamble recommended that the area be re-studied after the VTrans intersection reconstruction project scheduled for 2021, and further development of the area.

Several members of the Colchester town government gave presentations on the development plans for the New Town Center/Growth Center in the vicinity of the intersection. They pointed out that development is currently in the permit process for the southeast quadrant, and that there is a vision for pedestrian connectivity among all four quadrants so that people can live, work, and recreate without using their cars. This pedestrian friendly vision would be supported by a reduction in speed limit. Mr. O'Brien stated that development will happen in the next five to ten years. Chief Morrison stated that US 7 beyond the study area is relatively curvy and is hard to drive at 50 mph, and that there is a reduced speed zone near the US 7/VT 2A intersection, and said that the entire segment from Exit 16 to VT 2A should be 40 mph. Mr. Osborne stated that he had no issues with the engineering study on a factual basis, but desired the reduction in speed limit in anticipation of the changes in character that proposed growth will bring.

Ms. Gamble pointed out that drivers do not worry about tomorrow's traffic, and re-iterated that the speed limit should be based on current conditions and could be re-studied in the future. She also pointed out that pedestrian facilities are part of the intersection reconstruction project and do not currently exist.

Chairman Flynn stated that he had no disagreements with the engineering study and the safety mitigation measures, but that local concerns were persuasive. Commissioner Ide made a motion to establish a 40 mph zone as requested by the town. Ms. Gamble asked for clarification as to which of the three requests – the growth center, the intersection study area, or the entire 50 mph zone between Rathe

Rd and VT 2A as mentioned by the Chief. The Committee voted to reduce the entire 50 mph zone to 40 mph.

Johnson VT 100C, Speed Limit: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study, which did not support a reduction in speed limit. The proximity of the stop controlled intersection with VT 100 provides a natural speed reduction area which is appropriately signed with both warning and directional signs. Pedestrian warning signs have been provided for the pedestrian and wheelchair activity along the shoulder between the store and residences.

Mr. Story and the residents who attended said it was unnerving to walk along the shoulder even with the warning signs in place, especially with a wheelchair. Drivers approaching the intersection are relatively good about slowing down, but drivers making the turn from VT 100 tend to accelerate quickly once they've entered VT 100C.

The Committee voted to establish a short 35 mph zone in the vicinity of the intersection in the area bracketed by the pedestrian warning signs.

Northfield VT 12 Speed Limit: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study. Mr. Shulz stated that the town was in agreement with the recommendation to retain the existing speed limit. The Committee voted to retain the existing speed limit.

Plymouth VT 100A Speed Limit: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the engineering study and the sign upgrades that have been installed in response to the town's concerns. The Committee voted to retain the existing speed limit.

Additional agenda items:

Brattleboro VT 30 follow-up speed studies: Ms. Gamble explained that following the June 2017 Traffic Committee meeting establishing a permanent 40 mph speed zone, additional signs were installed to emphasize the speed limit. New speed studies were conducted at the same locations as the original engineering study. Slight reductions to the 85th percentile speed were noted (1-2 mph), but still ranging from 51 to 54 mph in the 40 mph zone.

Bridgewater US 4 preliminary speed studies: At the request of Commissioner Ide at the end of the June 2017 Traffic Committee meeting, speed studies were conducted in the village of Bridgewater in the 35 and 25 mph zones. While the studies would support raising the 25 mph zone to 30 mph, they would not support reducing the 35 mph zones to 30 mph, so there would be no advantage in simplification of the village speed limits. No further action will be taken.

Remaining Items: Ms. Gamble gave a brief explanation of the remaining agenda items, most of which were Certificate updates with no physical changes to the actual regulated zones, simply updates of location descriptions and milepoint references. The Traffic Committee voted to accept the staff recommendations for Items C - M.