

# VERMONT FREIGHT PLAN & RAIL PLAN UPDATES

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2020



## A First Look at the Plans

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT, also known as VTrans) is embarking on an update of two important statewide modal plans: the Vermont Freight Plan (2012) and the Vermont Rail Plan (2015). The updates will be closely coordinated to efficiently incorporate the overlap of freight rail components.

Keeping these plans current is necessary to meet federal requirements related to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Freight Formula funds, and to remain eligible for certain types of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant programs.

There have been a series of minor updates in the Freight Plan since 2012 to ensure consistency with MAP-21 and FAST Act requirements. VTrans envisions a major rewrite of the Freight Plan for this update cycle.

The Rail Plan update will refresh the data, maps, and the proposed projects table. Significant changes to the general direction and goals are not anticipated.

The Freight Plan update will be comprehensive and multi-modal, including air, rail, roadways, and waterways. It will be guided by a diverse Stakeholder Committee to be formed as part of this project.

## Vermont Freight Plan Update

Vermont recognizes the importance of freight transportation for long-term economic development and vitality. The Vermont Long-Range Transportation Plan supports strategic investments in all freight infrastructure, including highways and bridges, railroads, and airports.

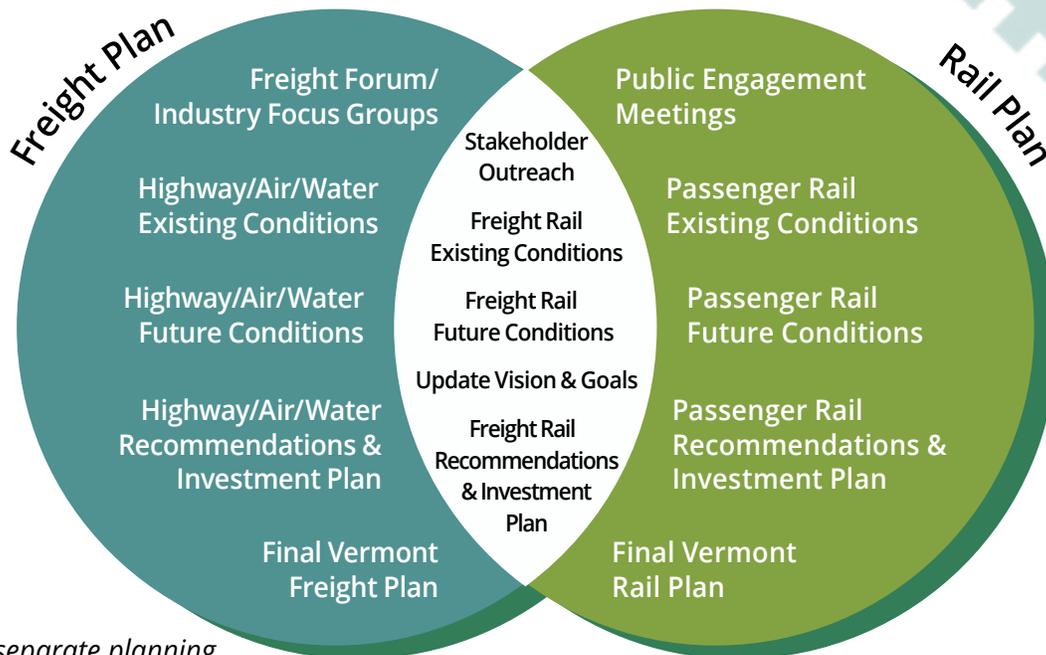
The State has worked diligently to maintain rail infrastructure and improve capacity with the goal of increasing the volume of freight moved via rail. Projections of freight traffic increases in the coming decades underscore the importance of maximizing the use of rail freight for roadway safety and to maintain highway and bridge infrastructure. Vermont has also made strategic investments in State-owned airports to support freight movement.

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*Both plan updates will address developing issues, including changes to the global economy and evolving trade agreements, e-commerce, technological advancements, and the reliability and resilience of our transportation system.*

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*Although two separate planning efforts, the Freight and Rail Plans share common tasks and work products.*

## Vermont Rail Plan Update

The State of Vermont owns 305 of the approximately 578 miles of active rail line. Passenger service is provided by Amtrak, consisting of the Ethan Allen Express terminating in Rutland (being extended to Burlington) and the Vermonter terminating in St. Albans. Freight services covering most of the rail network is provided by Genesee & Wyoming, Inc. and Vermont Rail System (VRS).

Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan sets forth goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the coming decades. Transportation strategies to achieve these goals include increasing intercity passenger ridership as well as moving more freight by rail rather than highways.

The Vermont Rail Advisory Council (VRAC) will serve as the primary sounding board for the Rail Plan. There will be a formal public outreach process including public meetings.

## Process for Plan Updates

The Rail and Aviation Bureau is the primary implementation entity of the Rail Plan and an essential partner on the Freight Plan. Policy and Planning Section staff will provide support for the update of the plans. Each project will be managed by a Planning Coordinator serving as a Project Manager;

one for the Rail Plan and one for the Freight Plan. These coordinators will inform and engage AOT staff.

Partner-agencies include FHWA, FRA, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCPRC), and the State's rural Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). CCPRC is Vermont's only Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is responsible for conducting transportation planning for the metropolitan area.

## Resources

[Vermont Rail Plan](#)

[Vermont Freight Plan](#)

## Questions?

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