

LEGISLATIVE OUTLINE

Key Statistics:

- Between 2005 and 2014, ridership on Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express and Vermonter grew 89 percent from 57,121 to 107,688. But ridership fell to 92,422 in 2016, a 14.1 percent drop.
- On-time performance is lacking. The Vermonter arrived on time over 80 percent only five of the eight years between 2009 and 2016. The Ethan Allen Express arrived on time more than 80 percent only one year in its history.
- Freight predicted to grow from 52 million tons to 70 million tons by 2035. Future Vermont freight shift from truck to rail expected to be just 1 percent.
- Most Vermont roads predicted to see increase in truck traffic between 20 percent and 40 percent by 2035. Some routes like 4, 7, 9, 11 and 22A through Vergennes are predicted to increase between 40 percent and 60 percent.

Passenger Rail Expansion:

- Strong support for western corridor expansion and Vermonter to Montreal.
- Vermonters want these new services as soon as possible.
- Forge timely connections to rail hubs in Albany, NY and Springfield, MA.
- Users critical of train station conditions. Want weather shelters.

Establishing Commuter Rail:

- Brattleboro supportive of connection to Western Mass.
- Vermonters believe commuter train service would improve the economy, ease the affordable housing crunch, and help attract millennials.

Railroads as Neighbors:

- Trains create issues related to noise, truck traffic and right-of-way.
- Railroad is often unwilling to discuss solutions with the community.
- Want state regulations that work within federal law.

Downtown Truck Traffic:

- Vergennes sees more than a truck per minute during peak hours.
- Trucks are incompatible with expected historic downtown quality of life.

Railside Economic Development

- Community resistance in places like Shelburne and Middlebury.
- Must ID property well ahead of time and incentivize communities.

Railroad Safety

- New trespass law criticized as way to allow railroad to punish people.
- Proper track maintenance largest single concern.
- People want the state to lean on VRS to allow multi-use paths in ROW.
- No Bakken Crude oil transport.