



To: Members of the House Transportation Committee
From: Karen Horn, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy, khorn@vlct.org www.vlct.org
Date: January 29, 2020
Re: Transportation and Local Governments

Thank you for the opportunity to testify again on transportation issues.

The proposed FY21 Transportation Budget would be \$641,329,744, a \$25,510,077 increase over FY20's \$615,819,667 figure. However, the allocation for combined town highway programs would *decrease* yet again – from \$69.3 million in FY19 to \$63.6 million in FY20 to \$62.1 million in FY21 – a ten-percent decrease since FY19.

The allocation for combined town highway programs would decrease from \$69.3 million in FY19 to \$63.6 million in FY20 and \$62.1 million in FY21. Town programs taken together represent 9.7 percent of the FY 21 Transportation Budget.

- Decrease of \$2.8M for Town Highways Bridge Program (from \$23M in FY16 to \$16.5M in FY18 to \$11.1M in FY21)
- Decrease of \$2.9M in FEMA's Public Assistance Program
- Decrease of \$505K for the Transportation Alternatives Program (from \$4.6M in FY17 to \$3.6M in FY19 to \$2.8M in FY21)
- Increase of \$442.6K for Town Highway Aid (the increase reflects a statutory formula level)
- Level funding of the following:
 - Town Highway Structure grants (\$6.33M)
 - Town Highway Class 2 grants (\$7.65M)
 - Town Highways non-federal disasters (\$1.15M)
 - Town Highway federal disasters (\$118K)
 - Town Highways Class 1 Supplemental (\$128.75K)
- Increase of \$300,000 in Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (\$13.3 M) funds 51 projects
- Transfer of \$3.7M of Clean Water Fund monies from the Agency of Natural Resources to VTrans for the Municipal Mitigation Grant Program for MRGP compliance projects

Municipal budget pressures:

Compliance with Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) (Act64) Average cost per mile for compliance with requirement to mitigate hydrologically connected roads - \$68,000. In particularly mountainous towns with steep roads such as Stowe, the average cost is approximately \$120,000 per mile. In that instance the town's highway budget is \$2,325,451. The state has paid \$131,000 in the last three fiscal years to help with MRGP compliance.

Stormwater management is a hugely expensive obligation for local governments, even with assistance from the Clean Water Fund. According to the Vermont Clean Water Initiative 2019 Performance Report, out of a total of 13,000 municipal road miles, only 169 miles of municipal

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road drainage and erosion control improvements have been implemented and only 525 hydrologically-connected municipal road miles have been identified that require water quality improvements. That's in spite of all the state investment of dollars in clean water initiatives for municipal roads. We obviously still have a long way to go.

Ongoing Maintenance – paving, culverts, bridges, ditching, reconstruction, grading, plowing
Highway Equipment maintenance and purchase
Sidewalk and Bike Lane Development and Maintenance
Traffic Calming and Amenities
Traffic Control
Personnel – Exceedingly difficult to come by

In several arenas the focus on pedestrian, bicycle and motorcycle safety has increased. Municipalities work to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, and will need to accommodate scooters and other micro-mobility devices. We understand that all have a right to travel safely on our networks. We are not alone in this endeavor.

Complete Streets – to enable safe access for everyone on the road in particular those who access the community without a car.
VT Highway Safety Plan Critical Emphasis Areas
4. Increase pedestrian, bicyclist, motorcyclist safety.
Act 250 proposals in House Natural Resources and Energy Committee, criterion (5)(A) Will not cause unreasonable congestion or unsafe conditions with respect to use of the highway, waterways, railways, airports and airways, bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure, and other means of transportation existing or proposed.

Resources

- [Vermont Clean Water Initiative 2019 Performance Report](#)
- Vermont AARP Webinar on Complete Streets, 2017
<https://aarp-states.brightspotcdn.com/74/6a/30309ec8e95516746722c5048a6a/aarpvt-cs-webinar-upload.pdf>