

**Build-Out of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail**  
**Vermont Agency of Transportation**  
**June 5, 2020 Update**

**Proposed Capital Construction Budget Adjustment Amending No. 42 of  
2019 An Act Relating to Capital Construction and State Bonding**

Appropriation of requested funds will allow for approximately 60 miles of remaining rail trail to be completed along with necessary bridge work. Once complete, the facility will span 93 miles from Swanton to St. Johnsbury through 18 communities and will be the longest rail trail in New England. Over the past decade, the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers in collaboration with the Agency of Transportation and other local and regional organizations, has advanced projects for improvements to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT). To date, approximately 33 miles has been completed including segments/ bridge replacements from St. Johnsbury to Danville, from Morrisville to Cambridge, trail and rehabilitation of Bridge 93 in the Town of Sheldon. The remaining 60 miles will include work in a dozen communities. Below is a map that shows sections completed in green along with what portions still need work as shown in red. VTrans is committed to ensuring the build-out occurs over the next two state fiscal years by committing to the federal funds and resources needed.

VTrans has begun this process by contracting with the design consultant that VAST was using; the design firm has been tasked with surveying the entire length of uncompleted trail and assessing the current condition of the various bridges to determine proper treatments. Much of this work has been completed, with the bridge assessments happening over the next few weeks. VAST and the Town of Hardwick are completing some small projects in Hardwick. For SFY21, the preliminary plan for VTrans is to accomplish the following for construction packages:

- Trail construction from Gore Road in Highgate to the trail terminus in Swanton – almost 4 miles.
- Trail construction from the intersection with the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail in Sheldon to Gore Road in Highgate – approximately 6.25 miles.
- Structure work as shown below; site visits continue, and structure treatments need to be confirmed. Much of this work can likely occur during the winter months.
  - BR A27 – replace missing long-span bridge over VT 15
  - BR 34 – replace missing mid-span superstructure over Stannard Mountain Road
  - BR 35 – replace long-span bridge over the Lamoille River
  - BR 48 – replace missing long-span bridge over the Lamoille River
  - BR 49 – replace missing mid-span bridge over the Wild Branch
  - BR 51 – replace with new short-span bridge
  - CULV 69G – replace with new short-span bridge
  - BR 77 – replace mid-span bridge over Black Creek
  - BR 80 – replace existing tri-arch structure with new long-span bridge over Black Creek
  - BR 83 – replace long-span bridge over Black Creek

For SFY22, there will be a need to contract out just under 50 miles of trail work. To ensure that this can all be completed, the work will be broken out into several different construction contracts.

The LVRT is not just for transportation; based on what has happened in the communities where sections are open, it will also provide for community and visitor recreation, health, and economic development. In addition to snowmobilers, use of the trail by walkers, bikers, equestrians and others will translate into expanded recreational opportunities, health benefits, a means of enjoying the natural environment, and trail connected economic development opportunities. The LVRT will connect to other recreation trail networks including the 26-mile Missisquoi Rail Trail in Vermont and La Route Verte, a 2,100-mile cycling network in Quebec. Marketing of the trail can be expected to bring new visitors to the State and enhance the State's brand – including international visitors.

Towns where the trail has been completed are reaping the benefits and advancing complimentary investments. Cambridge improved its Cambridge Junction trailhead with a playground that includes a miniature train. Hyde Park improved and extended its village sidewalks to make walking to the Depot Street trailhead easier. Johnson has improved the recreation fields near the LVRT and Morristown has touted the economic aspects of the trail with two popular restaurants located right alongside it parlaying the foot traffic into paying customers. For instance, during cycling season, numerous patrons arrive at the Lost Nation brewery from the LVRT. Volunteers in trailside towns have worked to improve the trail, like a small group trying to raise money to extend it from Cambridge Junction to the Fletcher town line.

Wolcott erected a new structure simply in anticipation of the trail being completed through there. A commitment of the funds by the Legislature this session would send a definitive message to the affected municipalities and businesses along the trail - providing them confidence needed to begin making complimentary investments, as towns and businesses along the constructed sections of trail have done.

The combination of federal Transportation funds and general obligation bonds make good use of the State's limited bonding capacity for a project which serves principally as an economic benefit to the State. The LVRT is much bigger than just a transportation project.