

Relinquishment of VT 36 Town of St. Albans



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Map of proposed Class I- From the intersection of Walnut St and VT 36 to the intersection of VT 36 and Hathaway Point Rd



Class 1 Town Highways

Class 1 town highways are connecting links in the state highway system. Thus, class 1 highways have the same weight/size limits as the state highway system. VTrans is responsible for periodic repaving of class 1 town highways, usually following a schedule similar to the state highway system.

19 V. S. A. § 302. Classification of town highways

(a) For the purposes of this section and receiving State aid, all town highways shall be categorized into one or another of the following classes:

(1) Class 1 town highways are those town highways which form the extension of a state highway route and which carry a State highway route number. The Agency shall determine which highways are to be class 1 highways.

State Relinquishment of State Highway to a Municipality

- The purpose of a relinquishment is to shift responsibility for maintenance and control of a segment of highway from the State to the Town.
- Once relinquished, the transferred segment retains its legal character as a public highway—subject to all relevant provisions of 19 V.S.A., under the Town's day-to-day control rather than that of VTrans.
- Just as with any other town highway, the general public interest is adequately protected by the statutory procedures governing reclassification/discontinuance of town highways, as well as the permit requirements for access onto the State Highway network through 19 V.S.A. Section 1111.

Municipal Benefits of Class 1¹

Design Control and Flexibility. While municipalities still must comply with applicable state and federal design guidelines, there are some VTrans-specific design policies or practices that may restrict or limit introducing features like angled parking, street trees, decorative crosswalks and traffic calming features into a state right-of-way. Reclassification would provide municipalities with greater autonomy for many street design features, including the following:

- posted speed limits
- crosswalk locations and surface treatments
- traffic signal installation
- placement of road and wayfinding signs
- travel lane widths
- shoulder widths
- on-street parking
- street tree planting
- median islands
- bulb-outs or curb extensions for traffic calming and pedestrian safety

Speed Management.

Access Management.

Utilities in right-of-way.

The Process of Relinquishment

Except in the case of relinquishments authorized by the Superior Court when a state highway is relocated (see 19 V.S.A. § 516), only the General Assembly may transfer a highway from/to state responsibility (19 V.S.A. § 15).

A municipality may request that the Agency review a proposal for the state to take over a town highway by addressing the DTA in writing, stating the basis for the request.

If, after analyzing the situation, VTrans feels the suggestion has merit, then it may make a recommendation to the General Assembly supporting the take-over.

If VTrans does not agree, the municipality may request that its elected representatives to the General Assembly take direct action by sponsoring legislation authorizing the takeover.¹

¹ The Orange Book – A Handbook for Local Officials (Revised 03/29/2022)

Proposed Statutory Change

Sec. 2. RELINQUISHMENT OF VERMONT ROUTE 36 IN THE TOWN OF ST. ALBANS

a. Pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 15(2), the General Assembly authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to enter into an agreement with the Town of St. Albans to relinquish a segment of the state highway in the Town of St. Albans known as Vermont Route 36. The segment authorized to be relinquished begins at mile marker 0.00, just east of the “Black Bridge” (B2), and continues 14,963 feet (approximately 2.834 miles) easterly to mile marker 2.834, where Vermont Route 36 meets the boundary of the City of St. Albans, and includes the 0.106-mile westbound section of Vermont Route 36 and approaches at the entrance to the St. Albans Bay Town Park.