

***REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE PURSUANT TO ACT 43 SECTIONS
30 & 31***

Annual Report on Railroad Rights-of-Way for Communications Leases

December 2025

Prepared for

Vermont House and Senate Committees on Transportation

Sec. 30. 5 V.S.A. § 3410 is added to read: § 3410. RAILROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY; COMMUNICATIONS LEASES; ANNUAL REPORT

Annually, on or before December 15, the Secretary shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the most recent fiscal year's lease revenues for State-owned railroad rights-of-way related to:

- (1) wired or wireless telephone infrastructure located in the rights-of-way;*
- (2) broadband infrastructure located in the rights-of-way; and*
- (3) leases of the rights-of-way for purposes other than the operation of the railroads within the rights-of-way.*

Sec. 31. AVAILABILITY OF STATE-OWNED RAILROAD RIGHT-OF- WAY FOR COMMUNICATIONS LEASES

In order to expand the use of State-owned railroad rights-of-way, the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Commissioner of Public

Service, shall provide information to communications companies regarding the availability for lease of property located in State-owned railroad rights-of-way.

Sec. 30. 5 V.S.A. § 3410 is added to read: § 3410. RAILROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY; COMMUNICATIONS LEASES; ANNUAL REPORT

The State of Vermont is the owner of 304 miles of active railroad property as well as 149 miles of railbanked rail right of way that is being used for rail trails. The right of way width varies along each corridor as there is no uniform dimension for each ROW. VTrans has created a ROW map that gives an approximate location of ROW lines but is for reference only and is not a survey grade property description.

Vermont Rail Systems (VRS) is the operating railroad for state owned active rail property and is the main user of the property. VRS primarily transport freight but does have seasonal passenger services.

VRS has the right to use the RR ROW but if they agree that there is excess property not needed, VTrans can establish leases with abutting property owners along the corridor.

VTrans is manages utility licenses along the railroad corridors. There are many utilities that need to cross directly over or run longitudinally along the RR ROW. There are license agreements that determine the terms and conditions for such things as access rights, location, maintenance responsibilities, insurance, fees and many more.

As of 12/1/25 the current annual revenue paid to VTrans for these types of leases are:

Active Railroad:

- (1) wired or wireless telephone infrastructure located in the rights-of-way: \$5124.00
- (2) broadband infrastructure located in the rights-of-way; \$148,311.00
- (3) leases of the rights-of-way for purposes other than the operation of the railroads within the rights-of-way. \$422,608.00

Railbanked (Rail Trails) :

- (1) wired or wireless telephone infrastructure located in the rights-of-way: \$330.00
- (2) broadband infrastructure located in the rights-of-way: \$38,330.00
- (3) leases of the rights-of-way for purposes other than the operation of the railroads within the rights-of-way. \$105,110.00

Sec. 31. AVAILABILITY OF STATE-OWNED RAILROAD RIGHT-OF- WAY FOR COMMUNICATIONS LEASES

VTrans works with many utilities across the entire state of Vermont allowing companies to access state owned rail property. VTrans rail property management manages the access agreements that define each area used by the utilities.

A link to maps that show available state-owned active rail property as well as rail banked rail trail property are below:

VTrans State-Owned Rail Lines

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a751c6d1df4b43e1ac6374f9de99bd3b>

VTrans State-Owned Rail Trails

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/310908cf188044c2a9ad7425a3dcd4b4>