

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Transportation to which was referred House Bill No.
3 488 entitled “An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program
4 and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation” respectfully
5 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the Senate
6 propose to the House that the bill be amended by striking out all after the
7 enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

8 * * * Transportation Program Adopted as Amended; Definitions * * *

9 Sec. 1. TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ADOPTED; DEFINITIONS

10 (a) Adoption. The Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026
11 Transportation Program appended to the Agency of Transportation’s proposed
12 fiscal year 2026 budget, as amended by this act, is adopted to the extent
13 federal, State, and local funds are available.

14 (b) Definitions. As used in this act, unless otherwise indicated:

15 (1) “Agency” means the Agency of Transportation.

16 (2) “Candidate project” means a project approved by the General
17 Assembly that is not anticipated to have significant expenditures for
18 preliminary engineering or right-of-way expenditures, or both, during the
19 budget year and funding for construction is not anticipated within a predictable
20 time frame.

1 (3) “Development and evaluation (D&E) project” means a project
2 approved by the General Assembly that is anticipated to have preliminary
3 engineering expenditures or right-of-way expenditures, or both, during the
4 budget year and that the Agency is committed to delivering to construction on
5 a timeline driven by priority and available funding.

6 (4) “Electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)” and “electric vehicle
7 supply equipment available to the public” have the same meanings as in
8 30 V.S.A. § 201.

9 (5) “Front-of-book project” means a project approved by the General
10 Assembly that is anticipated to have construction expenditures during the
11 budget year or the following three years, or both, with expected expenditures
12 shown over four years.

13 (6) “Mileage-based user fee” or “MBUF” means a fee for vehicle use of
14 the public road system with distance, stated in miles, as the measure of use.

15 (7) “Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV),” “plug-in hybrid electric vehicle
16 (PHEV),” and “battery electric vehicle (BEV)” have the same meanings as in
17 23 V.S.A. § 4(85).

18 (8) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation.

19 (9) “TIB funds” means monies deposited in the Transportation
20 Infrastructure Bond Fund in accordance with 19 V.S.A. § 11f.

1 (10) The table heading “As Proposed” means the Proposed
2 Transportation Program referenced in subsection (a) of this section; the table
3 heading “As Amended” means the amendments as made by this act; the table
4 heading “Change” means the difference obtained by subtracting the “As
5 Proposed” figure from the “As Amended” figure; the terms “change” or
6 “changes” in the text refer to the project- and program-specific amendments,
7 the aggregate sum of which equals the net “Change” in the applicable table
8 heading; and “State” in any tables amending authorizations indicates that the
9 source of funds is State monies in the Transportation Fund, unless otherwise
10 specified.

11 * * * Rail Program; Technical Correction * * *

12 Sec. 2. RAIL PROGRAM

13 (a) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026
14 Transportation Program for Rail the following project is deleted: Barre–
15 Berlin–Montpelier 04-9038–WACR Subsidy.

16 (b) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026
17 Transportation Program for Rail, the following project is added: Hartford
18 HRRD(1) 25G002–White River Junction Depot Repairs.

19 (c) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026
20 Transportation Program for Rail, spending authority for Hartford HRRD(1)
21 25G002–White River Junction Depot Repairs is authorized as follows:

1	<u>FY26</u>	<u>As Proposed</u>	<u>As Amended</u>	<u>Change</u>
2	Other	0	260,000	260,000
3	Total	0	260,000	260,000
4	<u>Sources of funds</u>			
5	State	0	260,000	260,000
6	Total	0	260,000	260,000

7 * * * Identification of Reversions from Fiscal Year 2025 * * *

8 Sec. 3. IDENTIFICATION OF REVERSIONS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2025

9 APPROPRIATIONS

10 (a) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 706 and the limits on program, project, or
11 activity spending authority in the fiscal year 2025 Transportation Program, the
12 Secretary of Transportation, with the approval of the Secretary of
13 Administration and subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section,
14 shall, on or before the close of fiscal year 2025, identify at least \$686,000.00 in
15 reversions from the fiscal year 2025 Transportation Fund appropriations, other
16 than appropriations for the Town Highway State Aid, Town Highway
17 Structures, or Town Highway Class 2 Roadway Programs to support the fiscal
18 year 2026 Transportation Program.

19 (b) The Secretary's authority under subsection (a) of this section to identify
20 reversions is limited to appropriations, the reduction of which, by itself, will
21 not have the effect of significantly delaying the planned fiscal year 2025 work

1 schedule of a project that formed the basis of the project's funding in fiscal
2 year 2025.

3 (c) The Secretary shall, on or before the close of fiscal year 2025, submit a
4 written report to the Joint Fiscal Office and to the Joint Transportation
5 Oversight Committee regarding the reversions identified pursuant to
6 subsection (a) of this section.

7 **[ALTERNATIVE SEC. 3 PROPOSED BY AOT]**

8 **Sec. 3. UNOBLIGATED TRANSPORTATION FUND BALANCE; FISCAL**
9 **YEAR 2026**

10 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of
11 Administration shall ensure an unobligated fund balance of at least
12 \$686,000.00 exists in the Transportation Fund in fiscal year 2026 prior to the
13 start of next budget season. It is the intent of the General Assembly that in the
14 creation of the fiscal year 2026 budget adjustment proposal and the fiscal year
15 2027 budget proposal, the unobligated fund balance required pursuant to this
16 section shall be utilized to offset estimated Transportation Fund revenue losses
17 from fee and tax reductions enacted during the 2025 legislative session.

18 *** * * State and Federal Funding Updates * * ***

19 **Sec. 4. STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATES**

20 (a) On or before September 30, 2025 and December 15, 2025, the Secretary
21 of Transportation shall provide the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee

1 with a briefing on the status of State Transportation Fund revenues and federal
2 funding for the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program, and any impacts on
3 the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program. The briefing shall include:

4 (1) a summary of federal funding that has been received to date, federal
5 funding that is anticipated later in the State fiscal year, federal funding that is
6 delayed, and federal funding that has been reduced or subject to rescission;

7 (2) a summary of the Transportation Fund revenues to date in State
8 fiscal year 2026;

9 (3) a summary of the impacts on the fiscal year 2026 Transportation
10 Program that are caused by changes in State Transportation Fund revenues
11 from the consensus forecast or delays or reductions in federal funding; and

12 (4) a summary of any legislative action that may be necessary to address
13 reductions in State revenues or federal funding.

14 (b) Upon becoming aware of a significant change in State revenues or a
15 reduction in federal funding, rescission of federal grants, or delay of
16 anticipated federal funding that will impact the Agency's ability to carry out
17 significant portions of the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program, the
18 Secretary of Transportation may request that the Joint Transportation
19 Oversight Committee meet within 14 days to review the Agency's plan to
20 address the reduction in funding.

1 (c) In the event of a decrease in overall State or federal funding for the
2 fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program that is in excess of four percent, the
3 Secretary shall submit to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee a
4 written report detailing the impact of the decrease on projects that are in the
5 2026 Transportation Program.

6 * * * Project Dashboard * * *

7 Sec. 5. 19 V.S.A. § 10g is amended to read:

8 § 10g. ANNUAL REPORT; TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM;

9 ADVANCEMENTS, CANCELLATIONS, AND DELAYS

10 * * *

11 (q)(1) The Agency's annual proposed Transportation Program shall include
12 the following information depicted in a graphical dashboard:

13 (A) the percentage of projects in each section of the Transportation
14 Program that have been delayed by more than one year from the preliminary
15 plan projected completion date; and

16 (B) the percentage of projects in each section of the Transportation
17 Program whose cost has increased by more than 50 percent or \$5,000,000.00,
18 whichever is less, from the preliminary plan cost estimate.

19 (2) The Agency shall provide the House and Senate Committees on
20 Transportation with quarterly updates to the dashboard provided pursuant to
21 subsection (a) of this section.

1 Sec. 6. 19 V.S.A. § 10g(g) is amended to read:

2 (g) ~~Project updates. The Agency's annual proposed Transportation~~
3 ~~Program shall include project updates referencing this section and listing the~~
4 ~~following:~~

5 ~~(1) all proposed projects in the Program that would be new to the State~~
6 ~~Transportation Program;~~

7 ~~(2) all projects for which total estimated costs have increased by more~~
8 ~~than \$5,000,000.00 from the estimate in the adopted Transportation Program~~
9 ~~for the prior fiscal year or by more than 75 percent from the estimate in the~~
10 ~~adopted Transportation Program for the prior fiscal year;~~

11 ~~(3) all projects for which the total estimated costs have, for the first~~
12 ~~time, increased by more than \$10,000,000.00 from the Preliminary Plan~~
13 ~~estimate or by more than 100 percent from the Preliminary Plan estimate; and~~

14 ~~(4) all projects funded for construction in the prior fiscal year's adopted~~
15 ~~Transportation Program that are no longer funded in the proposed~~
16 ~~Transportation Program submitted to the General Assembly, the projected~~
17 ~~costs for such projects in the prior fiscal year's adopted Transportation~~
18 ~~Program, and the total costs incurred over the life of each such project.~~

19 [Repealed.]

20 * * * Relinquishment of Vermont Route 36 in the Town of St. Albans * * *

21 Sec. 7. RELINQUISHMENT OF VERMONT ROUTE 36 IN THE TOWN

OF ST. ALBANS

Pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 15(a)(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.

* * * State-Owned Railroads; Rail Trails * * *

Sec. 8. 5 V.S.A. chapter 58 is redesignated to read:

CHAPTER 58. ~~STATE ACQUISITION OF~~ STATE-OWNED RAILROADS
AND RAIL TRAILS

Sec. 9. 5 V.S.A. § 3408 is amended to read:

§ 3408. RAILBANKING; NOTIFICATION

(a) If the Secretary finds that the continued operation of any State-owned railroad property is not economically feasible under present conditions, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary may place the line in railbanked status after giving advance notice of ~~such~~ the planned railbanking to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation when the General Assembly is in session, and when the General

1 Assembly is not in session, to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee.
2 The Agency, on behalf of the State, shall continue to hold the right-of-way of a
3 railbanked line for reactivation of railroad service or for other public purposes
4 not inconsistent with future reactivation of railroad service. ~~Such~~ The
5 railbanking shall not be treated, for purposes of any law or rule of law, as an
6 abandonment of the use of the rights-of-way for railroad purposes.

7 * * *

8 (c)(1) The Secretary may, after consulting with municipalities, adopt rules
9 consistent with the provisions of section 3408a of this chapter governing the
10 interim trail use of State-owned railroad rights-of-way that have been placed in
11 railbanked status.

12 (2) Signs indicating the rules shall be conspicuously posted in or near all
13 areas affected.

14 (3) Any person who violates ~~these~~ rules adopted pursuant to this
15 subsection shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$300.00.

16 Sec. 10. 5 V.S.A. § 3408a is added to read:

17 § 3408a. USE OF RAIL TRAILS

18 (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

19 (1) “Rail trail” means the right-of-way of a State-owned railroad line
20 that has been authorized for railbanking and interim trail use pursuant to
21 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d) or section 3408 of this chapter.

1 (2) “Trail sponsor” means the Agency of Transportation in the case of a
2 rail trail maintained by the Agency or the municipality in the case of a rail trail
3 maintained by a municipality.

4 (b) Use of rail trails. The following acts are prohibited within a rail trail
5 right-of-way:

6 (1) Throwing, dropping, or discarding bottles, cans, paper, garbage,
7 rubbish, sewage, or other material of any kind.

8 (2) Cutting, mutilating, or removing any tree, shrub, flower, plant, top
9 soil, or sod or attempting to do so.

10 (3) Injury, defacement, removal, or destruction of the surface of the rail
11 trail or a rail trail’s structures, appurtenances, recreation facilities, or property.

12 (4) Except as authorized by the trail sponsor, erecting, placing, or
13 displaying any advertising materials, posters, or placards of any kind. This
14 prohibition shall not apply to official signs erected by the trail sponsor.

15 (5) Except as authorized by the trail sponsor, entering or remaining on
16 the rail trail for the purpose of:

17 (A) selling, hiring, or leasing any goods or services; or

18 (B) distributing samples, pamphlets, or advertising materials, except
19 for official information authorized by the trail sponsor.

20 (6) Parades, demonstrations, picnics, games, entertainment, or
21 organizations, except at times and locations approved by the trail sponsor.

1 (7) Harassing or molesting wildlife, except for fishing.

2 (8) Using or discharging any firearms or other weapons or fireworks,
3 except by a person authorized by the trail sponsor or as otherwise permitted by
4 law.

5 (9) Igniting fires for any purpose, except in fireplaces or firepits at
6 locations designated by the trail sponsor or for trail maintenance purposes.

7 (10) Soliciting alms or contributions.

8 (11) Use of motorized vehicles, except for:

9 (A) maintenance purposes;

10 (B) snowmobiles, subject to applicable State rules, when the
11 Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. has declared the Statewide
12 Snowmobile Trail System officially open;

13 (C) Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD) utilized by an
14 individual with a disability as permitted by the Agency's Rail Trail
15 Accessibility Policy;

16 (D) electric bicycles as permitted pursuant to applicable State rules;
17 and

18 (E) other circumstances that the trail sponsor determines are
19 appropriate.

20 (12) Overnight camping, except at areas designated for that purpose by
21 the trail sponsor.

1 (c) Penalty. Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (b) of
2 this section shall be subject to a civil penalty pursuant to subdivision
3 3408(c)(3) of this chapter.

4 * * * Transportation Board * * *

5 Sec. 11. 19 V.S.A. § 3 is amended to read:

6 § 3. TRANSPORTATION BOARD; CREATION; MEMBERS

7 ~~A transportation board~~ The Transportation Board is formed to be attached to
8 the Agency of Transportation. There shall be seven members of the Board,
9 appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The
10 Governor shall so far as is possible appoint Board members whose interests
11 and expertise lie in various areas of the transportation field. The Governor
12 shall appoint the ~~chair~~ Chair, and the Board may vote to appoint other officers.
13 The members of the Board shall be appointed for terms of three years. Board
14 members may be appointed for two additional three-year terms but shall not be
15 eligible for further reappointment. ~~No~~ Not more than four members of the
16 Board shall belong to the same political party. No member of the Board shall:

17 * * *

18 Sec. 12. 19 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

19 § 5. TRANSPORTATION BOARD; POWERS AND DUTIES

20 * * *

21 (d) Specific duties and responsibilities. The Board shall:

* * *

(4) provide appellate review, when requested in writing, regarding legal disputes in the execution of contracts awarded by the Agency or by municipalities cooperating with the Agency to advance projects in the State's Transportation Program, except that the Agency shall provide appellate review relating to bids and the competitive negotiation process under 19 V.S.A. § 10a;

(5) provide appellate review, when requested in writing, of decisions of the Secretary in administering the provisions of Title 24, relating to ~~junkyards~~ salvage yards;

* * *

* * * Green Mountain Transit Authority * * *

Sec. 13. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 801 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 801. GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

* * *

§ 2. AREA OF OPERATION

(a) The area of operation shall be the urbanized area of Chittenden, ~~Franklin, Grand Isle, and Washington Counties and the Towns of Orange,~~ ~~Washington, and Williamstown. The area of operation shall include Addison and Caledonia Counties and the Towns of Orange County other than Orange,~~ ~~Washington, and Williamstown, but only for the provision of commuter services. The area of operation shall include Lamoille County, but only for the~~

1 ~~provision of published scheduled services~~ County as established by the U.S.
2 Census Bureau. The Green Mountain Transit Authority may operate service
3 outside the urbanized area of Chittenden County with approval from the
4 Agency of Transportation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to
5 prevent other transit providers from offering transit connecting to the
6 urbanized area of Chittenden County, or providing on demand services in that
7 area, with the approval of the Agency of Transportation.

8 * * *

9 § 10. IMPLEMENTATION

10 * * *

11 ~~(c) Immediately upon joining the Authority, the municipality shall appoint~~
12 ~~two commissioners as provided herein. The initial terms of the commissioners~~
13 ~~of the initial members shall be arranged by the Chittenden County Regional~~
14 ~~Planning Commission so that the terms of approximately one-third of the~~
15 ~~commissioners shall expire in each year. The initial terms of commissioners~~
16 ~~from municipalities joining after March 7, 1973, shall be set by the Board of~~
17 ~~Commissioners.~~

18 * * *

19 * * * Town Highways * * *

20 Sec. 14. 19 V.S.A. § 306 is amended to read:

21 § 306. APPROPRIATION; STATE AID FOR TOWN HIGHWAYS

1 (a) General State aid to town highways.

2 (1) An annual appropriation to class 1, 2, and 3 town highways shall be
3 made. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's
4 appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is
5 less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the
6 following are negative or zero:

7 (A) the percentage change of the Agency's total appropriations
8 funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations ~~for town~~
9 ~~highways~~ under this subsection (a) and subsections (e) and (h) of this section,
10 for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year
11 immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

12 * * *

13 (e) State aid for town highway structures.

14 (1) There shall be an annual appropriation for grants to municipalities
15 for maintenance (including actions to extend life expectancy) and for
16 construction of bridges and culverts; for maintenance and construction of other
17 structures, including causeways and retaining walls, intended to preserve the
18 integrity of the traveled portion of class 1, 2, and 3 town highways; and for
19 alternatives that eliminate the need for a bridge, culvert, or other structure,
20 such as the construction or reconstruction of a highway, the purchase of parcels
21 of land that would be landlocked by closure of a bridge, the payment of

1 damages for loss of highway access, and the substitution of other means of
2 access. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's
3 appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is
4 less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the
5 following are negative or zero:

6 (A) the percentage change in the Agency's total appropriations
7 funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations under this
8 subsection (e) and subsections (a) and (h) of this section, for the most recently
9 closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the
10 most recently closed fiscal year; or

11 (B) the percentage change in the Bureau of Labor Statistics
12 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

13 (2) For purposes of subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection, the percentage
14 change in the CPI-U is calculated by determining the increase or decrease, to
15 the nearest one-tenth of a percent, in the CPI-U for the month ending on June
16 30 in the calendar year one year prior to the first day of the fiscal year for
17 which the appropriation will be made compared to the CPI-U for the month
18 ending on June 30 in the calendar year two years prior to the first day of the
19 fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made.

20 (3) Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a
21 total estimated State share cost of \$7,200,000.00 at a minimum as new grants.

1 ~~The Agency's proposed appropriation for the Program shall take into account~~
2 ~~the estimated amount of qualifying invoices submitted to the Agency with~~
3 ~~respect to project grants approved in prior years but not yet completed as well~~
4 ~~as with respect to new project grants to be approved in the fiscal year~~
5 Beginning with State fiscal year 2027, the minimum total estimated State share
6 cost for the approved grants shall increase over the prior fiscal year's minimum
7 total estimated State share cost by the same percentage as the appropriation for
8 State aid for town highway structures is increased pursuant to subdivision (1)
9 of this subsection.

10 (4) In a given fiscal year, should expenditures in the Town Highway
11 Structures Program exceed the amount appropriated, the Agency shall advise
12 the Governor of the need to request a supplemental appropriation from the
13 General Assembly to fund the additional project cost, provided that the Agency
14 has previously committed to completing those projects.

15 ~~(3)~~(5) Funds received as grants for State aid for town highway structures
16 may be used by a municipality to satisfy a portion of the matching
17 requirements for federal earmarks, subject to subsection 309b(c) of this title.

18 * * *

19 (h) Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program.

20 (1) There shall be an annual appropriation for grants to municipalities
21 for resurfacing, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of paved or unpaved class 2

1 town highways. ~~However, municipalities~~ Municipalities that have no State
2 highways or class 1 town highways within their borders may use the grants for
3 such activities with respect to both class 2 and class 3 town highways. ~~Each~~
4 ~~fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated~~
5 ~~State share cost of \$8,600,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. The Agency's~~
6 ~~proposed appropriation for the Program shall take into account the estimated~~
7 ~~amount of qualifying invoices submitted to the Agency with respect to project~~
8 ~~grants approved in prior years but not yet completed as well as with respect to~~
9 ~~new project grants to be approved in the fiscal year. This appropriation shall~~
10 increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage
11 change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous
12 fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:

13 (A) the percentage change in the Agency's total appropriations
14 funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations under this
15 subsection (h) and subsections (a) and (e) of this section, for the most recently
16 closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the
17 most recently closed fiscal year; or

18 (B) the percentage change in the Bureau of Labor Statistics
19 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

20 (2) For purposes of subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection, the percentage
21 change in the CPI-U is calculated by determining the increase or decrease, to

1 the nearest one-tenth of a percent, in the CPI-U for the month ending on June
2 30 in the calendar year one year prior to the first day of the fiscal year for
3 which the appropriation will be made compared to the CPI-U for the month
4 ending on June 30 in the calendar year two years prior to the first day of the
5 fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made.

6 (3) Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a
7 total estimated State share cost of \$8,600,000.00 at a minimum as new grants.
8 Beginning with State fiscal year 2027, the minimum total estimated State share
9 cost for the approved grants shall increase over the prior fiscal year's minimum
10 total estimated State share cost by the same percentage as the appropriation for
11 the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program is increased pursuant to
12 subdivision (1) of this subsection.

13 (4) In a given fiscal year, should expenditures in the Class 2 Town
14 Highway Roadway Program exceed the amount appropriated, the Agency shall
15 advise the Governor of the need to request a supplemental appropriation from
16 the General Assembly to fund the additional project cost, provided that the
17 Agency has previously committed to completing those projects. Funds
18 received as grants for State aid under the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway
19 Program may be used by a municipality to satisfy a portion of the matching
20 requirements for federal earmarks, subject to subsection 309b(c) of this title.

21 * * *

1 Sec. 15. CANCELLATION OF LOCALLY MANAGED PROJECTS;

2 PROCESS; IMPROVEMENTS; REPORT

3 The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Transportation
4 Board, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Vermont Association
5 of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to examine
6 the requirements of 19 V.S.A. § 309c, cancellation of locally managed
7 projects, to evaluate the obligations, risks, and benefits imposed by the
8 provisions of that section on the State and the local sponsor of a locally
9 managed project and to identify potential changes to the provisions of that
10 section to ensure that State and federal transportation funding resources are
11 appropriately administered. The Agency shall, on or before January 15, 2026,
12 submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation
13 regarding the consultant's findings and any recommendations for legislative
14 action.

15 Sec. 16. MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION ASSETS; ASSESSMENT;

16 FUNDING NEEDS; REPORT

17 (a) The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Vermont
18 League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Association of Planning and
19 Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to:

20 (1) review current municipal practices relating to planning for ongoing
21 maintenance, upgrades, and replacement of municipal transportation assets,

1 including roads, pavement, bridges, culverts, signals, signage, highway
2 equipment, and highway facilities;

3 (2) develop a framework for a system to assess the current condition of
4 municipal highway networks and the potential impacts of improvements to or
5 degradation of those networks on the State's transportation system;

6 (3) develop a prioritization process to direct State funding to the repair,
7 upgrade, or replacement of specific municipal transportation assets based on
8 the need for such work in the context of the asset's role in the State and
9 regional highway networks; and

10 (4) identify and recommend potential statutory changes to implement
11 the assessment framework developed pursuant to subdivision (2) of this
12 subsection and the prioritization process developed pursuant to subdivision (3)
13 of this subsection.

14 (b) The Agency of Transportation shall, not later than January 15, 2027,
15 submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation
16 regarding the consultant's findings and recommendations for legislative action.

17 **Sec. 17. STATE TOWN HIGHWAY AID; MUNICIPAL GRANT**

18 **PROGRAMS; EFFICIENCIES; IMPROVEMENTS; REPORT**

19 (a) The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Vermont
20 League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Association of Planning and
21 Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to evaluate the State's Town

1 Highway Aid and municipal grant programs administered by the Agency to
2 identify potential efficiencies and improvements related to the administration
3 of Town Highway Aid and municipal grant programs. The consultant shall
4 evaluate the various funding streams authorized pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 306 as
5 well as programs administered through the Agency's Municipal Assistance
6 Bureau, including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program, Transportation
7 Alternatives Program, Municipal Mitigation Program, Municipal Park and
8 Ride Program, Better Roads Program, Municipal Highway and Stormwater
9 Mitigation Program, and Grants in Aid.

10 (b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency shall submit a written report
11 to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the
12 consultant's findings and any recommendations for legislative or
13 administrative actions to improve or increase the efficiency of the Town
14 Highway Aid and municipal grant programs.

15 * * * Mileage-Based User Fee * * *

16 Sec. 18. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Secs. 27–29 are amended to read:

17 Sec. 27. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE LEGISLATIVE INTENT

18 It is the intent of the General Assembly for the State:

19 (1) to start collecting a mileage-based user fee from all battery-electric
20 vehicles registered in Vermont starting on ~~July 1, 2025, which is expected to~~
21 ~~be the first day of the first fiscal year when more than 15 percent of new~~

1 ~~pleasure car registrations in the State are plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) or~~
2 before January 1, 2027 subject to sufficient funding being available for
3 implementation;

4 (2) to ~~start subjecting~~ subject plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs)
5 that are a pleasure car to an ~~increased~~ annual or a biennial ~~registration~~ electric
6 vehicle infrastructure fee starting on ~~July~~ January 1, 2025, and that PHEVs
7 shall not be subject to a mileage-based user fee;

8 (3) to ~~work towards~~ examine collecting a fee on ~~kWhs~~ electricity that
9 ~~are~~ is dispensed through certain electric vehicle supply equipment available to
10 the public so as to supplant lost ~~gas~~ fuel tax revenue from out-of-state PEVs
11 traveling in Vermont; and

12 (4) to not commence collecting a mileage-based user fee until ~~such~~ the
13 General Assembly has enacted legislation that establishes the amount of the fee
14 and codifies any necessary authorizing language ~~is codified~~ in statute and that
15 legislation becomes effective.

16 Sec. 28. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE AUTHORIZATION

17 (a) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2024
18 Transportation Program for Environmental Policy and Sustainability, the
19 Agency of Transportation, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, is
20 authorized to apply for and accept a competitive federal Strategic Innovation
21 for Revenue Collection grant established pursuant to the Infrastructure

1 Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (IIJA), Sec. 13001, with up to
2 \$350,000.00 in Transportation Fund monies authorized for the nonfederal
3 match in fiscal year 2024 and ~~a to-be-determined amount for the nonfederal~~
4 ~~match in subsequent fiscal years~~ up to \$350,000.00 in Transportation Fund
5 monies authorized for the nonfederal match in fiscal year 2025.

6 (b) ~~As permitted under federal regulations and grant terms, the~~ The Agency
7 ~~shall utilize grant monies to design~~ State or federal funding, or both, authorized
8 to be used for the purpose of designing a mileage-based user fee that is
9 consistent with Secs. 27 and 29 of this act.

10 (c) Subject to State procurement requirements and the availability of
11 sufficient funding, the Agency may retain one or more contractors or
12 consultants, or both, to assist with the design of a process to commence
13 collecting a mileage-based user fee on ~~July 1, 2025~~ January 1, 2027.

14 Sec. 29. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE DESIGN

15 (a) Definitions. As used in Secs. 27–30 of this act:

16 (1) “Account manager” means a person under contract with the Agency
17 of Transportation or Department of Motor Vehicles to administer and manage
18 the mileage-based user fee.

19 (2) “Annual vehicle miles traveled” means the total number of miles that
20 a BEV is driven between annual inspections as reported ~~by an inspection~~
21 ~~mechanic~~ to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

1 (3) “Mileage-based user fee” means the total amount that an owner or
2 lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont owes the State and is calculated by:

3 (A) multiplying the mileage-based user fee rate by the annual vehicle
4 miles traveled ~~or~~;

5 (B) in the case of a terminating event, by multiplying the mileage-
6 based user fee rate by the vehicle miles traveled between the last Vermont
7 annual inspection and the terminating event; or

8 (C) in the absence of a recorded odometer reading during the mileage
9 reporting period, by multiplying the mileage-based user fee by the 98th
10 percentile of estimated annual vehicle miles traveled for a pleasure car in
11 Vermont.

12 (4) “Mileage-based user fee rate” means the per-mile usage fee charged
13 to the owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont.

14 (5) “Mileage reporting period” means the time between annual
15 inspections or the time between ~~an~~ the most recent annual inspection and a
16 terminating event.

17 (6) “Pleasure car” has the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(28).

18 (7) “Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV)” has the same meaning as in
19 23 V.S.A. § 4(85) and includes battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in
20 hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), which have the same meaning as in
21 23 V.S.A. § 4(85)(A) and (B).

1 (8) “Terminating event” means either the registering of a BEV that had
2 been registered in Vermont in a different state or a change in ownership or
3 lesseeship of the BEV, or both.

4 (b) Commencement date. The Agency shall design a process to collect a
5 mileage-based user fee for miles driven by a BEV registered in Vermont to
6 commence collecting revenue on ~~July 1, 2025~~ January 1, 2027.

7 (c) Covered vehicles. The Agency shall design a process to collect a
8 mileage-based user fee based on the annual vehicle miles traveled by BEVs
9 registered in the State.

10 (d) Imposition of a mileage-based user fee. The Agency shall design a
11 process to collect a mileage-based user fee from the owner or lessee of a BEV
12 registered in Vermont for each mileage reporting period ~~within 60 days after~~
13 ~~the Vermont annual inspection~~ on an annual, quarterly, or monthly basis
14 selected by the owner or lessee and reconciled upon renewal of the vehicle
15 registration or within 60 days after a terminating event that closes the mileage
16 reporting period.

17 Sec. 19. INTENT

18 It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

19 (1) the mileage-based user fee for a BEV pleasure car be approximately
20 equivalent to the average amount collected by the State in fuel tax revenue
21 from the use of a non-PEV pleasure car registered in Vermont and the average

1 amount collected by the State in fuel tax revenue and Electric Vehicle
2 Infrastructure fee from the use of a PHEV pleasure car; and
3 (2) that the mileage-based user fee for BEV pleasure cars will be an
4 interim step towards gradually expanding the mileage-based user fee to all
5 motor vehicles.

6 Sec. 20. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE; FUNDING; DESIGN; UPDATES

7 The Agency of Transportation shall report to the Joint Transportation
8 Oversight Committee on or before September 30, 2025 and December 15,
9 2025 regarding the status of federal grants and other funding for the design of
10 the mileage-based user fee pursuant to the provisions of 2023 Acts and
11 Resolves No. 62, Secs. 27–29, as amended by Sec. 12 of this act, and the
12 Agency’s progress in designing the mileage-based user fee.

13 * * * Authority to Transfer Monies in State Fiscal Year 2026 * * *

14 Sec. 21. AUTHORIZATION TO USE MONIES TO CONTINUE

15 PARTNERSHIP WITH DRIVE ELECTRIC VERMONT IN STATE

16 FISCAL YEAR 2026

17 In State fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Transportation is authorized to
18 spend up to \$325,000.00 in remaining monies appropriated to the Electrify
19 Your Fleet Program in State Fiscal Year 2024 to continue the Agency of
20 Transportation’s partnership with Drive Electric Vermont. The monies shall

1 be used for programs and activities that support increased ownership and use
2 of PEVs in the State through:

3 (1) stakeholder coordination;

4 (2) consumer education and outreach;

5 (3) infrastructure development; and

6 (4) the provision of technical assistance and support to Vermont
7 municipalities and Vermont businesses desiring to electrify their vehicle fleets.

8 * * * Consideration of Vehicle Miles Traveled in Project Planning * * *

9 Sec. 22. 19 V.S.A. § 1 is amended to read:

10 § 1. DEFINITIONS

11 As used in this title:

12 * * *

13 (26) “Vehicle miles traveled” means the estimated sum of the miles
14 traveled by all motor vehicle trips within a specific area during a calendar year.

15 Sec. 23. 19 V.S.A. § 10b is amended to read:

16 § 10b. STATEMENT OF POLICY; GENERAL

17 (a) The Agency shall be the responsible agency of the State for the
18 development of transportation policy. It shall develop a mission statement to
19 reflect:

(2) the need for transportation projects that will improve the State's economic infrastructure;² as well as the use of resources in efficient, coordinated, integrated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound ways;² reduce vehicle miles traveled within the State when feasible; and that will be consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) issued under 30 V.S.A. § 202b.

* * *

§ 10c. STATEMENT OF POLICY; HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES

* * *

(c) In choosing between the improvement of an existing highway and complete reconstruction, the Agency shall weigh the following factors:

* * *

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1 **Sec. 26. PUBLIC TRANSIT DEMAND RESPONSE VOLUNTEER**

2 **COORDINATORS; GRANTS; APPROPRIATION**

3 (a) The sum of \$600,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
4 Agency of Transportation in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of providing
5 grants to the public transit agencies to hire volunteer coordinators. Volunteer
6 coordinators hired with grants provided pursuant to this section shall be
7 responsible for the identification, recruitment, and retention of volunteers to
8 provide transportation services to individuals enrolled in the State's demand
9 response transportation programs.

10 (b) The Agency shall, to the extent possible, seek to provide grants to
11 public transit providers in a manner that is geographically balanced and
12 ensures the distribution of volunteer coordinators throughout the State.

13 (c) Not later than December 15, 2026, the Agency, in consultation with
14 public transit agencies that receive grants pursuant to this section, shall submit
15 a written report the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding
16 the extent to which grants issued pursuant to this section resulted in an increase
17 in volunteer capacity in the State.

18 **Sec. 27. MEDICAID NON-EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION**

19 (a) In fiscal year 2026, prior to executing a contract to provide Medicaid
20 Non-Emergency Transportation services, the Department of Vermont Health

1 Access shall provide to the Joint Fiscal Committee for review and approval a
2 detailed analysis demonstrating that by executing such a contract:

3 (1) no State policy, including the coordinated delivery of transportation
4 services in the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities program and the
5 Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program, will be compromised;

6 (2) there will be no degradation of service to eligible individuals; and

7 (3) the financial stability of the State's public transportation systems
8 will be maintained.

9 (b) The analysis shall also include the impact of the Agency of
10 Transportation's investments in vehicles, technology, and other capital
11 investments on the coordinated service delivery model.

12 **Sec. 28. VOLUNTEERS PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES;**

13 **BACKGROUND CHECKS; EXPANSION OF VOLUNTEER**

14 **POOL; REPORT**

15 (a) On or before July 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access
16 shall commence meeting with the Vermont Public Transit Association, the
17 Agency of Transportation, and, in the discretion of the Commissioner of
18 Vermont Health Access, other stakeholders to identify potential, federally
19 permissible opportunities to expand the Medicaid Non-Emergency
20 Transportation program's pool of volunteer drivers. As part of this work, the
21 Department and Association shall collaborate to determine if there are specific

1 classes of offenses that currently prevent volunteer drivers from providing
2 transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation
3 program.

4 (1) The Vermont Public Transit Association shall, to the extent possible,
5 gather and provide to the Department anonymized information from its
6 members regarding:

7 (A) the number of potential volunteers who were barred from
8 providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency
9 Transportation program due to a background check during the past year;

10 (B) which of the background checks currently required by the
11 Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program resulted in potential
12 volunteers being barred from providing transportation services, broken out by
13 percentage; and

14 (C) a summary of the offenses that resulted in potential volunteers
15 being barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-
16 Emergency Transportation program, broken out by:

17 (i) the type of offense;

18 (ii) whether the offense was a felony or misdemeanor;

19 (iii) whether the offense was under State or federal law;

1 (iv) the percentage of potential volunteers who were barred from
2 providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency
3 Transportation program for each type of offense; and

4 (v) to the extent that it is possible to determine, the number of
5 rides that could have been provided by the individuals barred under each type
6 of offense.

7 (2) The Department shall utilize the information provided by the
8 Association pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection to determine, to the
9 extent possible, whether the identified offenses are:

10 (A) fraud-based or otherwise implicate potential Medicaid fraud,
11 waste, and abuse;

12 (B) an offense that otherwise bars an individual from providing
13 transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation
14 program; or

15 (C) an offense that caused harm to an individual other than the
16 offender, or otherwise negatively impacted the safety of the general public.

17 (b) The Department of Vermont Health Access and the Vermont Public
18 Transit Association shall, on or before January 30, 2026, make themselves
19 available to provide an update to the House Committees on Transportation and
20 on Health Care and to the Senate Committees on Transportation and on Health
21 and Welfare regarding the work performed pursuant to this section and

1 opportunities that were identified to expand the Medicaid Non-Emergency
2 Transportation program's pool of volunteer drivers.

3 **Sec. 29. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS; PUBLICITY; OUTREACH**

4 (a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the Vermont
5 Public Transit Association, shall identify and pursue opportunities to
6 communicate with the Vermont driving public regarding volunteer and
7 community driver participation in the State's demand response transportation
8 programs, including the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities program
9 and the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program. Outreach
10 conducted pursuant to this section may include:

11 (1) invitations for individuals to voluntarily indicate their interest
12 through the operator licensing and vehicle registration processes, subject to any
13 data privacy requirements under State or federal law;

14 (2) notices or other public outreach placed on the Department's website
15 or other internet-based platforms; and

16 (3) messaging by the Agency of Transportation on social media
17 platforms, including providing links to informational resources provided by the
18 Vermont Public Transit Association.

19 (b) The Department of Vermont Health Access, in consultation with the
20 Agency of Transportation and the Vermont Public Transit Association, shall
21 identify and pursue opportunities to increase awareness of available

1 transportation services provided by volunteer and community driver programs
2 among both individuals who are potentially eligible to volunteer as drivers and
3 individuals who could potentially utilize the transportation services.

4 **Sec. 30. COORDINATION OF HEALTH CARE AND TRANSPORTATION**
5 **SERVICES; WORKING GROUP; REPORT**

6 (a) The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Commissioner
7 of Vermont Health Access, shall convene a working group to improve the
8 coordination of health care and transportation services in relation to individuals
9 enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs. The working
10 group shall be composed of stakeholders identified by the Secretary in
11 consultation with the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, including
12 representatives of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems,
13 independent dialysis and methadone facilities, and the Vermont Public
14 Transportation Association.

15 (b) The working group shall examine various options for improving the
16 coordination of health care and transportation services, including:

17 (1) opportunities to coordinate the scheduling of health care
18 appointments and treatments to maximize the use of shared rides; and

19 (2) opportunities to improve communication between the public transit
20 agencies and health care providers to facilitate coordination of health care and

1 transportation services for individuals enrolled in the State’s demand response
2 transportation programs.

3 (c) On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary and Commissioner shall
4 submit a written report to the House Committees on Transportation and on
5 Health Care and the Senate Committees on Transportation and on Health and
6 Welfare with the working group’s findings and any recommendations for
7 legislative action.

8 * * * Vehicle Identification Numbers for Certain Vehicles * * *

9 Sec. 31. ULTRA-LOW VOLUME VEHICLE MANUFACTURING; KIT-
10 CARS; HOMEBUILT MOTOR VEHICLES; VEHICLE
11 IDENTIFICATION NUMBER; REPORT

12 (a)(1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the
13 Secretary of Natural Resources and representatives of the ultra-low volume
14 vehicle manufacturing industry in Vermont, shall examine processes for
15 issuing vehicle identification numbers to ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-
16 cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles and opportunities to facilitate the
17 registration of such vehicles.

18 (2) As used in this section:

19 (A) “Homebuilt motor vehicle” means a motor vehicle that is
20 constructed or assembled by an individual from new or used parts, or both, and
21 is not a kit-car.

1 (B) “Kit-car” means a motor vehicle that is constructed by an
2 individual from a manufactured kit that includes some or all parts and
3 components necessary to construct the motor vehicle.

4 (C) “Ultra-low volume motor vehicle” means a vehicle that is
5 manufactured for sale by a manufacturer whose annual worldwide production
6 is not more than 325 motor vehicles.

7 (b) In preparing the report, the Commissioner shall:

8 (1) examine the potential to waive some or all Vermont motor vehicle
9 emissions requirements for ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and
10 homebuilt motor vehicles;

11 (2) identify a cost-effective process for certifying the safety of ultra-low
12 volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles; and

13 (3) develop a streamlined process to provide State Vehicle Identification
14 Numbers to ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor
15 vehicles.

16 (c) On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner shall submit a written
17 report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the
18 Commissioner’s findings and identifying any legislative action necessary to
19 enable the issuance of vehicle identification numbers to and registration of
20 ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles.

21 *** Railroad Lease Extensions ***

1 Sec. 32. 5 V.S.A. § 3405 is amended to read:

2 § 3405. LEASE FOR CONTINUED OPERATION

3 (a) The Secretary, as agent for the State, with the approval of the General
4 Assembly, or if the General Assembly is not in session, approval of the Joint
5 Transportation Oversight Committee, is authorized to lease or otherwise
6 arrange for the continued operation of all or any State-owned railroad property
7 to any responsible person, provided that approval for the operation, if
8 necessary, is granted by the federal Surface Transportation Board under 49
9 C.F.R. Part 1150 (certificate to construct, acquire, or operate railroad lines).
10 The transaction shall be subject to any further terms and conditions as in the
11 opinion of the Secretary are necessary and appropriate to accomplish the
12 purpose of this chapter.

13 (b) To preserve continuity of service on State-owned railroads, the
14 Secretary may enter into a short-term lease or operating agreement, for a term
15 not to exceed six months, with a responsible railroad operator. The Secretary
16 shall notify the House and Senate Committees on Transportation within 10
17 calendar days after entering into any lease or agreement pursuant to this
18 subsection.

19 (c) The Secretary shall notify the House and Senate Committees on
20 Transportation or, if the General Assembly is not in session, the Joint
21 Transportation Oversight Committee when there are 12 months remaining on

1 the operating lease for any State-owned railroad, and when there are 12 months
2 remaining on a lease extension for the operating lease for any State-owned
3 railroad.

4 * * * Complete Streets * * *

5 Sec. 33. 19 V.S.A. § 2405 is added to read:

6 § 2405. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

7 The Agency shall provide technical and planning assistance to
8 municipalities to assist with the incorporation of complete streets principles
9 into municipal projects and compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

10 Sec. 34. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 148, Sec. 31 is amended to read:

11 Sec. 31. REPLACEMENT FOR THE VERMONT STATE DESIGN

12 STANDARDS

13 * * *

14 (c) The Agency of Transportation shall ensure that the replacement for the
15 Vermont State Design Standards incorporates provisions addressing the
16 following:

17 (1) prioritization of reducing vehicle miles traveled in downtown and
18 village centers identified by a regional planning commission pursuant to
19 24 V.S.A. § 4348a;

1 (2) alignment of eligible transportation improvements with future land
2 use in downtown and village centers identified by a regional planning
3 commission pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4348a through the use of transect maps;

4 (3) context sensitive design standards for downtown and village centers
5 identified by a regional planning commission pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4348a to
6 ensure that:

7 (A) standards are compatible with the existing size of the community
8 and intensity of activity within the community as well as the settlement scale
9 for the community depicted on future land use maps;

10 (B) investments are directed to the development of a comprehensive
11 pedestrian network consistent with existing and future land use; and

12 (C) design engineering standards provide for ease of understanding
13 and implementation of:

14 (i) narrowed travel lanes;

15 (ii) slow zones for motor vehicle traffic;

16 (iii) crosswalks;

17 (iv) enhanced shoulders to accommodate travel by bicycles or
18 pedestrians, or both;

19 (v) sidewalks; and

20 (vi) public transit services;

(4) identification of standards for reducing vehicle travel lane widths
and other traffic calming methods that can be incorporated by regional
planning commissions into downtown and village centers identified pursuant
to 24 V.S.A. § 4348a;

(5) requirements that reconstructed bridges and upsized culverts within downtown and village centers identified pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4348a shall incorporate pedestrian facilities; and

(6) consideration of guidance from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program Green Streets Guide into the design of State highways in downtown and village centers.

* * * Dig Safe * * *

Sec. 35. 30 V.S.A. § 7006 is amended to read:

§ 7006. MARKING OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITIES

A company notified in accordance with section 7005 of this title shall, within ~~48~~ 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, ~~on~~ after the receipt of the notice, mark the approximate location of its underground utility facilities in the area of the proposed excavation activities; provided, however, if the company advises the person that the proposed excavation area is of such length or size that the company cannot reasonably mark all of the underground utility facilities within ~~48~~ 72 hours, the person shall notify the company of the specific locations in which the excavation

1 activities will first occur and the company shall mark facilities in those
2 locations within ~~48~~ 72 hours and the remaining facilities within a reasonable
3 time thereafter. A company and an excavator may by agreement fix a later
4 time for the company's marking of the facilities, provided the marking is made
5 prior to excavation activities. For the purposes of this chapter, the approximate
6 location of underground facilities shall be marked with stakes, paint, or other
7 physical means as designated by the Commission.

8 Sec. 36. 30 V.S.A. § 7006a is amended to read:

9 § 7006a. MAINTENANCE OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITY

10 MARKINGS

11 After a company has marked its underground facilities in accordance with
12 section 7006 of this title, the excavator shall be responsible for maintenance of
13 the designated markings. In the event said markings are obliterated, destroyed,
14 or removed, the person engaged in excavation activities shall notify the System
15 referred to in section 7002 of this title that remarking is needed. The System
16 shall then notify all member companies whose facilities may be affected. ~~The~~
17 Each applicable company shall within ~~48~~ 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays,
18 Sundays, and legal holidays, following receipt of the notice, remark the
19 location of its underground utility facilities.

20 * * * Legal Trails * * *

21 Sec. 37. 19 V.S.A. chapter 3 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 3. TOWN HIGHWAYS

§ 301. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(2) “Legislative body” ~~includes boards of selectmen, aldermen, and village trustees~~ means a “legislative body” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2001.

(3) ~~“Selectmen” includes village trustees and aldermen~~ “Selectboard” means a “selectboard” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2001.

* * *

(8) “Trail” means a public right-of-way that is not a highway and that:

(A) municipalities have the authority to exclusively or cooperatively maintain;

(B) previously was a designated town highway having the same width as the designated town highway, or a lesser width if so designated; or

~~(B)(C)~~ a new public right-of-way laid out as a trail by the selectmen legislative body for the purpose of providing access to abutting properties or for recreational use. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to independently authorize the condemnation of land for recreational purposes or to affect the authority of selectmen legislative bodies to reasonably regulate the uses of recreational trails.

§ 302. CLASSIFICATION OF TOWN HIGHWAYS

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

3 * * *

4 (2) Class 2 town highways are those town highways selected as the most
5 important highways in each town. As far as practicable, they shall be selected
6 with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways from town to
7 town and to places that by their nature have more than normal amount of
8 traffic. The ~~selectmen~~ legislative body, with the approval of the Agency, shall
9 determine which highways are to be class 2 highways.

10 (3) Class 3 town highways:

11 (A) Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than
12 class 1 or 2 highways. The ~~selectmen~~ legislative body, after conference with a
13 representative of the Agency, shall determine which highways are class 3 town
14 highways.

15 * * *

16 (5) Trails shall not be considered highways ~~and the town.~~ A
17 municipality shall have the authority to maintain trails but shall not be
18 responsible for any maintenance, including culverts and bridges.

19 * * *

20 § 303. TOWN HIGHWAY CONTROL

1 Town highways shall be under the general supervision and control of the
2 ~~selectmen~~ legislative body of the town where the roads are located. ~~Selectmen~~
3 The legislative body of a town shall supervise all expenditures.

4 § 304. DUTIES OF SELECTBOARD

5 (a) It shall be the duty and responsibility of the selectboard of the town to,
6 or acting as a board, it shall have the authority to:

7 * * *

8 (16) Unless the town electorate votes otherwise, under the provisions of
9 17 V.S.A. § 2646, appoint a road commissioner, or remove ~~him or her~~ the road
10 commissioner from office, pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2651. Road
11 commissioners, elected or appointed, shall have only the powers and authority
12 regarding highways granted to them by the selectboard.

13 * * *

14 (24) Maintain trails, but shall not be required to maintain trails.

15 * * *

16 * * * Effective Dates * * *

17 Sec. 38. EFFECTIVE DATES

18 (a) This section and Secs. 32 (railroad leases) and 35 and 36 (dig safe) shall
19 take effect on passage.

20 (b) Sec. 5. (Agency of Transportation dashboard) shall take effect January
21 1, 2026.

1 (c) Sec. 6 (repeal of 19 V.S.A. § 10g reports) shall take effect on July 1,
2 2026.

3 (d) The remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

4

5

6

7

8

9 (Committee vote: _____)

10

11

Senator _____

12

FOR THE COMMITTEE