

Draft Vermont Rail Plan - A

Tier (2025)	ID # (Unique)	Type (Location or Policy)
First	2	Policy
First	4	Policy
First	13	Policy
First	18	Policy
First	100	Location Specific
First	110	Location Specific
First	111	Location Specific
First	115	Location Specific
First	116	Location Specific
First	122	Location Specific
First	126	Location Specific
Fourth	1	Policy
Fourth	7	Policy
Fourth	11	Policy
Fourth	107	Location Specific
Fourth	109	Location Specific

Fourth	123	Location Specific
Fourth	124	Location Specific
Fourth	125	Location Specific
Fourth	2502	Location Specific
Fourth	2505	Policy
Fourth	2512	Policy
Fourth	2515	Policy
Fourth	2518	Location Specific
Fourth	2521	Location Specific
Fourth	2524	Policy
Fourth	2525	Location Specific
Fourth	2526	Location Specific
NA	2503	Policy
NA	2511	Policy
NA	2514	Policy
NA	2516	Policy

Second	3	Policy
Second	6	Policy
Second	8	Policy
Second	9	Policy
Second	14	Policy
Second	15	Policy
Second	112	Location Specific
Second	2507	Policy
Second	2522	Location Specific
Third	5	Policy
Third	19	Policy
Third	20	Policy
Third	21	Policy
Third	102	Location Specific
Third	103	Location Specific

Third	104	Location Specific
Third	105	Location Specific
Third	106	Location Specific
Third	108	Location Specific
Third	113	Location Specific
Third	2506	Location Specific
Third	2509	Location Specific
Third	2527	Location Specific
Third	2528	Policy
Third	2529	Policy
Third	2531	Location Specific
Third	2532	Policy

II Initiatives by General Tier of Status with All Fields (See

Initiative Description	Primary Goal Area(s)	Freight or Passenger
Upgrade all rail lines to 286K weight-bearing capability, emphasizing bridges and weight restricted locations	State of Good Repair	Freight
Seek grants and innovative funding approaches for freight and passenger rail	Funding	Both
Increase resilience of rail system to make critical infrastructure more resilient now and to prepare for increasing storm severity	Safety & Resilience	Both
Further enhance marketing of Vermont passenger rail	Funding	Passenger
Vermont Extension to Montreal – one round trip/ day	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
VTR track upgrade between Hoosick and Rutland to continuous welded rail (CWR) with a minimum of 115 lb. rail	State of Good Repair	Freight
Passenger rail station improvements statewide, prioritizing stations based on usage trends and station needs, with a focus on multimodal access.	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger
Upgrade WACR Connecticut River Line Bridges and Track up to 286k standard (White River Junction to Newport)	State of Good Repair	Freight
Burlington Railyard Enterprise Project - Improve safety in rail yard, interconnections for the community, and multimodal transportation infrastructure	Economic Development	Both
Continue to improve at-grade rail crossing safety with gates, flashers, and other safety improvements at existing and planned public road crossings with an emphasis on the top 50 prioritized sites on state highways.	Safety & Resilience	Both
Upgrade NECR Winooski Branch Bridges and Track to 286k standard (Burlington to Essex Junction)	State of Good Repair	Both
Post freight rail system performance measures, including trends	State of Good Repair	Freight
Develop quick-response capability to leverage economic development opportunities	Economic Development	Freight
Workforce development and training	State of Good Repair	Freight
Add a second daily service to the <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> New York City to Burlington.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Vermont connection at Springfield, MA to trains to Boston	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger

Explore adding "whistle stops" along the Ethan Allen Express while recognizing need to keep speed up for line to be viable. For example, in Brandon and Shelburne to balance access with overall speed of service.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Study how to manage rail noise impacts to residential communities and support additional community and economic development. For example, near the South Summit St. crossing in Essex Junction.	State of Good Repair	Passenger
Improve rail crossings used by multiple modes of transportation, emphasis on local and non-state highways. Examples include Montpelier Main Street and Burlington Intervale Road.	Safety & Resilience	Freight
Coordinate in explorations of passenger rail service on the GMRC. Connecting Bellows Falls, Ludlow, Rutland, with additional interest in Chester and Proctorville. Rutland connection via Ethan Allen with service to Burlington & NYC.	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger
Reduce noise levels. Particularly in the fall and winter months. Quiet zones will also allow for HUD funding for affordable housing. See related Initiative 124.	Economic Development	Passenger
Explore adding more passenger rail routes	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Study how population changes in key population centers (Burlington, Rutland, Montpelier, Essex, etc.) impact higher frequency rail	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Winooski NECR Branch overhaul - double tracking, state ownership, high-capacity passenger rail connection for intercity and local passenger connections	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Both
Coordinate to upgrade privately owned Twin State Railroad. A 22 mile line connecting St. Johnsbury to South Lunenburg before connecting to the NHCR that has been in disuse for years and would require upgrades to resume service.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Freight
Coordinate with partners to reduce the impact of water from storms or floods on the rail network while also improving environmental networks such as connectivity of important water systems.	Safety & Resilience	Both
Evaluate <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> line for speeds up to 110 and 125 mph	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Explore extending the <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> to Montreal.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Improve safety, especially if speeds are increased.	Safety & Resilience	Both
Increases in speed reduce maintenance and operating costs, increasing ridership	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Study how frequency improvements would increase ridership, farebox recovery, and meet other plan goals, including climate mitigation goals.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Evaluate and publish transloading sites across the state.	Economic Development	Freight

Maintain State-owned freight trackage at FRA Track Class 2 or better and State-owned passenger rail trackage at Class 4 or better where viable based on geography	State of Good Repair	Both
Preserve and fully use industrial land parcels with access to rail sidings as well as the rail infrastructure that provides access to them.	Economic Development	Freight
Facilitate development of freight transload or potentially intermodal facilities in or near Vermont	Intermodal Connectivity	Freight
Maintain and improve freight network connections for Vermont businesses to regional short-haul markets and competitive Class I railroad (mix of physical and policy matters)	Economic Development	Freight
Improve multi-modal connections including bicycle, pedestrian, and transit to Amtrak stations. Improve wayfinding, Pick-up/Drop-off, supply of nearby parking (vehicles and bicycles) for short and long term uses. These efforts include partnerships and collaboration with adjacent neighbors.	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger
Support smart land use growth likely to increase rail use, such as transit-oriented development (TOD) and other housing strategies near Amtrak stations.	Economic Development	Passenger
Upgrade GMRC Bridges and Track to 286k standard (Rutland to Bellows Falls)	State of Good Repair	Freight
Improve multimodal coordination between Amtrak stations with broader intercity and interstate highway access (intercity buses including Greyhound, VT Translines, etc.). Including special combo fares and other incentives for multimodal travel. Connections from stations, such as Dartmouth from White River Jct.	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger
Coordinate to upgrade the privately owned East Alburgh Bridge that is important for international freight movement and would be used by the passenger train to Montreal.	State of Good Repair	Freight
Educate shippers about rail carload and intermodal service options and contracting approaches	Economic Development	Freight
Publicize existing voluntary efforts of railroads and encourage “freight as a good neighbor” (NCHRP Syntheses 320) while respecting rail’s exemptions from local control	Safety & Resilience	Freight
Modernize freight rail yards.	Economic Development	Freight
Work to reduce causes of delay to Ethan Allen Express and Vermonter service within and beyond Vermont’s borders through partnerships	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Vermonter Extension to Montreal – two round trips/ day	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Extension of <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> from Burlington to Essex Junction to connect with <i>Vermonter</i> .	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger

Add passenger service on the Albany-Bennington-Burlington freight route to supplement <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> service in Western Corridor. This is part of the FRA Corridor ID study.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Bring the <i>Vermont</i> up to 79 MPH where conditions allow	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Both
Bring the <i>Ethan Allen Express</i> up to 79 MPH where conditions allow	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Both
Extend one Valley Flyer service from Greenfield, MA to White River Junction, VT	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Upgrade WACR Montpelier & Barre Sub. Bridges and Track up to 286k standard (Montpelier to Barre)	State of Good Repair	Freight
Investigate a coordinated connection (rail, bus, etc.) at both Rutland and Bellows Falls to connect passengers between the Ethan Allen Express and the Vermont to Killington, Ludlow/Okemo and Chester.	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger
Add signs to help drivers know about and find Amtrak stations on I-91, I-89, and other major corridors in Vermont.	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger
Extend one Valley Flyer service from Greenfield, MA to Brattleboro, VT	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Explore increases to peak season passenger capacity on both Amtrak lines.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Passenger
Reduce and eventually eliminate restrictions to domestic double stack clearance across the state. For example on the NECR and the GMRC/CLP.	Increase Use/ Expand Capacity	Freight
Confirm and address the sections of rail that are most vulnerable to flood damage using results of the expansion of the Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) to rail. See appendix of Rail Plan for priority locations.	Safety & Resilience	Both
Enhance public safety relating to rail infrastructure, for example by further publicizing and encouraging participation in Operation Lifesaver of Vermont.	Safety & Resilience	Both

Draft Plan for Definitions)

Longer Description and Notes about the Initiative

286,000 pounds is the national standard for loaded freight rail car weight. Increasing all lines to this standard will improve regional and national connections and enhance freight business opportunities in the State.

Continue to position the State to pursue federal grant opportunities and collaborate with ACCD and other economic development agencies on opportunities.

Collaborate with railroad operators and private owners to identify priorities and funding to increase resilience. Maintain culverts, monitor erosion areas, consider physical improvements and agreements to be as ready as reasonable. Also see Initiative 2524 about considering connection of important waterways and habitats as part of reducing impacts of flood waters and animal strikes to rail systems.

Work more closely with ACCD and VT Tourism, economic development and tourist groups, chambers, to promote passenger rail opportunities and connections to local tourist attractions. Expand the use of VT food and branded clothing in passenger rail services.

Project is a high priority with active projects for station enhancements in Montreal and planning for the service in both countries. The service is part of the Corridor ID process underway in 2025/2026.

Higher track weight to allow for higher train speeds (passenger and freight) as well as maintain State of Good Repair.

This includes, but is not limited to, the list of ADA improvements in Table 4.1. Rutland & White River Junction are VTrans/City of Rutland responsibility. Montpelier (2022), Bellows Falls (2022), Brattleboro (2022-23), Essex Junction (2021) have projects planned by Amtrak. Example being, Ferrisburgh-Vergennes repairs and improvements (repair sidewalk to Vergennes, improve bike/ped access, improve lighting and walkway for safety of nighttime train arrivals)

21 bridges load rating not sufficient for 286k, rail weight between 90 and 115 pounds. Preliminary engineering costs for the rehabilitation of five bridges, and construction costs for the rehabilitation of three bridges on this line are included in the Governor's proposed FY22 budget.

This is a project to enhance safety of an urban rail yard. Reducing trespassing and providing safer multimodal access in the part of the city. The new road would provide truck and freight access to the site while enabling redevelopment of the surrounding parcels and improved roadway connection from Pine Street to Battery Street.

Long-term goal of State with safety improvements of rail crossings being addressed in multiple programs. IJJA continues the Section 130 program. More information at <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip/xings/railway-highway-crossing-program-overview>

This is Class I track, rated at 10 MPH for freight. This initiative would serve freight and support extending Ethan Allen service from Burlington to Essex Junction (#103). A CRISI grant for some work has been received to upgrade all track along the line to accommodate 286k.

Performance measures may need to be modified. Could be in VTransparency or elsewhere in a dashboard.

Collaborate with State and local economic development agencies to develop tools to help identify, promote, and calculate public/private benefits of developing rail-served sites.

Partner on job training with Dept. of Labor, educational facilities, and businesses to ensure that critical rail-related jobs can be filled.

Longer term prospect of increased capacity along the Western Line. A Corridor ID study in 2025/2026 is investigating passenger service on this line.

Project would make service and physical upgrades in Springfield, MA to enable a service to connect to Boston. It is part of the larger East-West passenger service that MassDOT is exploring. See: <https://www.mass.gov/east-west-passenger-rail-study>

The provision of additional "whistlestops" would need to account for the costs of additional stops. Brandon is approximately 15 miles from both Rutland and Middlebury, Shelburne is approximately 15 miles from Vergennes and 7 miles from Burlington. Would need to assess balance of added access with added travel time.

Conduct a Quiet Zone analysis for considering a New Quiet Zone. The analysis required is summarized here <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/how-create-quiet-zone>. Quiet zones could be explored if supported by analysis as part of Initiative #103 or #126

This project aims to support local jurisdictions with ways to enhance the safety and operations around rail crossings. Two locations named as examples - Main Street Montpelier, and Intervale Road in Burlington. Improving sight lines, bicycle crossings, etc. 2020 VTrans Bicycle & Ped. grant, See 2019 Scoping study: <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/7105> . Locations identified during interviews and discussions with stakeholders about problematic locations.

Project would create rail passenger service along this route. It relates to initiative (#2506).

Project aims to identify where and when quiet zones may be possible to create. Interest was noted during the fall and winter months with fewer trees blocking sounds. As well as supporting economic development and density around train stations. This would be a long-term consideration given existing funding constraints and density of Vermont that would support rail. This is partially being implemented with the expansion to Montreal and the Valley Flyer services. This project seeks to identify the longer term changes in key population centers in Vermont and works to identify how those populations may warrant further investment in rail in the future.

Project would aim to dramatically re-shape the NECR line between Burlington to Essex. Significant expense for right of way, bridges, tunnels, etc.

This project would work with VRS to upgrade the private rail line. It provides access to New Hampshire rail lines and would increase the demand and use of the Connecticut River lines.

This is an opportunity to advance the resilience of transportation and environmental systems at the same time. If waterways are more healthy and resilient they will be able to store storm surges with less damage to rail infrastructure. Similarly, if animals have alternate routes that would help keep them out from in front of trains.

The project would look to change rail radii and other topographic improvements to achieve speeds of 110 and 125 mph. The Western Line has more opportunities than other parts of the state, but would require improved safety of crossings, signaling, and track upgrades

The Project would benefit from the upgrades on the NECR line between Burlington and Essex. The project would consider how the Ethan Allen is to access Montreal - either through transfers or by keeping the same train from Essex Junction north. Project is a general statement that would support additional signaling, right of way improvements, clearance issues, and crossing upgrades throughout the state.

This initiative focuses on how improvements to maintenance can improve speed, efficiency, and will in turn attract ridership. Monitor these performance measures for feedback loops.

This project may be able to pick up from the Corridor ID work to identify how frequency and speed affect ridership elasticities.

This project would improve the awareness of transload sites in Vermont. Advertise with ACCD and work with regional economic development corporations to improve understanding of transload opportunities.

Long-term goal for the State to upgrade where necessary and then maintain rail at levels suitable for competitive and cost-effective use. Class 2 is 25 MPH for freight, 30 MPH for passenger. Class 4 is 60 MPH for freight, 80 MPH for passenger.

Work with RPCs, railroads, agencies, economic development groups, municipalities, etc. to update inventory of these properties and help publicize in a strategic manner. Maintain viability of industrial zoned land near existing or potential sidings, spurs, etc.

As demand warrants, work with customers and railroads to identify opportunities to expand or develop new transload facilities. An intermodal site could be explored where there are high volumes and Class 1 access.

Advocate on behalf of Vermont businesses for enhanced operating agreements between shortline and Class I railroads to improve efficiency of interchanges. Make physical improvements to support effective interchanges, for example for the State-owned Bennington Rail Yard to be able to support interaction with long Class 1 train sets.

Work with transit and tourist services to match scheduling, increase comfort and reliability of transfers. Work with municipalities to develop station area plans, improve wayfinding, and enhance bicycle and pedestrian accommodations (crosswalks, grade crossings, paths/trails, bicycle lanes, bicycle parking). Consider equity so everyone can access to train services. Improve sharing of Amtrak guidance for bringing bicycles on trains. Stations with higher possible ridership may be prioritized. This initiative also includes provision of secure long-term bicycle parking at or nearby train stations.

Work with municipalities and Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to explore and support TOD opportunities near Amtrak stations, including zoning, utility and other infrastructure, multimodal connections (see ID#14), and other needs. Recent legislation (2024 Vermont Act 47 and 2025 Act 181) prioritizes actions to reduce barriers to housing development. This initiative ties rail planning and land use strategies.

8 bridges with a load rating <286k, 17.9 miles of track is 90 lb. rail or lower. Preliminary engineering and/or right-of-way costs for the rehabilitation of three bridges on this line are in the Governor's proposed FY22 budget.

This project would involve public transit operators, private intercity bus operators, and regional economic development corporations to improve coordination between rail and transit. Access to key destination, tourism, education, etc.

Currently a freight bridge, this would become an important connection for future passenger service to Montreal. NECR has received a CRISI grant to evaluate the future of the crossing. This Initiative would focus on planning and eventual improvement of the crossing.

Work with economic development agencies to encourage intermodal rail freight use by private businesses where viable. Develop a guidebook and 'how to' manual for shippers interested to move goods by rail.

Highlight and support coordination on rail maintenance, operations, and construction activities. This could include: - Proactively share information such as FAQs that will be on the VRS website in early 2021; -Collaborate more on getting information visible to varied audiences such as outreach campaigns ahead of Ethan Allen extension to Burlington; and - Continue to explore positive ways for railroads and other Vermonters to resolve issues in a way that strengthens Vermont's economy and communities.

Improve sorting of cars for various destinations and support functions such as car/locomotive maintenance, storage, and inspection. VTrans can be supportive, though this would be done by the railroad companies (e.g., NECR and CP). These private yards were raised in interviews.

Most of the delays that effect on-time performance of the *Ethan Allen Express* and *Vermont* occur outside Vermont. Working with other states and railroads to ensure delays within and beyond Vermont's borders are addressed can improve service reliability and attract more riders.

The extension of the initial one-trip per day to two trips per day would depend on funding, demand, and coordination between partners. This is a secondary initiative after accomplishing the initial one trip per day (ID: 100)

This project would use the improvements on the NECR line to extend the Ethan Allen Express to Essex Junction. This is a complicated initiative that would need further exploration. Need to first do track improvements in #126.

This is envisioned as supplementing the existing Ethan Allen Express service, which is routed via Whitehall, NY, with additional service routed via Bennington. Previous studies[i] have evaluated other alternatives, and coordination between Vermont and New York State will be necessary to advance any service alternative in this corridor. Need to first do track improvements in #110.

Project would improve the quality of the rail and upgrade signals and crossings. Many areas are not favorable to this speed due to topography (vertical and horizontal constraints).

This project would improve the quality of the rail with additional signaling system improvements between Whitehall, NY and Burlington. This has costs but is generally more favorable topography relative to the Vermonter line.

Project is being explored through the Corridor ID process. It could be implemented north to Brattleboro or possibly White River.

3 bridges not capable of handling 286k, 12.7 miles of 90 lb. rail or lower. Preliminary engineering costs for the rehabilitation of one bridge on this line are included in the Governor's proposed FY22 budget.

This project would establish a dedicated and coordinated transit route to supplement the train services between the west and east sides of Vermont. It could build off of the two services - one from Rutland to Killington and one from Bellows Falls to Okemo. These are primarily workforce transit options. This project would explore what passenger demand may exist between the two services. This needs to be coordinated with VTrans Public Transit as it would likely start with bus services and TDM considering first potential adjustments in existing services.

Project to improve the multimodal awareness between the highway and rail.

The project is being considered in the Corridor ID process and would identify the types of upgrades necessary to accommodate additional passenger service north from Massachusetts.

Adding an additional car or two during periods of peak demand, such as tourism peaks or holidays.

Lowest clearance is 19'6" (US 5 in Hartland and US 7 in Georgia, VT). 31 total restrictions in Vermont to double-stack access. Presently handles some international containers, but NECR cannot handle double-stacked domestic containers. NECR has 12 vertical restrictions. 19'2" clearance restriction in Proctorsville (GMRC) and Rutland Center (CLP).

The TRPT sites have been prioritized by asset class. The locations warrant additional investigation and project development.

The project would reinforce the role that Operation Lifesaver has in Vermont. The increased awareness of and role of freight and passenger service benefits Vermonters and how to be safe around rail.

Concept Cost Level	Concept Feasibility Level	Concept Timing
High	High	Short to Long Term
Low	High	On-going
High	Medium	On-going
Low	High	On-going
Low	High	Short Term
Low	High	Long Term
Low	High	Short Term
High	Low	Short to Long Term
High	High	Long Term
High	High	On-going
Medium	Medium	Short Term
Low	High	Short Term
Low	High	Short Term
Medium	Medium	Short Term
High	Medium	Medium Term
Low	Low	Medium Term

Low Medium Medium Term

Low Medium Short Term

Low High Medium Term

High Medium Long Term

Medium Medium Medium Term

High Low Long Term

Low Low Short to Medium Tern

High Low Long Term

High Medium Long Term

Medium Low Medium Term

High Medium Long Term

Medium Medium Medium Term

High Low Long Term

Low Medium Short to Medium Tern

Low High Medium Term

Low Medium Short Term

High High Long Term

Low High On-going

Medium Medium Short Term

Low Medium On-going

Medium Medium On-going

Low High Short Term

Medium High Short to Long Term

Low Medium, Varies Short to Medium Tern

High Medium Medium Term

Low Medium On-going

Low High On-going

Medium Medium Long Term

Medium Low On-going

Medium Medium Medium Term

Medium High Medium Term

High	Low	Long Term
High	Low	Medium Term
High	Low	Medium Term
Medium	Low	Medium Term
Medium	Medium	Short to Long Term

Low	Medium	Short Term
Low	High	Short Term
Medium	Medium	Short Term
Medium	Medium	Medium Term

Very High	Low	Long Term
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Low to High	Medium	Short to Long Term
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Low	High	Short Term
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