



Update of Vermont Rail Plan & Vermont Freight Plan Presentation #1

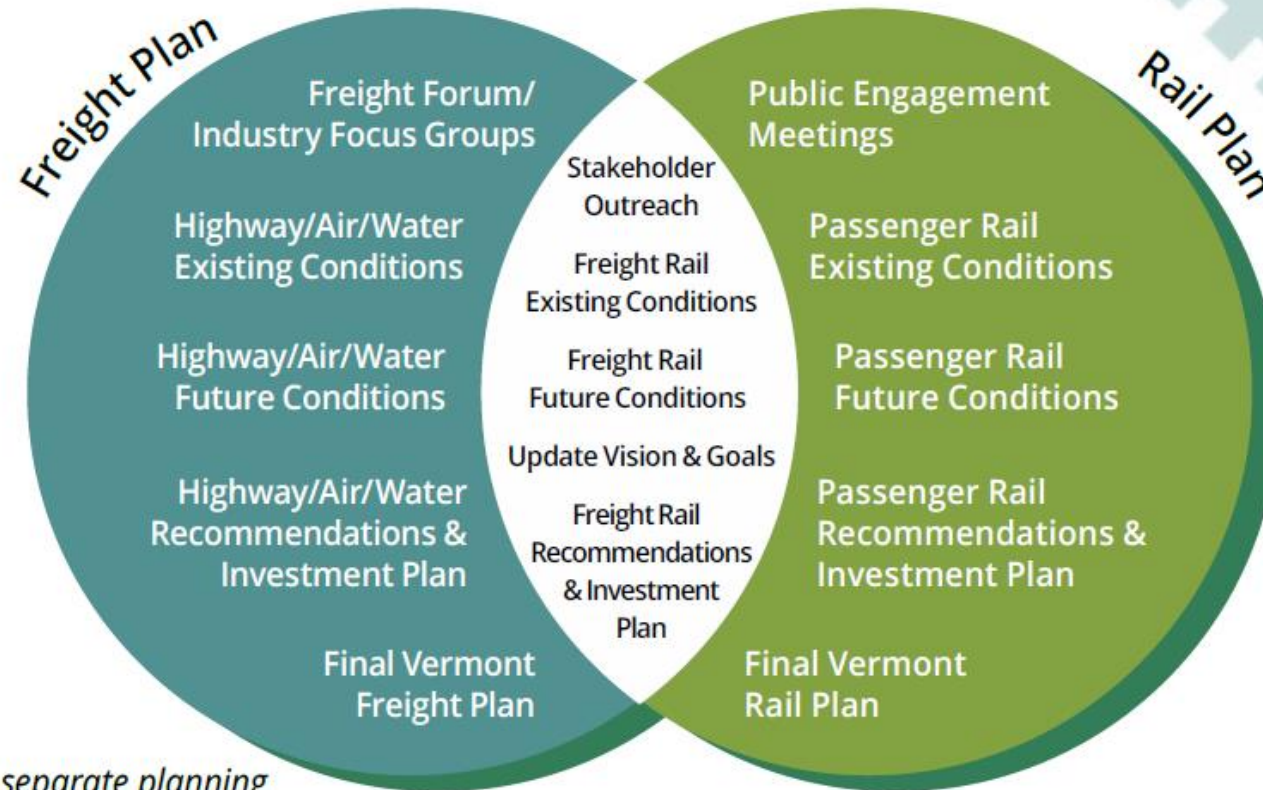
Chittenden County Regional Planning
Commission TAC – September 1, 2020



Background & Goals

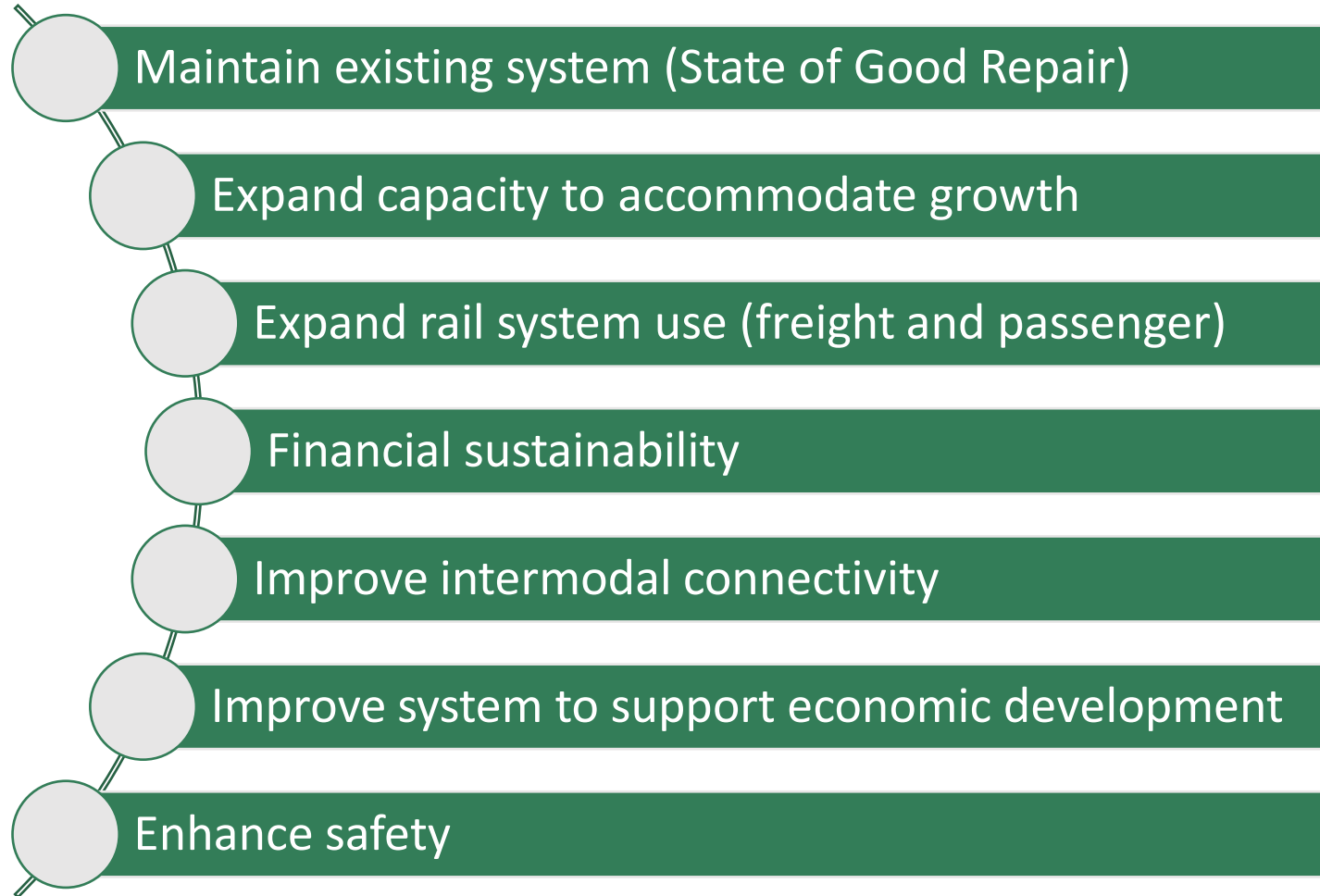
- FRA requires a State Rail Plan at minimum every 4 years to remain eligible for certain types of rail grants
- FHWA requires a State Freight Plan every 5 years in order to obligate Freight Formula funds
- Update of 2015 Rail Plan will include Freight/Intercity passenger rail service
- Update of 2012 Freight Plan will cover all modes: rail, highway, air, & water
- **RPC Role:**
 - Provide input on regional/local needs and ideas
 - Help expand public outreach

Rail Plan & Freight Plan Overlaps

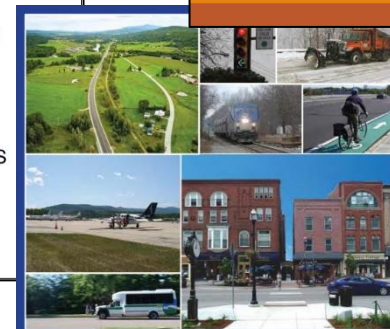
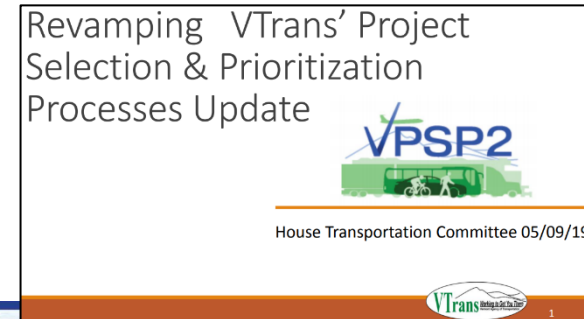


Although two separate planning efforts, the Freight and Rail Plans share common tasks and work products.

2015 Rail Plan Goals



- Aligned with other efforts
- Open for minor refinement



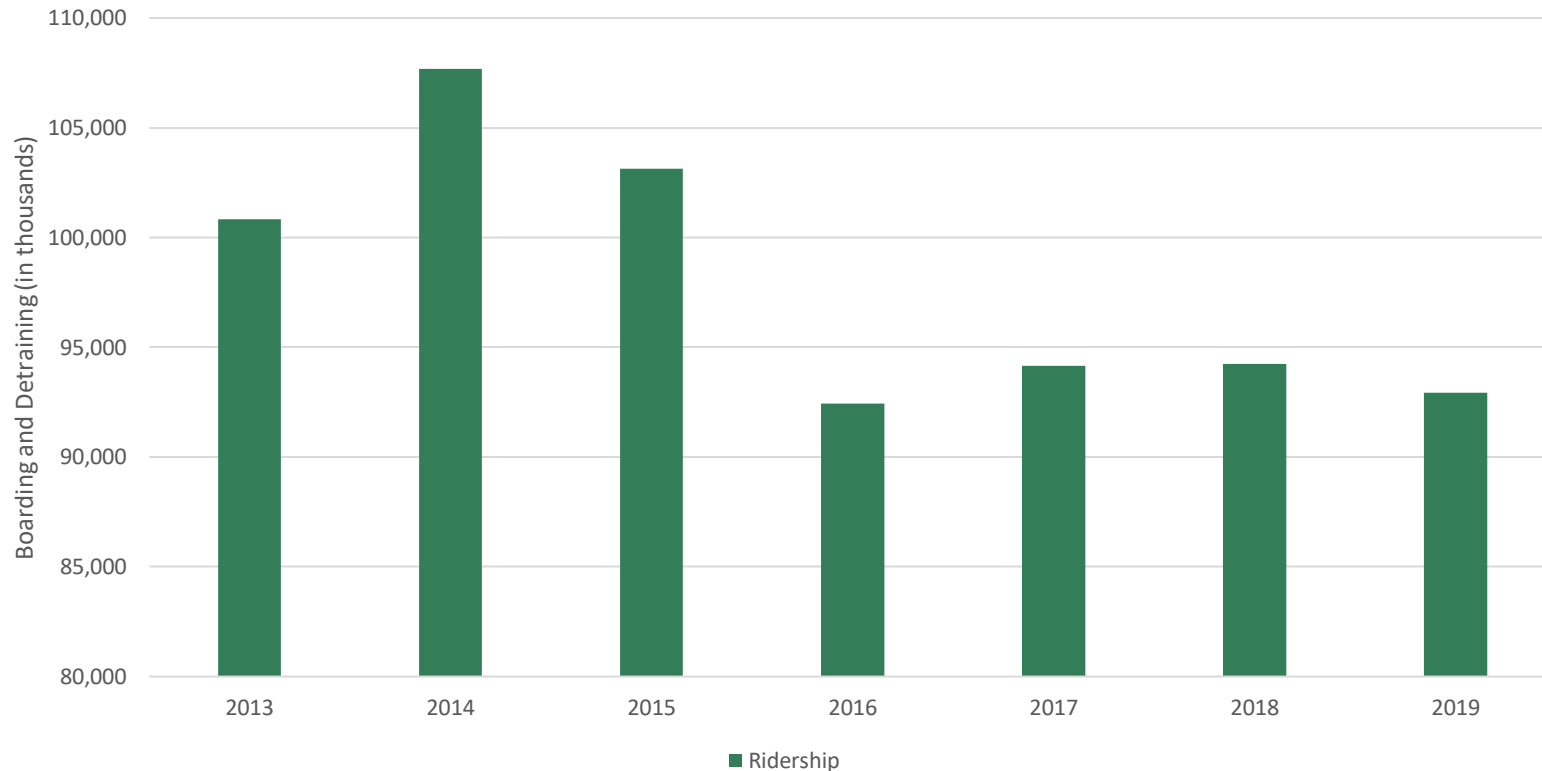
Additional Information

- For more information on the rail and freight plans including
 - Newsletters
 - Data Trends Summary
 - Existing Conditions Technical Memo (forthcoming)
 - Online map with information and stakeholder feedback tool
 - Recording of full presentation and slides (forthcoming)
- Rail Plan: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports>
- Freight Plan: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight>

Passenger Rail Trends



Passenger Rail Ridership



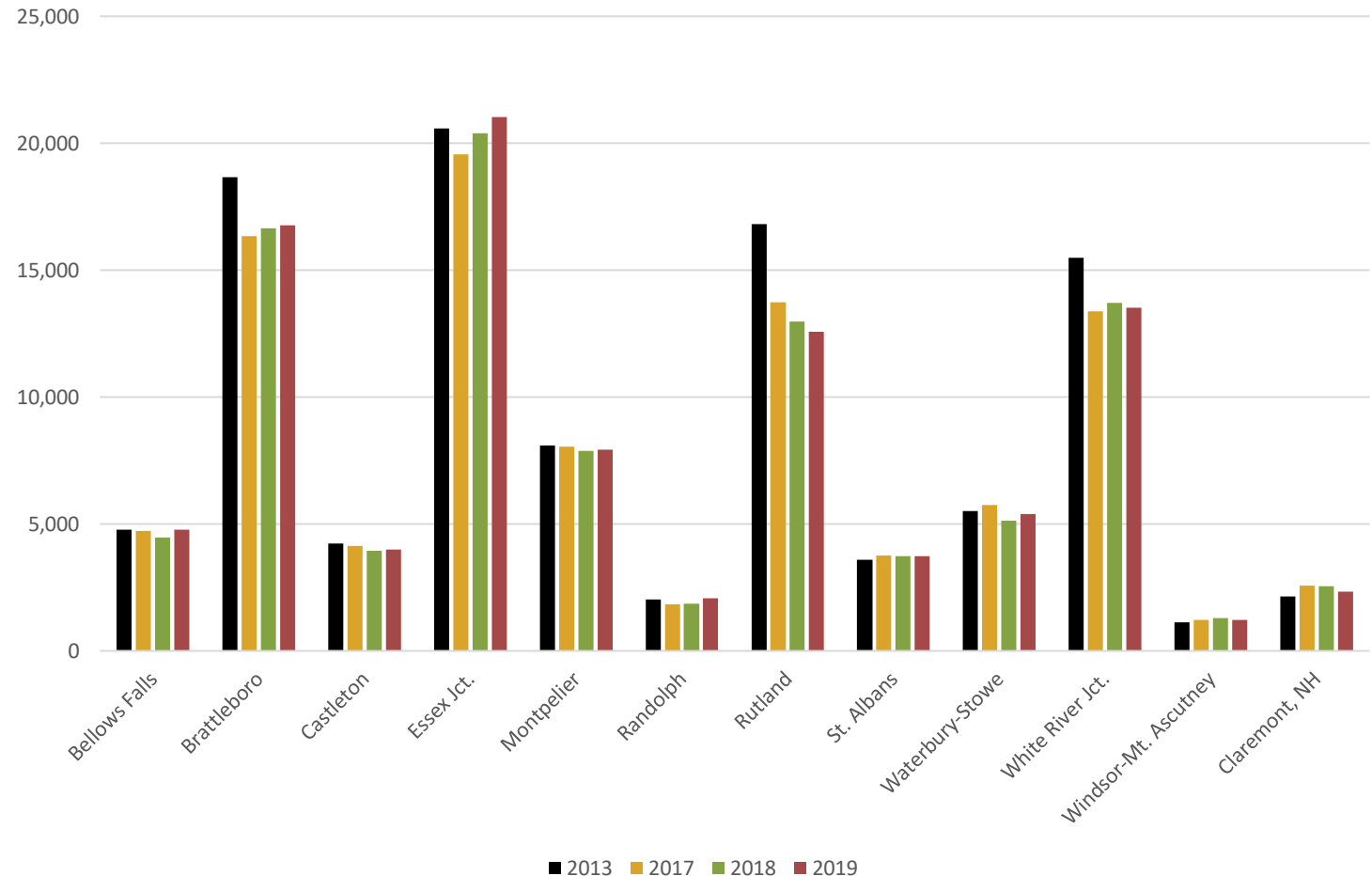
- Overall decline in VT Amtrak ridership since FY2013
 - Ridership has steadily risen in NY and MA over the same time.
 - NH growing ridership since a low in 2015

Passenger Rail Ridership by Station

- Essex Junction, Brattleboro, Rutland, and White River Junction = 67% of VT ridership
 - Ridership at Brattleboro, Rutland, and White River Junction are down since 2013

Top 3 city pairs by ridership and revenue

- 1) Rutland – NYC
- 2) Brattleboro – NYC
- 3) Essex Junction - NYC

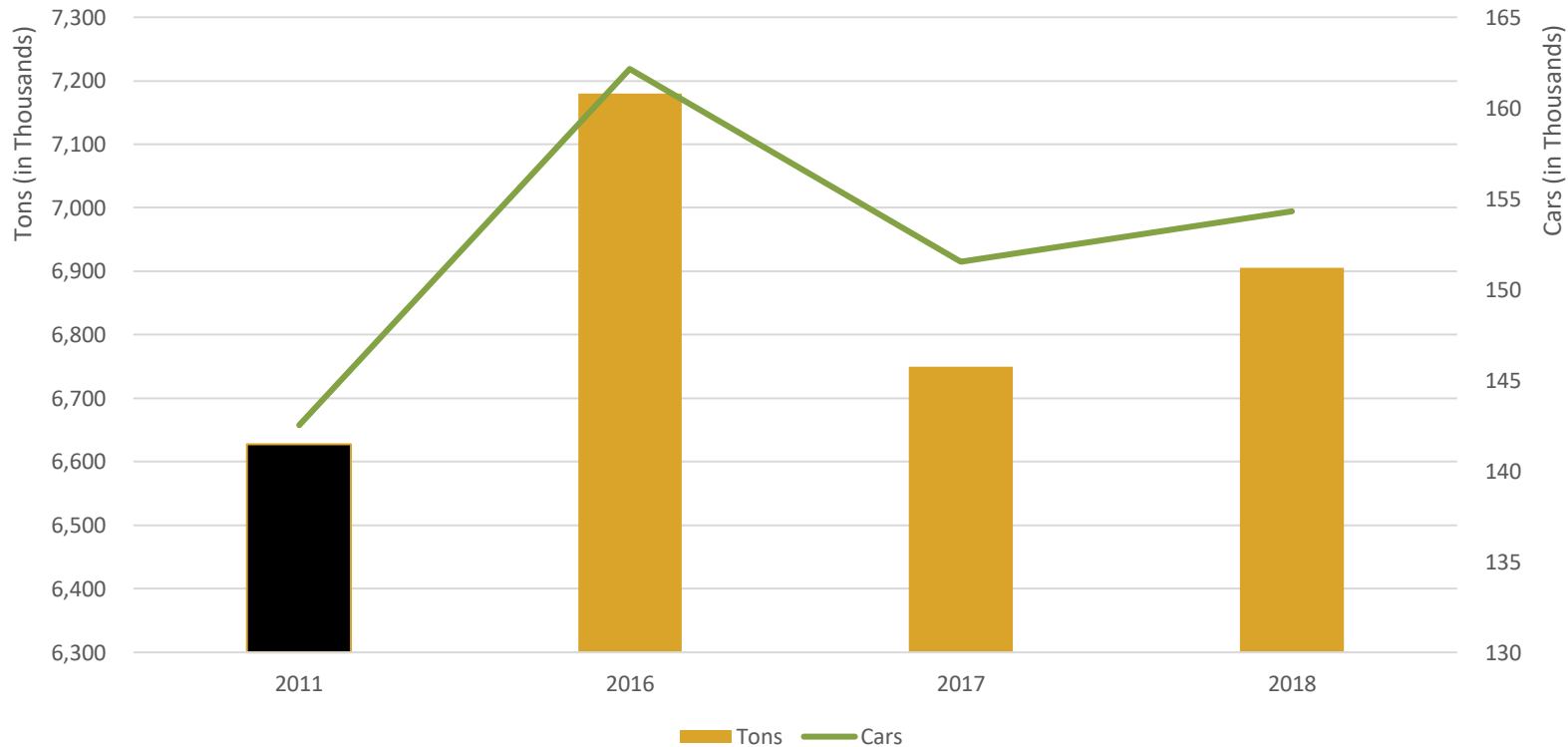


Data for 2014-2016 omitted for space

Freight Rail Trends



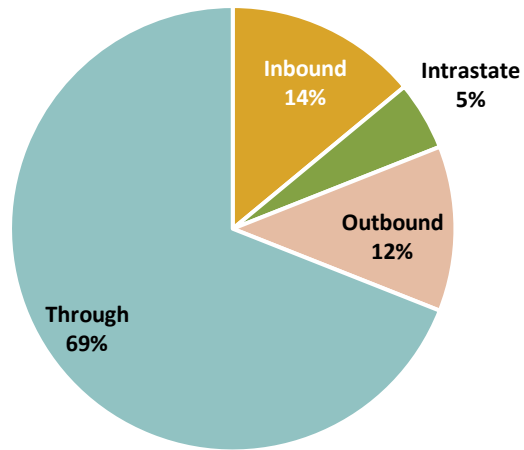
Freight Rail Overview



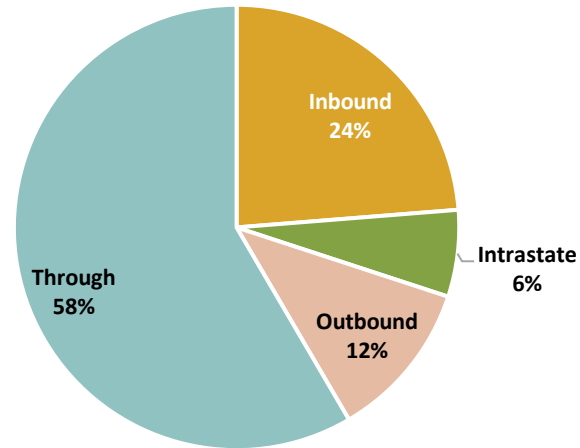
- 4% growth in tons, 8% growth in carloads since 2011
 - Data not available 2012-2015 (STB Waybill Confidential Sample)

Freight Rail By Direction

2011 Tons



2018 Tons

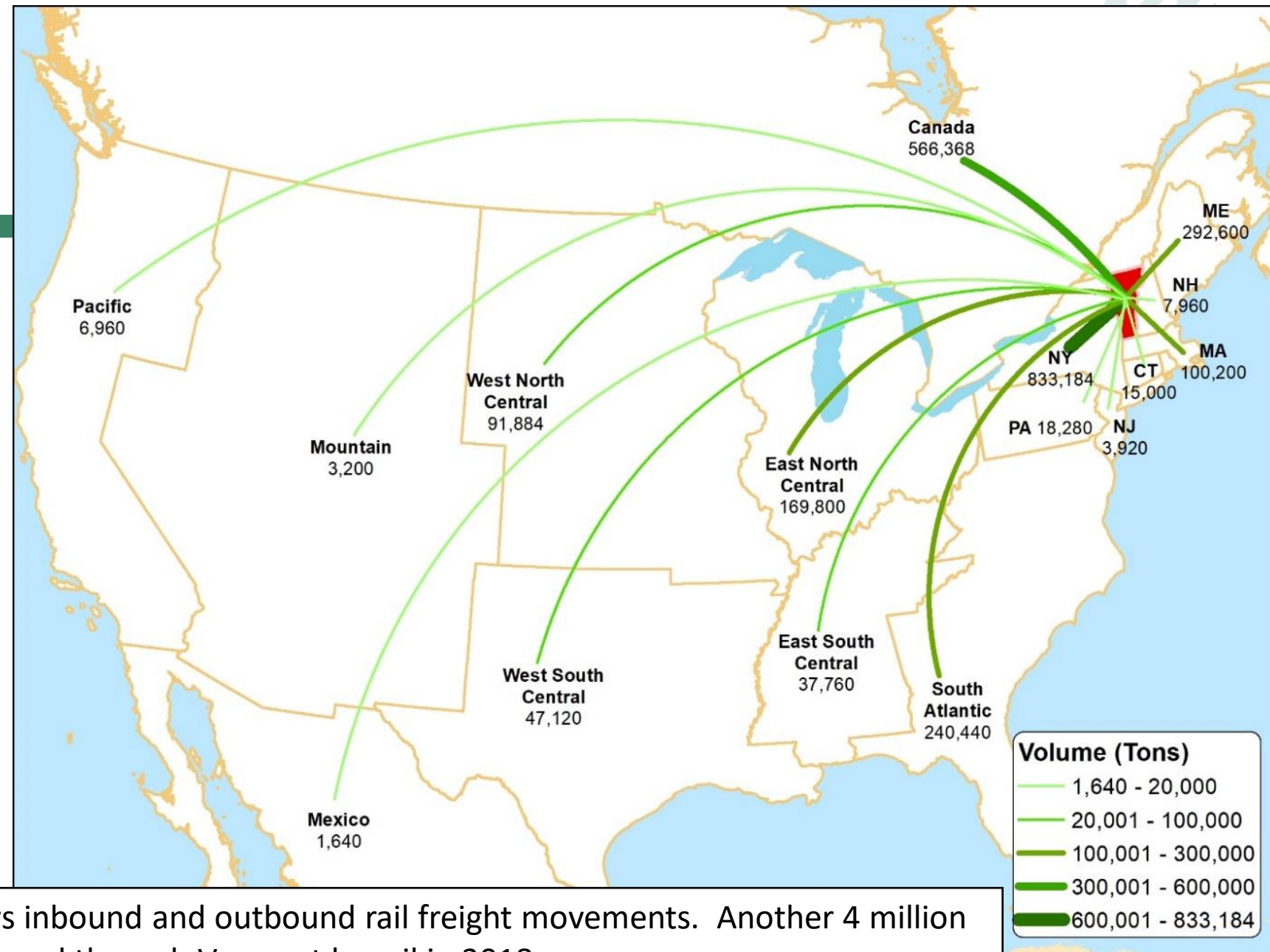


New York (inbound) & Maine (outbound) are top trading partners



Freight Rail Trading Partners

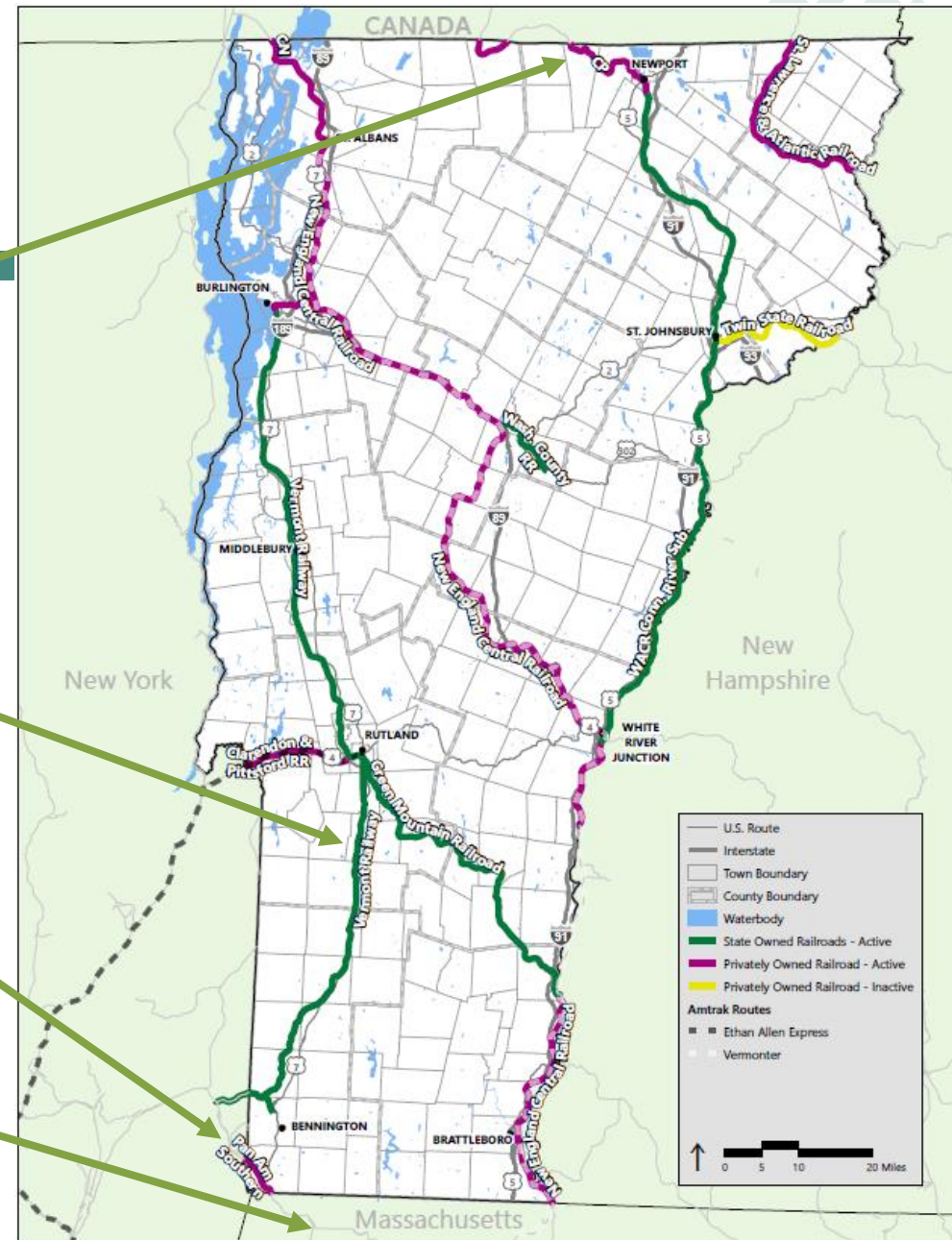
- Vermont's rail shippers are connected to the rest of North America via Vermont's short line railroads and its connections to Class I networks



Note: Map only shows inbound and outbound rail freight movements. Another 4 million tons (58% of total) moved through Vermont by rail in 2018

System Changes

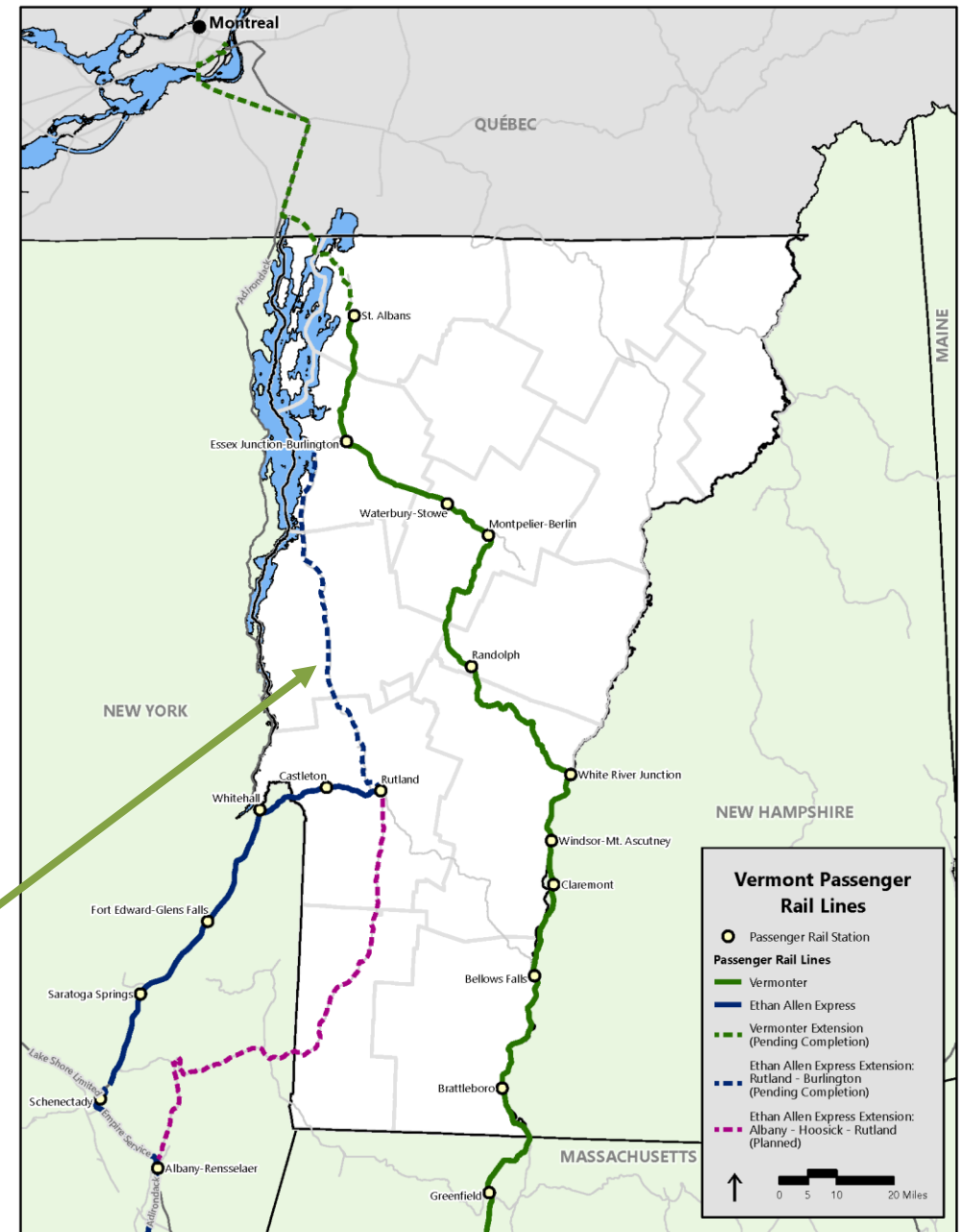
- Central Maine & Quebec acquired by Canadian Pacific
- Work on Western Corridor rail bridges (Hoosick Junction to Rutland) – 2018 BUILD Grant
- Pending sale of Pan Am Railways
- Hoosac Tunnel Closure
 - February – early April 2020
 - Re-route possible because of resilient freight rail network



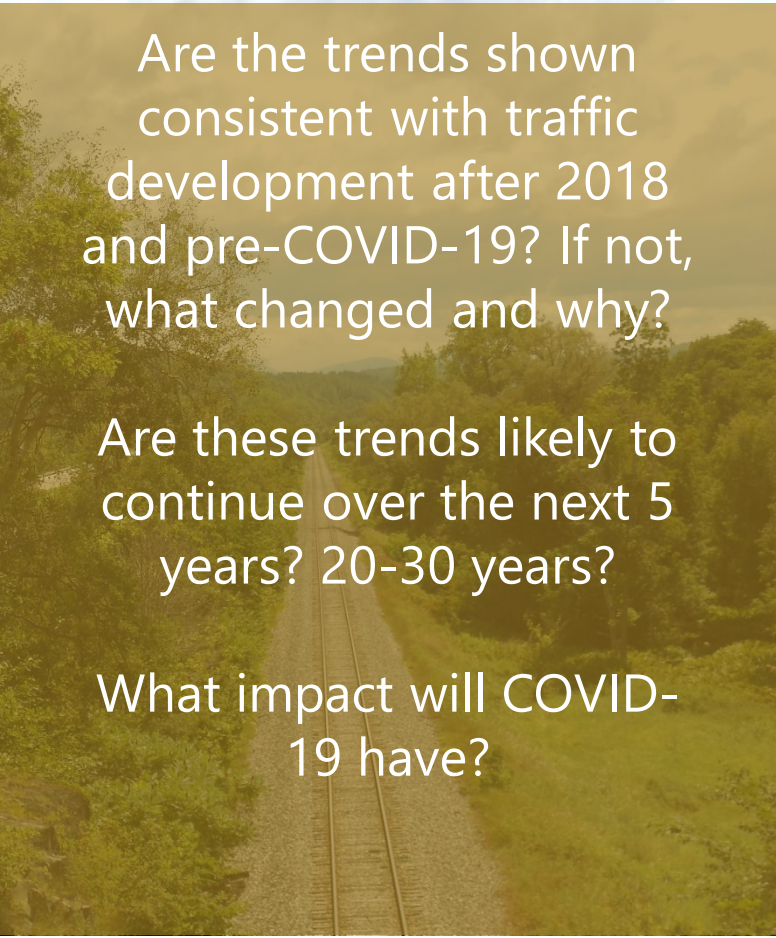
Notable System Changes & Initiatives



- Middlebury Tunnel (in progress)
- Extension of *Ethan Allen Express* to Burlington - 2021




Discussion & Questions



Are the trends shown consistent with traffic development after 2018 and pre-COVID-19? If not, what changed and why?

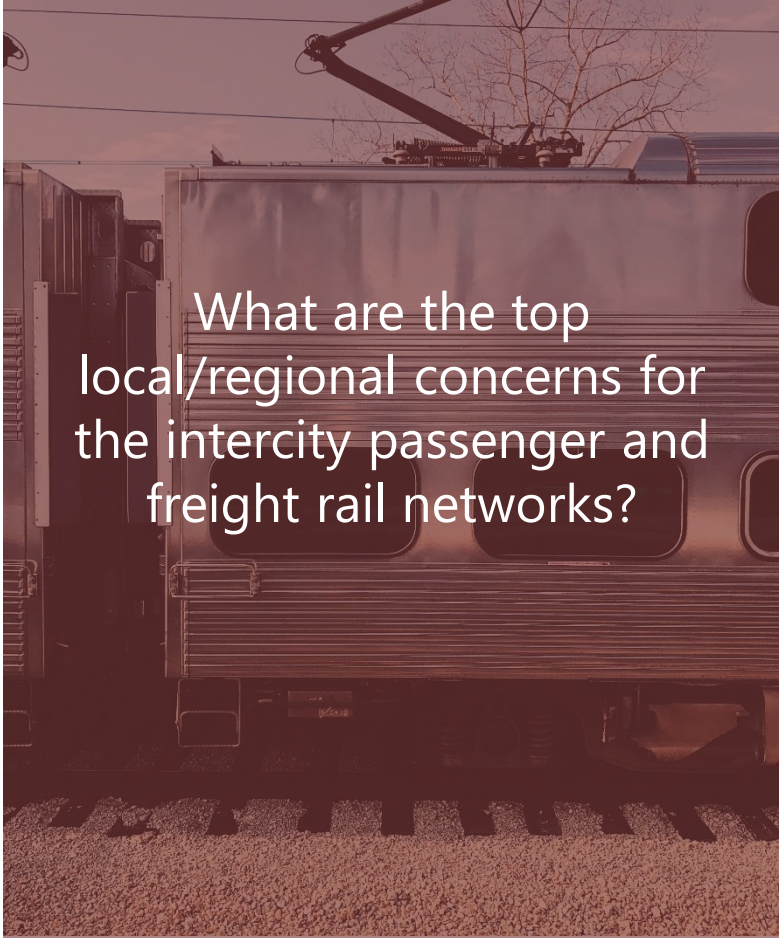
Are these trends likely to continue over the next 5 years? 20-30 years?

What impact will COVID-19 have?



At the regional/local level, what is or could be done to support rail-related businesses (both existing and potential future)?

58% of all freight rail tons are moved through Vermont (and likely to grow). How do we think and speak about this?



What are the top local/regional concerns for the intercity passenger and freight rail networks?

2015 Rail Plan Performance Measures

System Effectiveness

- Freight Rail Volumes – 3 million tons with origin/destination in VT
- Recruit Rail-using Businesses – 2 per year
- Passenger Trips on Amtrak – 5% annual increase
- Amtrak/PRIIA measurements

System Condition

- Rail Bridge Capacity – minimum 263,000 pounds for state-owned bridges
- Rail Bridge Capacity – upgrade 3 bridges per year to 286,000 pound capacity
- Grade Crossing Ratings – minimum 3 grade crossing improvements per year
- Rail Weight – upgrade 5 miles per year to 115 pound rail

System Initiatives

- Eliminate Permanent Slow Orders – remove 3 per year
- Continuously Welded Rail – on all current and planned passenger routes
- FRA Track Class 4 – all passenger rail routes (Progress made south of WRJ)
- Remove all obstructions to allow unrestricted double-stack clearance

Discussion & Question

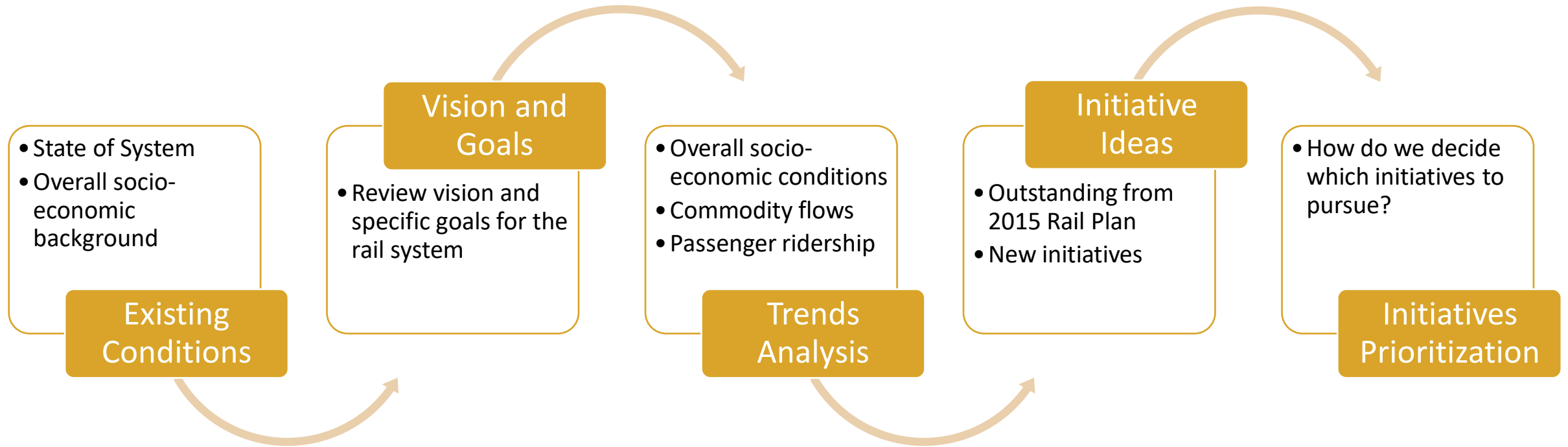


We are considering these measures in relation to other efforts.

Do you have any thoughts about these measures we should consider?



Rail Plan Elements



Passenger Rail Forecasting

- Forecast Horizon: 20 years



Process to Evaluate Potential Initiatives

Rail goals consistent with other State goals



Criteria to evaluate pool of initiatives consistent with Vermont Project Selection and Prioritization Process (VPSP2)



Table of potential reasonable initiatives based on 2015 Plan, updated analysis, & outreach



Analysis using criteria & discussion



Draft short set of recommendations for second round of outreach

Online Web Map

- **Link:**
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/eb1c30b5bace49fd8f36d4e8bcab89f1/page/page_1/?views=view_10
- **Purpose:**
 - Collect stakeholder input on issues and potential initiatives
 - Provide valuable information
- What would be of most interest to RPC members?
 - Rail-related initiatives and status
 - Vertical clearance issues
 - Transload locations
 - Amtrak station ADA features
 - Freight-related employment data
 - Other?

Update of Vermont Rail Plan and Vermont Freight Plan

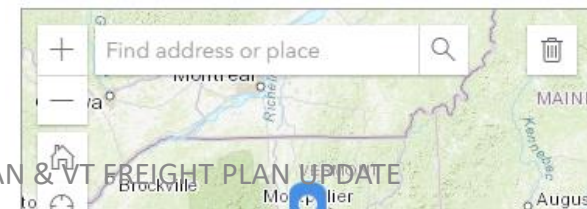
About [Add New Idea / Issue](#)

Share your feedback!
Add a note, including the location, and drop a pin on the map below (optional). You may also upload a photo to illustrate your input. If you have a general comment or question about the planning process, scroll down.

What is the issue or idea?
(e.g. an issue with a section of rail line, rail crossing, rail passenger issue, or a freight issue for another mode of travel)

Please describe the route or location
(e.g. a rail facility, road section that crosses a rail line, intermodal site, rail passenger station, or truck movement issue)

Mark it on the map:



Layers

- > 286
- < 286

Pending Ethan Allen Extension to Burlington

Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Incidents (2015-2019)

Rail Equipment Incidents (2015-2019)

Amtrak Stations

Amtrak Routes

NAME

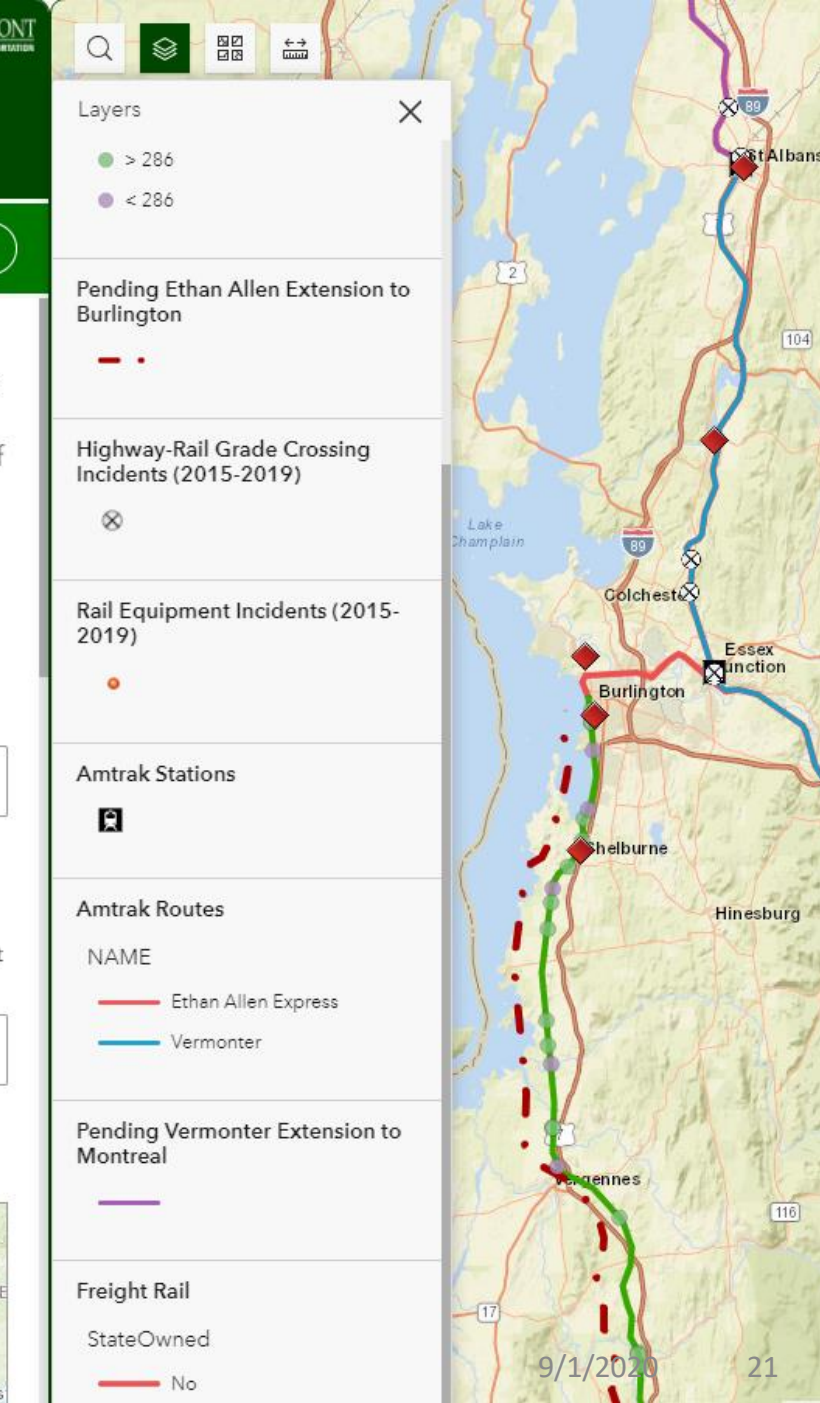
- Ethan Allen Express
- Vermont

Pending Vermonter Extension to Montreal

Freight Rail

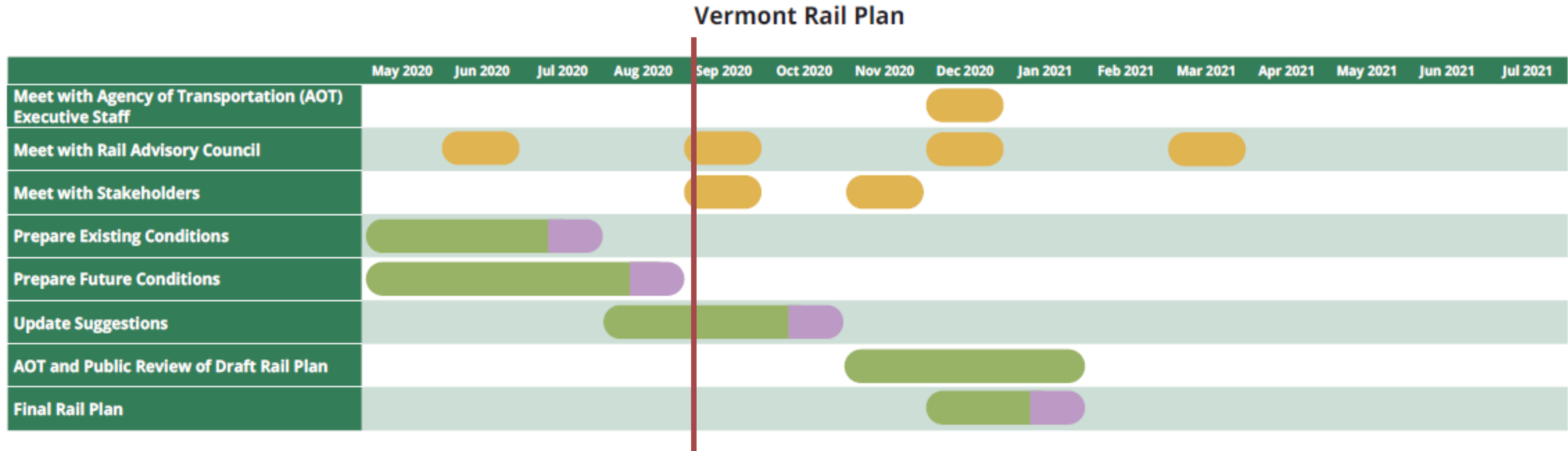
State Owned

- No



9/1/2020 21

Vermont Rail Plan Schedule



Legend

- Indicated work is underway, progress toward a task deliverable
- Outreach activity
- Rail plan deliverable

Action Request

- Help publicize Town Hall Meeting #1 - Online
 - October 6, 4:00 - 5:00 PM
- There will be a second round of outreach and a 2nd Town Hall Meeting later this year on draft recommendations
 - Does the TAC want a briefing at that point?
 - Will ask for help in publicizing Town Hall Meeting #2

Thank You

For more information on the Vermont Rail Plan Update, visit vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports or contact Zoe Neaderland at Zoe.Neaderland@vermont.gov or (802) 793-2778.

For more information on the Vermont Freight Plan Update, visit vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight or contact Dave Pelletier at Dave.Pelletier@vermont.gov or (802) 595-9675.