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

Addison County Regional Planning Commission TAC –
October 21, 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
2015 Rail Plan Goals

- Maintain existing system (State of Good Repair)
- Expand capacity to accommodate growth
- Expand rail system use (freight and passenger)
- Provide a financially sustainable rail system
- Improve intermodal connectivity
- Improve system to support economic development
- Enhance safety

- Aligned with other efforts
- Open for minor refinement
Additional Information

• For more information on the rail and freight plans including
  • Newsletters (#1 and #2 included in TAC packet)
  • Data Trends Summary (included in TAC packet)
  • Existing Conditions Technical Memo (on websites below)
  • Online map and stakeholder feedback tool (on websites below)
  • Recording of full presentation and slides (on websites below)

• 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
Freight Rail Overview

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

- Vermont is linked worldwide by short line railroads and then Class I rail networks.
- Tonnage inbound to Vermont increased from 14% in 2011 to 24% in 2018.

Note: Map only shows inbound and outbound rail freight movements. Another 4 million tons (58% of total) moved through Vermont by rail in 2018.
Are these trends consistent with your experience?

Are these trends likely to continue over the next five 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?
Initiatives can be projects, but also new computer systems, signal updates, improved coordination, etc. that increase efficiency. These operational and administrative efforts are particularly important given limited funding.
Online Web Map


**Purpose:**
- Collect stakeholder input on issues and potential initiatives
- Provide valuable information

**What would be of most interest to RPCs?**
- VTrans initiatives and status
- Transload locations
- Amtrak station locations
- Rail-highway crossing incidents
- Truck volumes
- Other?
Action Request

• Help expand our public outreach
  • Send people to the project websites for more information and to access the online mapping tool to submit ideas and identify issues

• There will be a second round of outreach and Town Hall #2 later this year on draft recommendations
  • Does the TAC want a briefing at that point?
  • Will ask for help in publicizing Town Hall #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.