**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Vermont Agency of Transportation to Hold Virtual Town Hall Meeting**

**For State’s Freight and Rail Plans**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) invites the public to participate in a virtual Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, from 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM via Microsoft Teams (event [link](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YjI3NzAwMjEtNGYyYi00Y2EyLTg5YmUtOGM3YzFkNGVjZTQw%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%226cba27bb-141c-42b2-8e72-22f72e3b5e95%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%226f5cc874-61fc-40f4-90d0-a2f29af098f6%22%7d)). This is the first of two being held this year as part of updating the State’s [Freight](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight) and [Rail](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports) Plans.

The State’s Freight and Rail Plans are important to:

* Support and enhance Vermont’s economy and quality of life
* Provide rail transportation options for intercity and interstate travel
* Meet Federal requirements and remain eligible for certain grant programs
* Support goals such as in the [Vermont Long-Range Transportation Plan](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/long-range-plan) and [Comprehensive Energy Plan](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/publications-resources/publications/energy_plan)

The Town Hall will provide an overview of the plans; review rail trends, existing conditions, and system changes; and provide opportunity for members of the public to give feedback and ask questions. A longer version of the presentation and additional material are available at the web pages for the plans.

At any time, all are welcome to use the new online crowdsourcing [map](https://bit.ly/VTFreightRailMap) tool developed for the rail and freight plans. The interactive experience allows visitors to “drop a pin” on the map, easily providing feedback about areas of concern or ideas for new initiatives. Initiatives include improvements to operations, coordination, capital investments or other enhancements recognizing that funding is limited. Feedback is also welcome by e-mail, phone, or mail.

The map also displays helpful information about the State’s rail and freight systems, such as freight transload facilities, rail bridges that will not carry the new standard freight rail car weight, and Vermont’s rail connections to the rest of North America. This centralized resource helps inform planning discussions.

For more information about the State’s Freight and Rail Plans, please visit <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports> or <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight>.