



Amtrak Fact Sheet, Fiscal Year 2016

State of Vermont

Amtrak-Vermont partnership

- Grants from the State of Vermont help support the daily *Vermont* service from St. Albans to New York and Washington
- State grants also help support the daily *Ethan Allen* express service from Rutland to Albany and New York
- Over 14,000 Vermont residents are members of the Amtrak Guest Rewards frequent user program
- Vermont completed a federally funded track improvement project along the *Vermont* route in 2012

Amtrak Service & Ridership

Amtrak operates two State Supported trains in Vermont, the *Vermont* (Washington, D.C.-New York-St. Albans) and the *Ethan Allen Express* (New York-Albany-Rutland).

During FY16 Amtrak served the following Vermont locations:

<u>City</u>	<u>Boardings + Alightings</u>
Bellows Falls	4,543
Brattleboro	16,434
Castleton	4,484
Essex Junction	18,964
Montpelier	7,789
Randolph	1,940
Rutland	14,336
St. Albans	3,382
Waterbury	5,397
White River Junction	13,988
Windsor-Mount Ascutney	1,165
Total Vermont Station Usage:	92,422

(down 10.4% from FY15)

Procurement/Contracts

Amtrak spent \$1,391,335 on goods and services in Vermont in FY16, most of it in Burlington.

Employment

At the end of FY16, Amtrak employed 3 Vermont residents. Total wages of Amtrak employees living in Vermont were \$340,044 during FY16.

PRIIA Section 209 and State Supported Services

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-432) required, by October 2013, an equitable arrangement of cost sharing between Amtrak and state or public agency partners that provide funding for short-distance, intercity train services. Agreements were reached with all parties, including Vermont, by the deadline, and the services continued to run without interruption.

Both the *Vermont* and the *Ethan Allen Express* are supported by the State of Vermont. In Fiscal 2015, *Ethan Allen Express* ridership was over 52,000, and *Vermont* ridership was over 92,000.

Stations

In 2013, the State purchased the station at White River Junction, which previously had been privately owned. This will enable the State to plan rehabilitation and economic development efforts at the station and surrounding property.

New platforms were installed in 2013 at St. Albans and Waterbury as part of the Accessible Stations Development Program, providing improved train boarding, platform access, and lighting.

Under the same program, improvements were made at Montpelier, including construction of accessible parking. A new sidewalk will provide an accessible path from the parking area to the station entrance and platform. New stairs and ADA-compliant ramp will be installed to access the station and the asphalt adjacent to the building will be replaced with concrete. Interior work includes modifications to the existing entrance door, restroom renovations, and improvements to the waiting room. Exterior and interior signage will be provided, as well.

ADA compliance design planning for Castleton and Windsor was on-going during 2016 and construction at these locations is expected to begin in 2017.

***Vermont* Route Improvements**

In October 2012, the State of Vermont completed a \$70-million track rehabilitation project along the route of the *Vermont*, on track owned by the New England Central Railroad. Of that amount, \$50 million was from the ARRA Stimulus program and \$20 million from the State. The project consisted of replacing jointed rail with continuously welded rail, new cross ties, grade-crossing safety improvements, and other track improvements along a 190-mile section of track from St. Albans to Vernon (just north of the

Massachusetts border). These upgrades will allow trains to travel up to 59 mph (79 mph in some sections). Maximum speeds were raised from 55 to 59 mph from St. Albans to White River Junction; and from 59 to 79 mph White River Junction to the Massachusetts state line. Effective March 18, 2013, the *Vermont* schedule was reduced by 28 minutes as a result of these improvements.

In January 2010, Massachusetts was awarded \$70 million in federal stimulus funds for final design and construction of the “Knowledge Corridor” along the Connecticut River in western Massachusetts. Track restoration began in 2013 and was completed in 2014. Starting December 29, 2014, Amtrak’s *Vermont* service was rerouted to this line, which was served by Amtrak until 1987. This provides a faster service by its shorter distance and by eliminating a reversal in train direction at Palmer. At the same time, the *Vermont* began serving the former Amtrak station in Northampton and a new stimulus-funded intermodal transit center in Greenfield. A station in Holyoke was constructed by the City of Holyoke, where work continued after the change in route. Service to Holyoke began in summer 2015.

Bicycles: In May 2016, Amtrak and the State of Vermont began a pilot program for carry-on bicycles along the entire length of the route from Washington. Luggage racks within the coaches were removed and replaced with newly retrofitted racks that fold down to convert to bicycle racks. From May to September 2016, the *Vermont* carried 435 bicycles.

Western Corridor improvements

In September 2013, the State of Vermont was awarded an \$8.9 million federal TIGER grant to rehabilitate a portion of the western corridor between Rutland and Burlington. This grant funded Phase 1 of the project, including installation of seven miles of welded rail and surfacing upgrades to the rail bed between Rutland and Leicester, completed late in 2015. In October 2015, Vermont was awarded another TIGER grant for \$10 million. The State will provide matching funds and proceed with Phase 2 of the project, completion of which will allow restoration of passenger rail service along the corridor. The state-owned rail line will be improved by installing new, heavier-gauge (weight) rail, ballast, and ties between Leicester and Burlington; also new crossing gates, a new passing siding in Pittsford, and new crossover in Leicester to allow for increased operational flexibility. There will be new platforms at Vergennes and Middlebury. Vermont hopes to extend the *Ethan Allen Service* north to Burlington by late 2018.

Boston-Montreal High Speed Rail Corridor

Feasibility and Planning Study: The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans), in partnership with Massachusetts and Connecticut, is conducting the Boston-Montreal High-Speed Rail Corridor Alternative Alignment Feasibility and Planning Study to identify upgrades and improvements along the Boston-to-Montreal corridor.

The study focuses on the possibility of using the “Inland Route” from Boston to Springfield, then turning north along the Knowledge Corridor and up through Vermont to Montreal. The Inland Route will be studied concurrently under a single consultant contract to ensure that the evaluation of infrastructure improvements and future operations will incorporate both proposed passenger rail services. The study is funded partly with two grants from the Federal Railroad Administration to Vermont and Massachusetts and will follow, predominantly, segments of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor.

Vermont State Rail Plan

Completed in October 2015, the Vermont State Rail Plan provides a framework for maintaining and enhancing the state rail system. It has been prepared to conform to the requirements for state rail plans as specified by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The primary components of the plan are:

- Description and inventory of existing rail infrastructure and services in Vermont and their performance;
- Analysis of the usage of the Vermont rail network, both by passengers and freight;
- Assessment of past and future trends that will impact the Vermont rail network;
- Analysis of freight and passenger rail needs for the Vermont rail network;
- Identification of vision, goals, and objectives for the Vermont rail network;
- A proposed capital plan to address the needs of the Vermont rail network.

