



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Town Farm Road Traffic Study

Prepared for:
Town of Brandon

Prepared by:
Rutland Regional Planning Commission

January 24, 2020

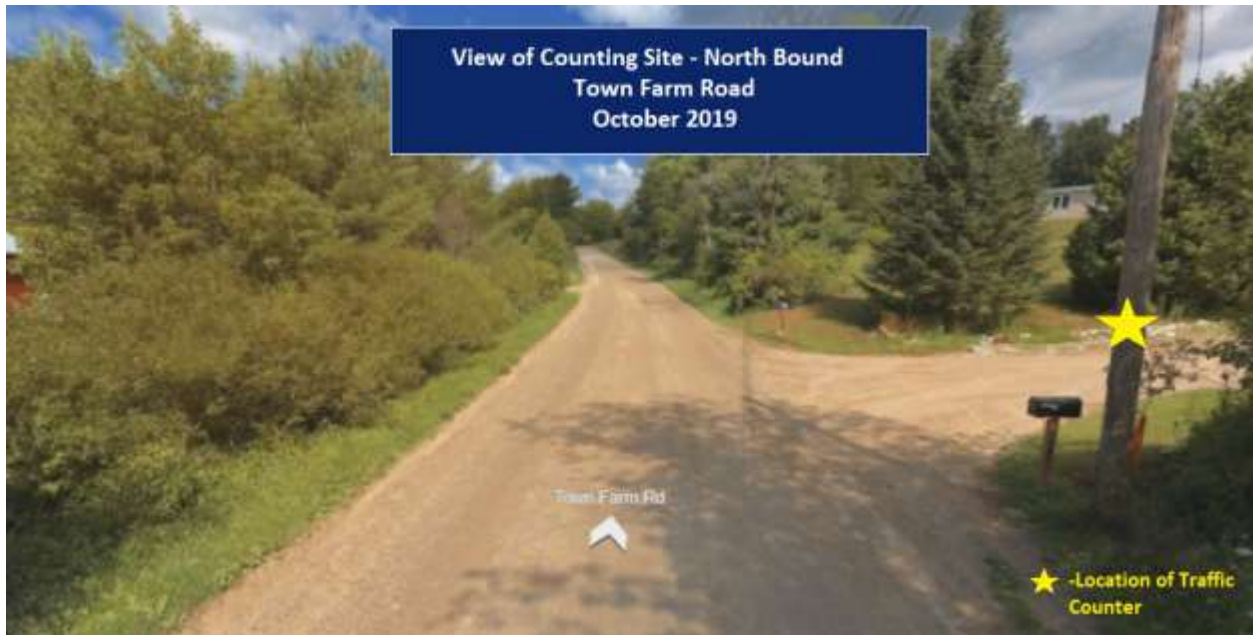
INTRODUCTION

The Town Farm Road Traffic Study was conducted at the request of the Town of Brandon to evaluate vehicle speed concerns north of the intersection with Richmond Rd and Blackberry Lane. The Town had received complaints of excessive vehicle speeds by local residents that live and travel on Town Farm Road. In response, the Town requested the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) conduct a traffic study on Town Farm Road.

Town Farm Road is a Class 3 Town Highway, owned and maintained by the Town, and has a current posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour (MPH). The RRPC identified one counting site, north of the intersection of Blackberry Lane and Richmond Road in the vicinity of 1919 Town Farm Road (Mile Marker (MM) 1.92). The counting site has a generally flat slope and rural residential land use. The traffic study, including traffic volume, vehicle speed, and vehicle class, was conducted using JAMAR Apollyon Traffic Recorders from 10/11/2019 to 10/18/2019.

LOCATION DETAILS

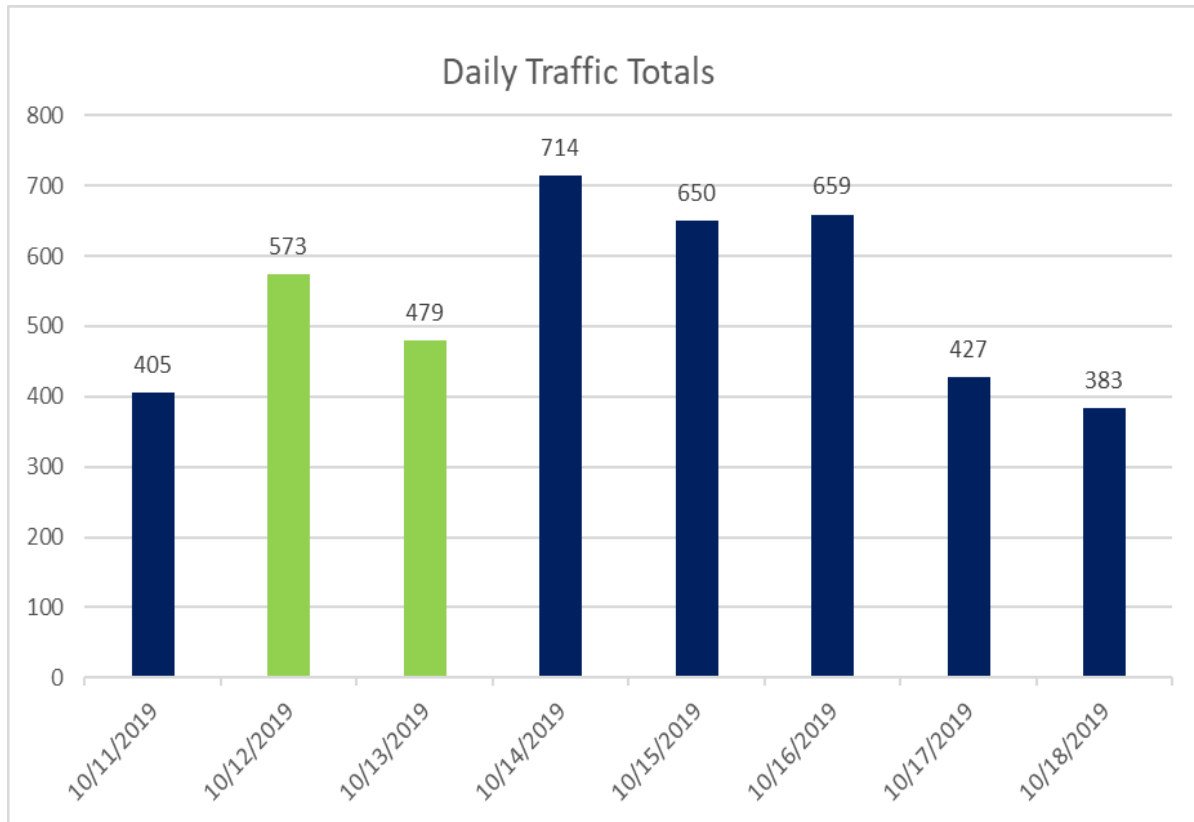


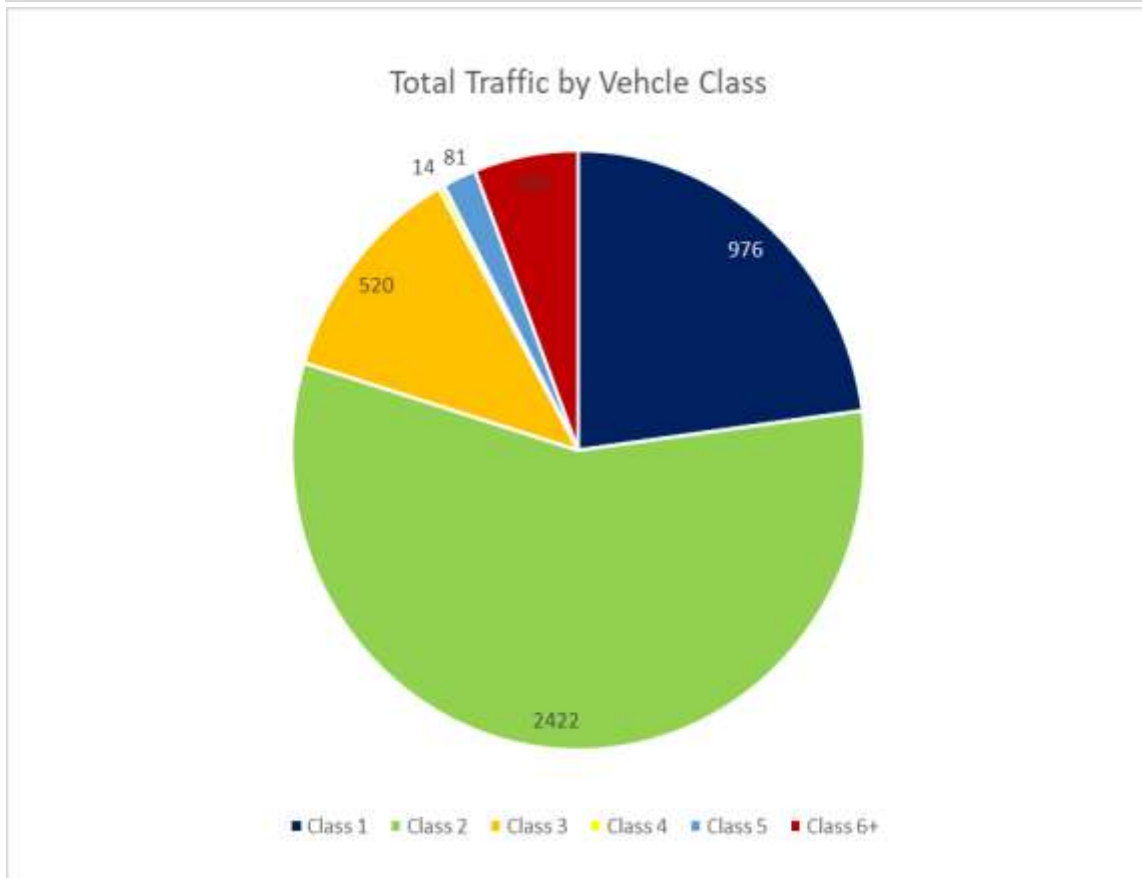
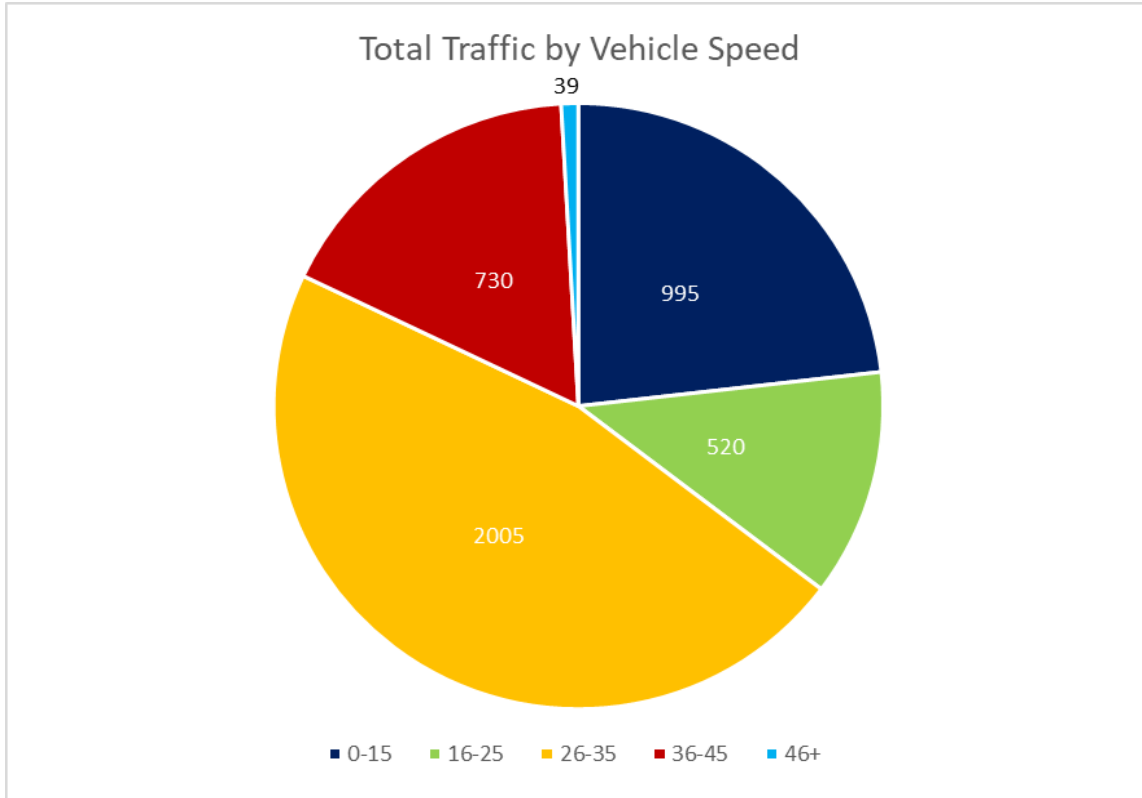


KEY FINDINGS

Location: **Site #1, 1919 Town Farm Road, Brandon, VT**
Traffic Counter: **JAMAR APOLLYON**
Dates Analyzed: **10/11/2019 – 10/18/2019**
Total Traffic: **4,290**
Daily Average (Study Period): **606**
Busiest Day of the Study Period: **Monday, October 14 (714)**
Average Speed: **24 MPH**
50th Percentile Speed: **29 MPH**
85th Percentile Speed: **36 MPH**
Mode Vehicle Class: **II (2,422)**

*Complete data on volume, speed and vehicle length by direction and time of day are available upon request from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.





RESULTS

The Town Farm Road Traffic Study recorded normal traffic conditions from 10/11/2019 to 10/18/2019 in the vicinity of 1919 Town Farm Road in Brandon, VT. The rural residential area reported a total traffic volume of 4,290 vehicles with a 50th percentile speed of 29 miles per hours (mph) and an 85th percentile speed of 36 mph. The traffic study found 82% of the total traffic traveled at or below the posted speed limit of 35 mph.

DISCUSSION

Setting Speed Limits

State statute—23 VSA §1007—authorizes the local governing body to establish effective and enforceable speed limits on town highways. The speed limit must be drawn from within a range of a high number and a low number. Research shows that vehicles traveling between the 50th and 85th percentiles of speed have the lowest risk of speed-induced crashing. The 50th and 85th percentiles collected from this study are within the current posted speed limit of 35 MPH.

According to the Vermont Agency of Transportation's *Setting Speed Limits – A Guide for Vermont Towns*, there are two principles to achieve reasonable and safe speeds - “The first is to protect the public and curb unreasonable behavior. Motorists should have some assurance that the risk of having an accident is low on that particular road or street if they obey the speed limit. Second, to effectively enforce a law, the public must believe that the law is reasonable. Local officials should not set a uniform speed limit for all roads and streets, nor should they succumb to pressure by residents to lower speed limits.”

The VTrans Traffic and Safety Division does not recommend setting speed limits on Class 3 gravel roads. Gravel roads are difficult to assess and research shows that most people tend to drive on gravel roads at speeds slower than the posted speed limit.

Crash History

According to VTrans's Public Crash Data Inquiry Tool, there have been 5 motor vehicle crashes reported on Town Farm Road from 01/24/2015 to 01/24/2020. Of those crashes, 2 were reported from the gravel portion of the road, north of the intersection with Richmond Road.

Speed Countermeasures

There are several strategies a community may consider in minimizing excessive traffic speeds on town highways. The coordinated approach to manage speeding should be based on engineering, enforcement, and education countermeasures. Engineering countermeasures can include traffic control devices that reduce speed such as advisory and transition road signs, and speed feedback signs. The Vermont State Police have speed feedback signs available for loan to interested communities.

Enforcement is also critical in some locations to achieve compliance with local posted speed limits. The Town may consider increased law enforcement that is focused on locations and times of day that experience the highest volumes and highest speeds. Lastly, the Town may consider education countermeasures for residents. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has developed a Speed Campaign Toolkit for public information and outreach. In addition, the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance, Vermont Governors Safety Program, Department of Motor Vehicle, and VTrans operate several traffic-safety programs to assist local communities.

Systemic Local Road Safety

VTrans operates a Systemic Local Road Safety (SLRS) program to complement the High-Risk Rural Roads (HRRR) program to enhance safety on local roads by implementing signage, beacon and marking improvements. The SLRS program addresses rural and urban roads that are locally maintained by a municipality and have less than 5,000 vehicles per day and focuses on risk factors to identify sites for improvement. VTrans data indicates that curves with radii of less than 750 feet that are on paved roads have the greatest risk for single motor vehicle crashes. The Town of Brandon could discuss Town Farm Road with VTrans Traffic and Safety Division for program availability and eligibility.

Resources

Setting Speed Limits – A Guide for Vermont Towns. Vermont Agency of Transportation, Vermont Local Roads Program.

<https://localroads.vermont.gov/sites/localroads/files/files/resources/materials/Setting%20Speed%20Limits%20Guide%20Update%20August%202016.pdf>

Speed Management: A Manual for Local Rural Road Owners. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

<https://ruralsafetycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/speedmanagementguide.pdf>