

TRANSPORTATION

Existing Transportation Network

Classification of Roads

Dummerston's network of roads consists of town roads and state and federal highways (see the Transportation and Community Facilities map). State Routes 5 and 30 serve as Dummerston's main arteries for both daily commuting and through-traffic. Both routes run generally in a north-south direction. Some residents in the southwestern corner of Dummerston use Route 9 to gain easier access to Brattleboro.

Town roads are classified as either Class 1, 2, 3, or 4 highways. There are also Legal Trails that are town public rights-of-way which are not highways. This information is represented on Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Highway Maps that are updated annually based on information supplied by towns on an annual Mileage Certificate. The original purpose of these maps was to document classification and mileage of Class 1, 2, and 3 town highways for calculating payment to towns of state aid for highway maintenance. The VTrans Highway Maps now serve, also, to document the existence and extent of Class 4 roads and Legal Trails. The length of Dummerston's public highways and trails is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 8: Mileage Summary of Town Highway/Roadway

	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Legal Trail	Interstate	Non-Interstate	Total Mileage
Town Roadways	12.37	50.31	3.05	1.60			67.33
State Highways					5.93	10.38	16.31
Total							83.64

Source: VT Agency of Transportation Highway Map, 2015

Interstate 91 passes through Dummerston following the Connecticut River Valley, providing direct access to the town's road network near the Putney town line at the Exit 4 interchange. Other interchanges are located south in Brattleboro. Routes 5 and 30 are State Highways. In accordance with state law they are exclusively maintained by VTrans.

There are no Class 1 highways in Dummerston. There are several Class 2 roads including East-West Road, Middle Road, School House Road, and Upper Dummerston Road. Most Class 3 roads are comprised of secondary town roads that are passable year round by standard vehicles. Maintenance of Class 2 and 3 highways is the town's responsibility.

Class 4 roads typically are seasonally functional for normal vehicular traffic but are not maintained by the town. There are four Legal Trails a continuation of Hague Road to Evans Road, a continuation of Knapp Road East to Knapp Road West, a continuation of Falls Brook Road north to the town line, and a continuation of Windmill Hill Road (old Route 5) to East-West Road.

Funding for the maintenance and infrastructure improvements comes from federal, state and local sources. Transportation needs exceed and will continue to exceed available funds for the foreseeable future. Dummerston is fortunate to have local source of sand and gravel. For detailed information about sand and gravel resources in town, please see the Mineral Resources section of the Natural Resources chapter. The Town is looking to secure long-term local supplies and is

investigating other potential sites based on expected areas of gravel deposits. Finding a sustainable source of gravel is imperative to controlling road maintenance costs. Along with maintaining dirt road beds with gravel, other annual maintenance includes repaving approximately one mile of road, cutting approximately six miles of roadside brush, and installing approximately 2,500 feet of buried drainage pipe. Also see bridges and culverts below.

Traffic and Circulation Concerns

Travel speed through Dummerston is an ongoing concern and problem. Traffic counts taken on East-West Road, Middle Road, and School House Road confirm this issue. East-West Road is frequently used as a cut through for traffic traveling from Route 5 to Route 30 or vice versa. An ad hoc citizen Traffic Committee has also identified West Dummerston Village, as well as East West Road and Middle Road, as a place where speeding is a concern. The density of development and lack of sidewalks make these high priority areas. The Town will continue to work with the Windham Regional Commission to obtain reliable traffic counting information and evaluate the need for traffic calming.

East-West Road and Middle Road are categorized as High Risk Rural Roads. The High Risk Rural Roads program allocates federal funds to mitigate safety issues on rural roads that have a history of crashes distributed throughout the traveled corridor. The program provided funding to install new signs to improve safety along East-West Road from the covered bridge to Dummerston Center and from the Center to the intersection of School House Road, as well as along Middle Road from Route 5 to the Center.

One particular area where existing conditions present traffic safety concerns, based on the popularity of a local swimming hole, is the area south of the intersection of Route 30 and Depot Road (Newfane). There is a significant amount of pedestrian movement across Route 30 on the town border with Newfane as people park on Route 30 and cross the heavily traveled road to access a trail leading to the Rock River and popular swimming holes. The vehicles are parking along the shoulder of the southbound lane and in an informal parking area on the northbound side. The Town supports controlling the access for the informal parking area and limiting parking on the southbound lane as a means of improving the safety of this area. VTrans has implemented the following measures to help address these safety concerns:

- A flashing beacon, southbound lane, with signage of recreational area ahead (can be turned on based on seasonal usage)
- Cross hatching at the intersection of Depot Rd/VT30 to indicate a No Parking Zone
- No parking signs, along the southbound shoulder, extending southerly from the Depot Rd/VT30 intersection
- Signage on the northbound lane of VT30 to indicate pedestrians

Bridges and Culverts

The Town of Dummerston owns and maintains seven bridges. Two bridges on East-West Road, Bridge 29 between Slab Hollow and the Center, and Bridge 32 at the intersection of Schoolhouse Road, were slated to be inspected in 2016. The bridge on Tucker Reed Road at Middle Road failed and was rebuilt in 2016.

Dummerston has two significant historic bridges, both listed on the National Register of Historic Place. The Dummerston Covered Bridge is the longest covered wooden bridge located wholly within Vermont. The last major restoration was during 1997 and 1998. Since then, there has been work to enhance the travel deck, adding runners in 2009, and rebuild the abutment wing walls, in

2012. The Green Iron Bridge, spanning the West River, is a rare intact quadruple intersection Warren truss bridge. The bridge was fully rehabilitated with work finishing in 2011, including new steel, paint job, and deck.

In 2016, Dummerston has 35 structures, which are water crossings larger than a 3-foot culvert. The town is replacing large culverts with arches which allow much greater water flow, and sediment and debris passage, greatly reducing the chance of flooding. The arches have open bottoms so that the stream bed is uninterrupted and aquatic life in the streams can pass through. Since 2010, arches have been installed on Stickney Brook Road (2011), Dutton Farm Road (2013), Quarry Road (2015), and Park Laughton Road (2016). Projects of this type cost in the range of \$120,000 - \$150,000 in 2016, and would not be possible without state grants for 90% of the cost.

In 2016, there are 584 culverts, 3 feet or less in diameter, that allow water to pass under town roads. These range in condition from fair to excellent. The town is maintaining and replacing these as needed. In 2015, twenty-two culverts were replaced.

Park and Ride Facilities

The Town operates and maintains a municipal park and ride lot at the Covered Bridge on Route 30. It contains 30 marked spaces on pavement and is well used. The State owns several parking sites in Town that are principally used for recreational access to the Connecticut and West Rivers. There is a state Park and Ride facility at the Putney Fire Department property which is located on the town line.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

There are no sidewalks in Dummerston. Most of the rural roads, both paved and unpaved, have little or no shoulder. Nonetheless, these roads are popular routes for recreational users such as walkers, hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders and cross-country skiers. Bicycle traffic is particularly heavy along Route 30 and Route 5, especially during the spring and summer months.

The West River Trail is located primarily along the old railroad bed of the West River Railroad. The southerly section of it provides pedestrian, bicycle, and cross country ski access along the West River from near the mouth of the river in Brattleboro to Rice Farm Road in Dummerston.

Public Transportation

Southeastern Vermont Transit (SEVT) operates daily bus service that can link Dummerston to various parts of the region. A commuter bus runs from Bellows Falls to Brattleboro along Route 5. It operates in each direction, twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon. There are currently no dedicated stops in Dummerston. We could request one in the future based on need.

There is an effort underway to address the longstanding unmet public transit need for daily bus service along Route 30 from Brattleboro through Dummerston to points west. Southeast Vermont Transit, Grace Cottage Hospital, Leland and Gray, and a number of towns have collaborated to submit a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant application to provide funding for such service.

SEVT, also called The Current, provides both public transportation and medical rides for the elderly and disabled. The Current serves all of Windham County and lower Windsor County. Dial-A-Ride bus service is available for destinations along Route 30 from Brattleboro to Jamaica. Dial-A-Ride is for the elderly (age 60+) and disabled (on Medicaid) for medical appointments. Transportation is provided from home to the medical appointment and return to

home. Dial-A-Ride medical appointment service is also available for riders who have an ADA-defined disability.

The New England Central Railroad Company operates an active rail line that runs along the western shore of the Connecticut River. The rail bed is used to move freight. Amtrak also uses the rail for passenger service. There is daily northbound and southbound passenger rail service available from rail stations located in Bellows Falls and Brattleboro.

Travel Corridors

Routes 5, 30, and Interstate 91 constitute Dummerston's main travel corridors. Located along the roadsides of these travel corridors are certain amenities such as the Connecticut and West Rivers, active farmland, and forested slopes and ridge tops. Residents and visitors derive enjoyment from these natural and pastoral landscapes. The scenic beauty of rural Dummerston is vital to tourism and the recreation industry. These industries play an increasingly large and important role in the economic base of this region. Route 5 is part of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway which was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2005 by the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. This designation recognizes roads for their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities.

Transportation Vision

It is the intention of Dummerston to have a transportation system that encourages the safe and convenient movement of people and goods by motor vehicle, bike, and foot.

The transportation system should continue to be a multimodal one that provides different types of transportation options. A dedicated stop along the CRT bus route from Brattleboro to Bellows Falls is desired. Having a predictable pick-up and drop-off location might enhance the service for Dummerston residents.

Transportation is the single largest use of energy in Vermont, and almost all of that is highway transportation. As a rural town, Dummerston will strive to increase energy efficiency. Implementing zoning districts that discourage dispersed settlement patterns will help to reduce expansions of the transportation system and help contain maintenance costs to existing bridges and roads. At an individual level, choosing fuel efficient vehicles and reducing vehicle miles traveled by ridesharing or taking advantage of alternate modes of transportation will help reduce energy consumption.

There are over 52 miles of dirt roads in Dummerston, crisscrossing diverse geological, ecological, and aesthetically appealing landscapes. It is imperative to preserve these roads along with the historic structures that remain alongside them. Retaining the existing features of these roads, which include narrow traffic lanes and curves, can help decrease speed and preserve Dummerston's rural character.

The Covered Bridge is one of Dummerston's most visible landmarks. Maintaining it as a one lane covered bridge is important to preserving our rural character and controlling traffic on the East-West Road. The inconvenience of having to wait for cars from the opposite direction to pass over the bridge is minor compared to the benefits of keeping truck traffic off East-West Road.

Goals, Policies, and Action Steps

Goal 1 — *Provide for safe, economical, and energy-efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural and social environment.*

Policy 1.1 Maintain a safe and functional public road system.

Action Steps

- a. Continue to grade and seed all road cuts and embankments to minimize erosion and to maintain their rural character. (Highway Department, Selectboard)
- b. Review and update road and bridge condition status annually to reflect the priority of needed improvements. Make recommendations for short and long-term improvements. (Highway Department, Selectboard)

Policy 1.2 Coordinate with local, regional and state entities to plan for Dummerston's transportation needs in a comprehensive manner.

Action Steps

- a. Support the efforts of Connecticut River Transit. (Selectboard)
- b. Continue to work on regional transportation planning with the Windham Regional Commission. (Windham Regional Commission Representatives)
- c. Continue to procure culverts, fuel and other transportation materials and equipment at the best price and quality possible. (Highway Department, Selectboard)
- d. Coordinate with the Agency of Transportation and neighboring towns in planning for road and bridge improvements along Routes 30 and 5, the interstate, and all bridges, to ensure adequate road and bridge capacities without damage to the rural character and environment of Dummerston. (Highway Department, Selectboard)

Policy 1.3 Make more efficient use of existing road capacity without significantly expanding roads or highways.

Action Steps

- a. Find a long-term source of gravel and develop a long-term gravel plan. (Highway Department, Selectboard)
- b. Provide traffic calming where warranted for enhancing or restoring livability of neighborhoods for town residents through reduction of cut-through traffic and excessive speed. Traffic calming should be provided for safety of all road users including pedestrians, children, bicyclists, and those who wish to congregate along the road. (Selectboard, Highway Department)
- c. Avoid, if possible, the widening of existing town roadways and the construction of new roads. (Highway Department, Selectboard)
- d. Where it helps retain and enhance character, adopt a Policy such that unpaved roads remain unpaved. (Selectboard)
- e. Encourage the safe sharing of roadways by vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Promote the VT Safe Passing Law and post signs warning of cyclists and pedestrians on popular recreational routes. (Planning Commission, Highway Department)

Policy 1.4 Preserve the character of Town roads.

Action Steps

- a. Conduct an inventory of scenic roads in Dummerston and establish management guidelines to protect the distinctive features located in the right-of-way, such as road surface and width, canopy trees, and stone walls. (Planning Commission & Selectboard)
- b. Determine whether Dummerston should designate scenic roads (either state or local) under the Scenic Highway Law (19 V.S.A. 2501 and 2502, respectively) or the VT Scenic Byway Program, to ensure that future road maintenance and construction activities are carried out in a manner that is consistent with the scenic quality of the area. (Planning Commission)

Policy 1.5 Retain Class 4 roads and legal trails for recreational use.

Policy 1.6 Maintain the Covered Bridge as a working bridge to preserve its historic character and structural integrity.

Policy 1.7 Work with VTrans to enhance safety along Routes 5 & 30 for cyclists and pedestrians.