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## Chapter 6: TRANSPORTATION

### Introduction

Transportation in Pomfret relies primarily on a network of paved and gravel town highways. ~~Preserving the rural and agricultural character of Pomfret is an important aspect of many sections of the Town plan. Since improving roads can lead to development pressure, it~~ is not Pomfret's intention to build new roads, significantly improve old roads or to pave existing Class 3 roads. Because, ~~among other things,~~ more roads lead to more energy use, the Town will continue to provide economical ways of moving goods, services, and people at a safe speed within and through Pomfret via an existing network of roads.

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### Town Highways

~~The State of Vermont periodically publishes road maps for each town in Vermont. Pomfret's 2015-2022 map of roads, including legal trails, is~~ **(IN THE TOWN OFFICE?)** available at the following web [link](#)here:

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[http://vtransmap01.aot.state.vt.us/Maps/TownMapSeries/WINDSOR\\_Co/POMFRET/POMFRET\\_MILEAGE\\_2015.pdf](http://vtransmap01.aot.state.vt.us/Maps/TownMapSeries/WINDSOR_Co/POMFRET/POMFRET_MILEAGE_2015.pdf)

The State uses four classifications of roads to distribute financial aid to towns for road repair. State aid to a town decreases on a per mile basis from Class 1 to Class 3. ~~The town does not receive any aid for Class 4 roads and trails. According to the 2013 Town Report, in Fiscal Year 2013, the town received a total of \$133,111.90 to maintain these roads.~~ The roads and their respective classifications in Pomfret are:

**State Highways:** ~~are major roads with state route numbers entirely maintained by the state.~~ Pomfret's only state highway is the 1.4-mile section of Route 12 in the southwest corner of the Town.

**Class 1** ~~Town highways are extensions of a state highway route with a state route number.~~ Pomfret has no Class 1 Town highways.

**Class 2** Town highways serve through traffic from one community to another and are paved. The Town of Pomfret maintains 14.7 miles of Class 2 highways. These are:

- ~~Woodstock Town Line to West Hartford Town Line South Pomfret - Pomfret Road: 10.15-1.16 Mi.~~
  - ~~South Pomfret to Barnard Town Line - Stage Road: 2.81 Mi.~~
  - ~~South Pomfret to Hewitt's Corners - Pomfret Road: 4.42 Mi.~~
  - ~~Hewitt's Corners to Sharon Town Line - Howe Hill Road: 1.77 Mi.~~
- ~~Hewitt's Corners to W. Hartford Town Line - Pomfret Road: 4.57 Mi. Pomfret Rd. and Howe Hill are part of the Federal Aid System and classed by the state as principal arterials.~~

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**Class 3** Town highways are all the other Town roads that are maintained year-round. In Pomfret, there are 47.25 miles of Class 3 roads that are all gravel.

**Class 4** Town highways are not maintained by the Town except for bridge and culvert repairs, and occasional grading. ~~The Town receives no state funds for maintaining its~~ Pomfret has 6.6 miles of Class 4 roads. These roads often have considerable recreational use.

All town highways have a 3-rod or 49.5-foot right-of-way by state statute, unless surveyed or otherwise deeded.

**Legal Trails** are Town rights-of-way, usually former Class 4 roads. They are no longer maintained and may be restricted to non-motorized use.

**Discontinued highways** were previously Town roads but their rights-of-way have been transferred to adjoining landowners. Neither the public nor the Town has any residual rights in discontinued highways.

### Road Maintenance

~~In 2013, the Town of Pomfret was awarded a Better Backroads Category A Grant for a new town-wide inventory of the Town's highways and for the development of a Road Surface Management System. This project's scope of work included the following major steps:~~

- ~~• Inventory of road surfaces,~~
- ~~• Survey of road surface and drainage conditions,~~
- ~~• An update to the existing culvert inventory, and~~
- ~~• A final report recommending a major maintenance program with the associated costs for the next five years.~~

~~The purpose of this project was to identify specific road segments and culvert/drainage problem in the Town and to determine effective repair solutions to each problem according to the Vermont Better Backroads Manual and the road standards of the Town of Pomfret. The Town adopted the 2013 Town Road and Bridge Standards from VTrans and the State of Vermont on March 20, 2013. The roads and culverts throughout the Town of Pomfret, based on the findings of this grant project, are generally in fair to good condition.<sup>5</sup>~~

The cost of maintaining the Town highways is second only to the cost of education in the Town budget. Pomfret's public highway system is by far the largest asset in Pomfret. With this fact in mind, maintenance practices should be directed to preserve the life of this asset over the long term for the benefit of the greatest number of users.

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<sup>5</sup> "Town of Pomfret – Road Surface and Culvert Maintenance Plan." 2013.

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Summer maintenance is a matter of trying to repair and prevent the deterioration of the roads, both gravel and paved. A regular reclaiming and repaving program has continued for several years, retreatment should be done as needed. Some years several miles have been repaved, some of which will barely last a year because of poor underlying road structure. In other years short sections of highway have been completely rebuilt including the underlying base, whose repairs should last for many years. Over the next eight years, the town will XYZ (any rebuilds or maintenance goes here; anything with a big investment). Pomfret will continue to perform routine maintenance on ditches and culverts.

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## Safety

### Highway Department

The Highway Department has a Road Foreman, appointed by the Selectboard, and two full-time employees. See the Pomfret Annual Report for a current listing of Town Highway Equipment. Major equipment replacement is based on a ~~ten-ten~~-year Capital Equipment Replacement plan with annual allocations to the Highway Equipment Reserve Account. Both the Replacement Plan and the Reserve Account are included in the annual Town Reports and updated each year based on projected costs and the anticipated service life of the equipment. This plan allows for equipment to be replaced before the maintenance costs become excessive and provides for level funding from year to year.

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~~The Town Garage, which houses all the highway equipment, is in marginal condition and needs a major overhaul with a small addition. It is important that all the equipment used in the winter be stored in a heated building with adequate space for regular maintenance and repair work. Improvements to the Town Garage are long overdue: it is not in compliance with waste handling best practices and safety issues. Energy efficiency issues need to be addressed. The town will need to study and decide as to whether a major renovation will be more cost effective than short term fixes.~~

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With the current population and its relatively stagnant rate of increase, the operation of the highway department and its inventory of equipment seem to be adequate. ~~If the population were to increase significantly, particularly in areas served by Class 3 gravel roads, the highway department might need to add employees and equipment, as well as more garage space.~~

### Ordinances

There are Town Highway Ordinances relating to speeding, road improvement, and driveway access. A map of Town roads (Map #3) is included in Appendix C and in the web link provided at the top of this section.

### Private Roads

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The Town should be concerned about private roads or driveways for three reasons:

- ~~First,~~ the intersection of private roads with town roads must be safe and not cause damage to town roads. The sight lines must allow for the speed limit on the road. Ideally, the intersection angle should be as close to 90° as possible, and the elevation and grade of the private road, relative to the town road, should be designed to prevent gravel washing into the road~~water erosion damage to the town road~~. All new or modified driveways require an Access Permit issued by the Selectboard after they review the proposed plans and determine that they meet the specifications of the Town driveway access ordinance. The access permit only regulates the access point, not the entire drive or road.
- ~~Second, new~~ How private roads and driveways should be constructed ~~so that determines if~~ emergency vehicles are able to reach residences and businesses year-round. Pomfret currently does not review or approve plans for private roads/drives -except where they intersect with the town road, unless they are part of a major subdivision or are in the Ridgeline Zone. Many towns have regulations setting minimum standards for construction of private roads, particularly the maximum grade and minimum width.
- ~~Third, new~~ private roads and drives can have a negative impact on the natural resources and scenic beauty of the Town. Poorly constructed roads can cause soil erosion during and after construction. ~~Improper installation of driveway culverts can exacerbate siltation and drainage problems. Poorly sited roads can disturb wetlands or wildlife habitats. Roads built in open fields and on ridgelines can intrude on agricultural land and viewsheds.~~

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### Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation

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Pomfret does not have any sidewalks or bicycle facilities (such as racks) anywhere in town. However, bicyclists within town and across the region travel Pomfret's roads to enjoy the scenic and rural landscapes. ~~Road improvements that would reduce bicycle safety or discourage bicycling will not be supported in any sense.~~ Paved roads in town generally lack any shoulder and are therefore difficult to safely bike or walk along. Pomfret Road is a popular bike route.

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### Public Transportation

~~Unless~~To be efficient, public transportation requires that a large number of people go to the same place at the same time. The common view is that rural communities like Pomfret do not have the population to support a public transportation system. The exception is the school bus system where a portion of the community, ~~approximately 15 percent,~~ goes to the same places (Woodstock Elementary School, the Prosper Valley School, and Woodstock Union High School) at the same time each school day morning. The van picking up senior citizens at their homes and transporting them to the Thompson Senior Center in Woodstock is also a public transportation system. Although not as efficient as the school bus system, it is an important service to many of Pomfret's older residents.

Stagecoach Transportation Services, a non-profit organization based in ~~Pomfret-Randolph~~, Vermont, is the local transit provider in this region. Essentially, they respond to individual needs for transportation to medical centers or elsewhere by acting as a coordination center for a list of volunteer drivers. The service, available to Pomfret residents, is supported by minimal fees in

addition to federal and state funding.- The Thompson Senior Center also has a van for the same purpose.

~~There are situations now and there may be new ones in the future that justify some additional form of public transportation in Pomfret. Similarly Short of more formal transit, carpooling, either by private arrangements or through Vermont Rideshare, would also have the benefit of minimizing dependence on private autos. Location of Locating a Park and Ride facility ies in Pomfret would facilitate carpooling. These have been and are being established in other small Vermont towns.- Full state funding for Park and Ride lots is available every year for this purpose.~~

The Vermonter is an Amtrak passenger train line running between Washington, D.C., and St. Albans, Vermont. It stops locally in Randolph and White River Junction. The closest regional airport is in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

### Regional Transportation

Regional transportation planning in Vermont is now the joint responsibility of the Regional Planning Commissions and the state highway engineers in Montpelier. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission has a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of representatives from all towns in the region. The TAC is charged with creating a regional transportation plan that is coordinated with land use planning and is responsive to local needs and concerns.

Of special concern to Pomfret is traffic generated in other towns and flowing through Pomfret to other towns such as Hartford or Woodstock, or to Interstate 89.- Further, the Town will not support so-called transportation system improvements that would effectively divert traffic from neighboring communities with state highways to or through rural towns hips such as Pomfret.

### Long-Range Goals

1. To Mmaintain Pomfret's roads in a manner that promotes public safety, is consistent with land use goals, does not degrade the environment, and efficiently moves people, goods, and services.
2. To support biking, walking, transit, EVs, and other means of transportation that use less energy or fossil fuels.

### Objectives and Policies

- 1.- Continue to schedule resurfacing of paved highways on a yearly basis, in a cost effective manner that will prevent road deterioration.
- 2.- Continue to grade gravel roads and apply new material on a minimal basis. Continue to improve side ditches to keep the roads from significantly degrading without widening or straightening unless this becomes necessary to handle existing traffic.

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~~3. Continue roadside mowing and removal of brush, dead trees, stumps, and rocks that interfere with vision on town roads.~~

~~1. Schedule regular inspections of roads, bridges, and culverts to determine repair needs on a priority basis. perform maintenance on roads as needed.~~  
~~4.~~

~~5. Continue to allocate tax dollars to the Reserve Funds each year.~~

~~6. Encourage the Selectboard to continue use of the maximum amounts of federal and state aid available for highways.~~

~~7. May provide for enforcement of the Town Traffic Ordinance by the County Sheriff and State Police to reduce the high number of trucks and automobiles that travel at excessive speeds and damage paved roads.~~

~~2. Enhance safety by designing road improvements that do not encourage drivers to speed by setting appropriate speed limits. Set appropriate speed limits which will improve safety.~~

~~3. Appropriate speed limits, while promoting efficient movement of traffic, should take into consideration pedestrian use, built-up areas, and schools.~~

~~9.~~

~~9. Appropriate speed limits, while promoting efficient movement of traffic, should take into consideration pedestrian use, built up areas, and schools.~~

~~10.4. The Town will not build new roads, improve old roads, pave existing Class 3 roads, or accept ownership of private roads to accommodate development unless such actions provide long term benefits outweighing costs to the Town as a whole.~~

~~5. Any proposed new private road or driveway that serves two or more residences will should meet minimum standards of construction, grade, and width to permit access by emergency vehicles.~~

~~11. Road improvements that would reduce bicycle safety or discourage bicycling will not be supported in any sense.~~

~~12. Construction of private roads should be regulated in a manner that protects town roads and provides safe intersections.~~

~~13. The design and construction of private roads should be reviewed to ensure the protection of significant natural resources, agricultural and forest land, and scenic beauty.~~

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~~14. In the interest of keeping roads useable while maintaining rural character, roads should not be widened or straightened at the cost of damaging mature trees or stone walls.~~

~~15. Maintain roads so that soil erosion and the use of salt do not adversely affect the environment.~~

~~16. When improving, widening, opening or closing a road, the Town should do a cost benefit analysis.~~

~~6.~~

~~17. Develop and maintain a Capital Budget and Replacement Plan for the purchase of highway and fire vehicles and equipment.~~

### **Recommended Actions**

~~Develop a long range plan and budget to reconstruct and resurface a percentage of the paved town roads every year to reduce deferred maintenance. (Selectboard)~~

~~Determine whether the Town Garage and Shed meet the needs of the Highway Department; plan and budget for additional space as required. (Selectboard)~~

~~Create design and construction specifications for new private roads and driveways to be used in Conditional Use review. (Planning Commission)~~

~~Where feasible provide and maintain pedestrian and bicycle paths with grant funding. (Conservation Commission and Planning Commission)~~

~~Work with legislative representatives to change government regulations on posting roads for weight limitations as traffic weights exceed the structural capacity of Pomfret town roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)~~

~~1. Work with legislative representatives to change State regulations governing speed limits on gravel roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)~~

~~2. Identify roads not used for access to properties and change their classification to legal trails for recreation. (Planning Commission)~~

~~3. Make recommendations to the Selectboard about road widening and straightening. (Road Foreman)~~

~~1. The Selectboard **(should/shall)** develop a long-range plan and budget to reconstruct and resurface a percentage of the paved town roads every year to reduce deferred maintenance.~~

~~2. The Planning Commission **(should/shall)** create design and construction specifications for new private roads and driveways to be used in zoning.~~

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3. The Conservation Commission and Planning Commission, where feasible, (should/shall) provide and maintain pedestrian and bicycle paths with grant funding.
  4. The Selectboard (should/shall) work with legislative representatives to change state regulations governing speed limits on gravel roads by granting more local control.
  5. The Planning Commission and Selectboard (should/shall) identify roads not used for access to properties and change their classification to legal trails for recreation.
  6. The Road Foreman (should/shall) make recommendations to the Selectboard about road widening and straightening.
  7. The Selectboard (should/shall) continue use of the maximum amounts of federal and state aid available for highways.
  - 4.8. The County Sheriff and State Police may provide for enforcement of the Town Traffic Ordinance to reduce the high number of trucks and automobiles that travel at excessive speeds and damage paved roads.

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