

# Executive Summary

This report on the “Evaluation of Potential Sites for the Relocation of the Burlington and Rutland Railyards” responds to a mandate from the Vermont State Legislature. During the 1999 legislative calendar, House Bill 537 was passed. Section 12 of this bill directs the Agency of Transportation “to study the feasibility of relocating the Rutland City and Burlington railroad yards and to develop a list of proposed sites for each yard and their associated cost estimates.” The evaluation of the relocation of the two yards is based on specific criteria identified in the legislation and incorporates input from an advisory Committee of stakeholders. The final report is hereby submitted by the Agency of Transportation (VTrans) to the Vermont Rail Council and the Vermont House and Senate Committees on Transportation.

The purpose of the “Evaluation of Potential Sites for the Relocation of the Burlington and Rutland Railyards” is to determine the feasibility of relocating the existing railyards located in Burlington and Rutland City. The evaluation was accomplished through the following study process:

- Description of the infrastructure and operation of existing facilities,
- Development of the evaluation criteria,
- Identification of the candidate sites,
- Analysis of the sites including development of order of magnitude cost estimates, and
- Summary of the next steps required including environmental and funding considerations.

To assist VTrans in identifying potential railyard sites, an Advisory Committee of local and regional officials was developed to provide input into the feasibility study. The Advisory Committee assisted in the development of the list of proposed sites and provided input into the evaluation process.

A total of sixteen locations, including both of the existing railyard sites, were identified for the Burlington and Rutland facilities. Each of these sites were evaluated on criteria defined by the Vermont legislature. This criteria included:

- ™ Size (acreage) and availability
- ™ Potential for adjacent industrial development

- ™ Municipal and State permit requirements
- ™ Compatibility with local land use and development planning
- ™ Availability of power, water, and sewer
- ™ Access and proximity to municipal and State highways
- ™ Environmental impacts including wetlands, floodplains. Archeological and historical resources, contaminated soils, and topography.

In addition, impacts to railroad operations were also considered in the evaluation of each site. The factors assessed in determining these impacts included but were not limited to the following:

- ™ Administrative facilities
- ™ Existing railroad lines and routing
- ™ Storage of rail equipment, infrastructure materials and fuels
- ™ Repair facilities
- ™ Freight cargo storage and handling
- ™ Service to existing customers on site

In addition, order of magnitude capital costs were developed for each of the proposed alternatives. It is important to note that these costs do not include engineering and design fees, real estate acquisition, environmental mitigation, VTR moving costs or costs associated with the impacts to operations caused by the relocation.

Evaluation matrices of these criteria for Burlington sites and Rutland sites are included on Tables EX.1 of this report and have been included in this executive summary for reference. These tables represent the results of the evaluation of each of the sites based upon the criteria set forth by the legislation. This data has been summarized to allow a side-by-side comparison of the alternate sites. The tables do not rank the proposed sites, however, they do provide a comprehensive summary of each of the location's attributes.

Based on these results, the State of Vermont should determine whether to pursue the relocation of the Burlington and/or Rutland City railyards. The study has identified several potentially feasible sites for the relocation of the Rutland railyard. In Burlington, however, no clear choices for sites were identified.

Should the state of Vermont decide to pursue the relocation of the Burlington and/or Rutland railyard, it is likely that federal funding will be a component of the overall project funding plan. All major capital investment projects that utilize any federal funds are subject to a project development process. This process must be followed to be eligible for federal funds. The specifics of the process vary depending on the lead

Table EX.1

**Evaluation Matrix - Burlington Site Alternatives**

	Size (Acres)	Potential Industrial Development	Land Use Compatibility	Utility Connections	Proximity to Highway	Wetlands	Floodplains	Potential Historical Significance	Topography	Impact to Railroad Operations	Cost*
<b>Existing Burlington</b>	47	Minor	Incompatible	Existing	1.5mi	None	Moderate	Significant	Minor	NA	NA
<b>CLV</b>	5	NA	Incompatible	No	2.3mi	None	None	Minor	Minor	Significant	\$38,016,030
<b>St Michaels</b>	33	Minor	Incompatible	No	0.7mi	None	Significant	Significant	Significant	Mod to Sig	\$51,679,227
<b>Intervale</b>	122	Minor	Incompatible	No	2.3mi	Significant	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Moderate	\$46,995,990
<b>Airport Industrial</b>	69	Minor	Compatible	No	0.3mi	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Moderate	\$51,016,839
<b>Shelburne</b>	24	Minor	Incompatible	No	1.2mi	Moderate	Moderate	Significant	Minor	Minor to Mod	\$38,913,399
<b>Demers</b>	48	Significant	Compatible	No	1.6mi	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor	High	\$47,524,990
<b>Williston</b>	25	Significant	Compatible	No	3.5mi	None	None	Significant	Minor	High	\$47,122,897

\* Capital cost estimates for comparison purposes.

Table EX.1

Evaluation Matrix - Rutland Site Alternatives

	Size (Acres)	Potential Industrial Development	Land Use Compatibility	Utility Connections	Proximity to Highway	Wetlands	Floodplains	Potential Historical Significance	Topography	Impact to Railroad Operations	Cost*
Existing Rutland	48	Minor	Incompatible	Existing	0.2mi	None	No	Significant	Minor	NA	NA
South Proctor 1	87	Significant	Mixed	No	4.2mi	Moderate	No	Significant	Minor	Significant	\$37,047,857
South Proctor 2	25	Minor	Incompatible	No	4.2mi	Moderate	No	Significant	Minor	Moderate	\$35,140,491
Center Rutland	101	Significant	Mixed	No	1.2mi	Moderate	No	Significant	Minor	Minor	\$33,600,678
Florence	45	Significant	Incompatible	No	1.6mi	Moderate	No	Significant	Minor	Mod to Sig	\$34,051,227
East Castleton	33	Significant	Incompatible	No	1.6mi	None	No	Minor	Minor	Moderate	\$32,407,122
West Castleton	49	Minor	Incompatible	No	10.7mi	Significant	No	Significant	Minor	Moderate	\$32,496,549
Otter Creek Rte 4/7	78	Significant	Compatible	No	0.3mi	Moderate	No	Significant	Minor	Minor	\$34,953,093

\* Capital cost estimates for comparison purposes.

federal agency. The five major steps of the process leading from project conception to construction are:

- Systems planning
- Alternatives analysis/ draft environmental impact statement
- Preliminary engineering
- Final design
- Construction

Each of these steps is eligible for federal funding participation. Prior to initiating the federal process however, the state may want to further explore the funding options. It is often appropriate to develop a financial feasibility or funding options study that explores federal, state, local, and private options. The purpose of such a study is to examine potential funding scenarios. These scenarios help to establish the basic funding strategies or parameters of the project. This step is particularly important given the limited availability of federal funds for freight projects. Even with the flexible provisions included as part of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), few programs with limited dollars exist to fund freight initiatives. The majority of the funding is targeted for highway and transit development.

This study document represents the initial step in the project development process. It identifies the need for the action, defines the issues, presents an initial list of potentially feasible sites, and presents a range of conceptual level cost estimates. Once the state evaluates the funding options and makes a decision to pursue a project, then the alternatives analysis efforts can commence. These efforts will involve completion of a draft environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines that will result in the identification of a locally preferred alternative (LPA). The step concludes with the development of a specific financial plan to fund the LPA. It is recommended that the effort be split into two separate projects: the relocation of the Burlington railyard and the relocation of the Rutland City railyard. Splitting the relocation of the railyards into two separate projects allows the State flexibility in pursuing funding strategies that may be better suited to the conditions of one railyard.