

Department of Homeland Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

PUBLIC NOTICE

**Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment
Vermont Route 9 Whetstone Brook Flood Mitigation Project
Windham County, Marlboro and Brattleboro, Vermont**

FEMA intends to provide federal funding to the Vermont Agency of Transportation for the Vermont Route 9 Whetstone Brook Flood Mitigation Project. Funding would be provided through the FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program. The purpose of the Vermont Route 9 Whetstone Brook Flood Mitigation Project is to improve the resiliency of Route 9 at five high risk locations in Marlboro and Brattleboro, VT previously damaged during past flood events. These sections of Route 9 remain vulnerable to flood damage despite past repairs. The proposed mitigation project is needed to lessen flood risk to human health, improved property, and public infrastructure.

The Proposed Action includes the following components: 1) Construction of flood benches along the Whetstone Brook to increase flood storage and reduce flood velocities. 2) Repair and reinforcement of road embankments where past armoring is failing. Embankment armoring would include constructing a combination of stacked stone toe walls along the river's edge and stone fill/riprap sloping embankments depending on the specific conditions at each site. 3) Removal of berms that currently channel flood waters towards the road and increase the risk of road failure from erosion. 4) Restoration of connectivity to the floodplain by removing sediment bars that prevent flood waters from accessing the floodplain. 5) Restoration of flood chutes to divert flood waters away from Route 9. 6) And minor road grade adjustments to raise portions of Route 9 slightly above floodplain elevation. Activities that would be common to all five sites include clearing and grubbing of an approximate total of 4 acres (including the removal of individual trees), temporary utility relocation, and temporary traffic barriers and traffic control.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act and federal regulations, FEMA evaluated the Proposed action and a No Action alternative. Two other alternatives including relocation of Vermont Route 9 and a Vegetative-Only Solution were considered but dismissed as infeasible. An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to assess potential impacts of the proposed project on the human environment. The Draft EA summarizes the project purpose and need, project alternatives, the affected environment, and potential environmental consequences for considered alternatives.

The Draft EA is available for public comment and can be viewed and downloaded at:

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/project-delivery-environmental/permitting-review>

The Draft EA can be viewed in hard copy at the following location:

Brattleboro Town Clerk's Office, Brattleboro Municipal Center,
230 Main Street, Suite 108, Brattleboro, VT 05301

The comment period will end 15 days from the date of this legal notice publication, or distribution of print copies, whichever is later. Written comments can be emailed to David.Robbins@fema.dhs.gov or sent to FEMA Regional Environmental Officer, 99 High Street, Boston, MA 02110. If no substantive comments are received, the EA will become final and a Finding of No Significant Impact will be signed. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.