



## **Route 9 Corridor Management Plan (2021) Executive Summary**

Last amended 6/24/2021

### **Background**

On October 4, 2019, VTTrans staff met with locals to hear about concerns for the VT Route 9 corridor. Secretary Joe Flynn, Wayne Symonds (Chief Engineer), Jesse Devlin (Project Delivery Bureau) and Jake Elovirta (DMV Enforcement) represented the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The meeting discussion focused on truck traffic, including oversized loads, and included concerns about safety (especially curves and sight distances) as well as non-car modes.

In winter 2020 the Route 9 Corridor Management Plan was started, in part to further examine issues raised during the October 2019 meeting, as well as to help prepare for the [Route 9 Paving Project](#) (Wilmington to Brattleboro) scheduled for 2021-2022. The Corridor Management Plan was completed in July 2021.

### **Goals and objectives**

Overall the Corridor Management Plan is intended to support the statewide vision for “a safe, reliable and multimodal transportation system that grows the economy, is affordable to use and operate, and serves vulnerable populations” along Route 9.

The goal for the Route 9 Corridor Management Plan was:

- Gather feedback on local needs and concerns in a focused and effective way
- Identify practical recommendations that are possible to implement in the short-term in combination with asset management investments such as paving and bridge projects.
- Identify longer-term needs that may be addressed through other AOT and municipal programs.
- Monitor progress and changes through Annual Status Meetings with corridor partners and stakeholders, and update the plan as necessary

For the purposes of this study VTTrans focused on the Route 9 corridor from VT-279 in Bennington to I-91 in Brattleboro. It focuses on the state roads and infrastructure, although a section of Class 1 Town Highway is part of the study area in Brattleboro. Route 9 is 45 miles long, and this study includes 37 miles.

## Study Area for Vermont Route 9 Corridor Management Plan in 2020



### Meetings and outreach

The Corridor Management Plan synthesizes comments from a variety of meetings and conversations between February 2020 and July 2021, in addition to notes from the October 2019 meeting. In addition to smaller meetings, the following larger meetings were held with many participants:

- VTrans Staff Kick off Meeting – 2/19/2020
- Partners meeting – 9/2/2020
- Stakeholders meetings – 11/9/2020, 12/3/2020, 12/8/2020
- Final Public meeting – 7/3/2021

The Corridor Management Plan had three types of input:

- VTrans data and staff observations and experience with the corridor
- Partners – other state agencies, towns, RPCs or other similar entities which helped identify issues along the corridor. Partners also have the means to implement some of the identified next steps
  - Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) and others
  - Southeast Vermont Transit and Green Mountain Community Network (GMCN)
  - Windham Regional Commission (WRC) and Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC)
  - Towns on the corridor
  - Green Mountain National Forest
- Stakeholders – people who use the corridor
  - Towns near the corridor who use it often
  - Businesses near and along the corridor
  - Residents near and along the corridor
  - Advocacy groups near and along the corridor
  - Members of the WRC and BCRC Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs)

Over the course of the project a contact list was developed from meeting attendees and others who expressed interest. As of June 2021 nearly 200 people are part of this email list including VTrans staff, partners and stakeholders.

## Corridor Management Plan

Over 130 needs and concerns were identified as part of the Corridor Management Plan. Each need/ concern was considered and next steps assigned where appropriate.

There are three main themes for the Plan:

- Safety and crashes
- Traffic and congestion
- Natural resources

The following are some general goals for next steps that were shared between several needs/ concerns:

- Improve roadway safety (section or intersection)
- Evaluate signage and/or road markings
- Improve safety near recreation area
- Develop a Roadway Master Plan for road section
- Consider accommodating wildlife when rehabilitating or replacing structure
- Improve roadway resilience to flooding and extreme weather
- Improve drainage and/or stormwater infrastructure.

Next steps are organized in three ways:

- Timeline for implementation
  - Short term - To be completed within the next 5 years. To be done through maintenance activities, incorporation within an existing project (most often a paving or bridge project), or is already included within a programmed project.
  - Medium term - To be completed within a 5 - 10 year range. Work on the action item would start soon, but implementing the action item may take time due to funding availability, complexities of scope, harmonization or other similar reasons.
  - Long term - Action item likely will not be implemented for at least 10 years, but work would start in the near term. Issues of funding, complexity of scope and project integration push the solution to this need out of the short term.
  - Await harmonization opportunity (i.e. to incorporate into another project) - Next step does not have its own timeline and instead should await opportunity to "harmonize" with other projects.
- Lead Implementer – VTrans, Towns, RPCs and others
- Collaboration opportunities – eg Towns, RPCs, other state agencies

### Memos/ Reports associated with the Plan

All memos are linked within the StoryMap on the [Corridor Webpage](#).

#### **Route 9 Congestion Study (June 2020)**

This study looks at congestion levels at various intersections on Route 9, both now and for 2040.

#### **Route 9 Crash Report (August 2020)**

This report summarized crash patterns along Route 9, looking at time of year, time of day, types of crashes and other factors.

#### **Crash Mitigation Strategies along Rural Roads and Villages (June 2020)**

This memo gives a summary of some actions that can be taken to reduce crashes in village areas and between them.

#### **Route 9 Oversized Truck Memo (June 2021).**

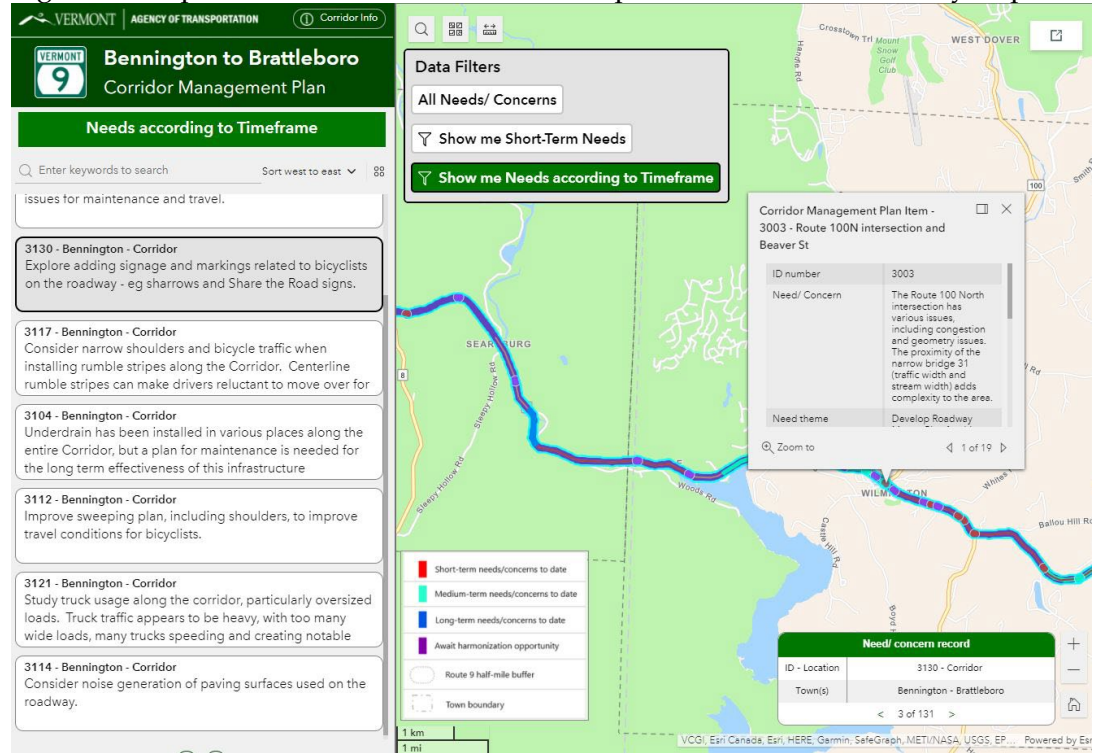
This memo summarizes key findings about oversized permits issued for Route 9 and potential next steps for VTrans and DMV staff to pursue. An update to this memo is expected within a year (i.e. early summer 2022).

## View the Plan!

Details of the plan, including individualized next steps, can be viewed in the StoryMap, linked from the [Corridor webpage](#). This site includes links to several memos and reports, as well as interactive maps.

A table version of the Needs/ Concerns and Next Steps is also on the [Project Website](#).

Figure 1: Snapshot of one of the interactive maps within the Route 9 StoryMap



## Next Steps

After the Plan is finalized in early summer 2021, the plan will be used by many different parts of VTrans as well as local partners like RPCs and Towns.

To keep this plan relevant, we intend to:

- keep the background data up-to-date (e.g. project lists, asset conditions, etc)
- check in with VTrans staff and local partners on a regular basis for updates (next update likely in 2023, after completion of the major paving project)

Periodically, updates will be emailed to partners and other interested parties along the Corridor.

## Comments and Questions

Please contact Katharine Otto, Planning Coordinator - ([Katharine.otto@vermont.gov](mailto:Katharine.otto@vermont.gov), 802-917-3451).