

Cornwall-Middlebury STP 0172(11) Scoping Study

Introduction

Cornwall-Middlebury STP 0172(11) focuses on roadway safety for all users within the corridor of Vermont Route 125, beginning 0.1 miles east of the Middlebury-Cornwall town line and continuing west to the intersection of VT Route 125 and Hamblin Road. The project extends through an area where there is a crash history that includes multiple fatal crashes, 4 different intersections and significant pedestrian and bike use.

Due to specific and significant concerns in certain locations, the project has been broken down into sections to develop a purpose and need that will address these concerns more effectively.

Purpose

The project purpose is to develop improvements that will increase the safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians within project area.

Need

Begin Project to Ledge Creek Crossing

The Knoll has been defined as the first two vertical curves driving westbound along VT Route 125 out of Middlebury. This location has multiple crest vertical curves that reduce visibility to motorists of the other side of the curves, with special consideration being paid to the easternmost crest due to the increased risk. In addition, there is a 1 to 2-foot shoulder with insufficient width for safe bicycle or pedestrian access, despite their frequent use of this corridor. Sight lines for motorists need to be improved to meet appropriate stopping sight distances. The posted speed is 50 mph in this area with a small 40 mph zone on the westerly end of the section. Residents report a general lack of speed limit adherence that exacerbate the safety concerns of the section. The project will need to provide cost-effective solutions to increase safety of all users of the roadway.

James Road & Cider Mill Road Intersection

The intersection of VT Route 125 with James Road and Cider Mill Road has significant sight distance limitations and has experienced multiple crashes. A vertical curve on the west side of the intersection as well as a retaining wall on a residential property reduce visibility for those travelling on VT Route 125, as well as those travelling on James Road or Cider Mill Road. The posted speed of 50 mph at the intersection and



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reduced sight distance leads to subpar decision time for all users in the area. This situation is only made worse for maintenance personnel with plows or larger trucks due to the reduced sight lines, particularly when snowbanks are present. Efforts have been taken to increase awareness of the hazardous intersection including installation of flashing lights at the intersection, advanced warning signs with flashers with an advisory speed of 30 mph on VT Route 125, and additional warning pavement markings on James Road. Despite these attempts to improve awareness, there continue to be crashes. The project will need to provide cost-effective solutions to increase decision times and sight lines for motorists, along with providing a safe corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists from this intersection to the west.

Lemon Fair Road to Ridge Road

From Lemon Fair Road east to Ridge Road is a winding stretch of roadway with 1 ft shoulders and reduced sight lines. The VT 125 is located on a sharp horizontal curve where it intersects Lemon Fair Road. Between the two intersections there is a driveway with poor sight distance that has no warning to oncoming traffic. Community input indicates that VT 125 to Ridge Road has consistent bicycle traffic regardless of the narrow shoulders. The project will need to provide cost-effective solutions to increase safety of all users of the roadway.

Ridge Road to Hamblin Road

No significant concerns about the area from Ridge Road to Hamblin Road were brought to the attention of the team. Comments were made that the previous project in the ledge outcrop area in this segment eased concerns over the roadway width of the section. The Y-intersection at Hamblin Road is less than ideal, along with the change in grade from the heavily superelevated curve of VT 125 to the slight downhill grade of Hamblin Road.