
Appendix A – Purpose and Need Statement Adopted by the St. Albans City Council

Purpose and Need Statement
Revised Nov 14, 2011

Federal Street Multi Modal Connector
St. Albans, VT

Submitted to VTrans on _____, 2011
VT State Project # St. Albans HPP 8000 (17)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector project in the City of St. Albans, VT is three fold:

- 1) To increase economic competitiveness and livability in Downtown St. Albans by providing an efficient and convenient alternate north-south route for truck and automobile traffic currently using Main Street (US Route 7);
- 2) To resolve long-standing traffic flow problems that have impacted the competitiveness of commercial and industrial properties using Complete Street design principles where appropriate; and
- 3) To harness the economic power of multiple transportation modes located in close proximity to one another in an environment containing commercial, residential, and industrial uses.

The northern limit of the study area would be the intersection of Main Street (US Route 7) at Lower Newton Street westerly to the intersection of Lower Newton Street at Federal Street. The southern limit would be a two-lane extension of the Interstate Access Road (St. Albans State Highway) westerly to the intersection of Lemnah Drive and Nason Street. The existing roadways between the northerly and southerly ends of the corridor are Federal Street, Catherine Street, Allen Street, and Lemnah Drive.

Alternatives to be evaluated include roadway widening, dedicated bicycle lanes, sidewalks on both sides of the corridor, and realigning or reconfiguring select intersections. The alternatives could improve access to the downtown for destination traffic, facilitate the passage of through traffic, improve access to the adjacent industrial areas, and create potential development and redevelopment opportunities. These types of improvements should also improve overall operations of Lake Street at Federal Street/Catherine Street and Lower Newton at Federal Street intersections, accommodate transit routes, and provide access to a possible multi modal facility or other redevelopment opportunities.

Any improvements should be consistent with the objectives of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan as amended. The Plan's corridor and city-wide objectives for transportation are based on traffic circulation, encouragement of alternative modes

of transportation, and improvement of pedestrian and bicycle access.

NEED:

The project need is defined by the concerns and deficiencies identified in the following areas:

Traffic Circulation and Mobility

Main Street (US Route 7) is the primary north-south corridor through the City. Heavy truck and commuter traffic often create congestion and delay through the downtown, most notably at the intersections of Main Street (US Route 7) at Lake Street and Fairfield Street (VT Route 36). Motor vehicle congestion has a negative impact on the livability and safety of the otherwise pedestrian-focused commercial downtown.

To avoid vehicular congestion on Main Street, motorists often seek relief by traveling on adjacent residential streets. This is detrimental to the livability and pedestrian safety of those residential neighborhoods. The Federal Street corridor includes a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Its current function as an informal bypass for Main Street traffic is documented through existing vehicle turn movement counts and origin-destination studies that show that during critical peak hours, motorists that are familiar with the local street network are bypassing the aforementioned congested Main and Lake Street/Fairfield Street intersection. However, the Federal Street Corridor has inherent problems and in its current configuration it is inadequate as a bypass. These problems are due primarily to the corridor's piecemeal construction history and are exacerbated by the informally routed overflow traffic. Problems along the Federal Street corridor include:

- inconsistent and deficient roadway geometrics
- inconsistent pedestrian accommodations
- poor access management
- lack of provision for turning movements at key intersections
- lack of direct connection to Interstate 89 (I-89)
- generally poor state of repair

Prior studies have shown that points south via Catherine Street or Market Street, Allen Street, and Lemnah Drive have fewer vehicles using the corridor as a bypass route, due to inconsistent roadway geometrics (see chart below). Motorists unfamiliar with the area will follow the posted routes - US Route 7, VT Route 36, VT Route 104, VT Route 105 and VT Route 207 and are most likely to continue through the congested downtown area.

In addition to deficiencies in existing pavement widths, the Federal Street Corridor is not presently suitable as a bypass route because key intersections are

not configured to best accommodate through or bypassing turn movements and do not have pedestrian crossings that meet current standards. Examples include Lake Street at Federal/Catherine Streets and Federal Street at Lower Newton Street. These intersections experience long vehicle delays and congestion due to pre-existing bypass traffic. Moreover, vehicular delays are compounded because the corridor does not have direct access to I-89 via the Interstate Access Road. Therefore, vehicles must travel on residential streets to gain access to Main Street (US Route 7), Federal Street, and the Interstate Access Road.

Roadway Widths

<i>Roadway</i>	<i>Approximate Existing Width</i>
Catherine Street	28' with 5' sidewalk
Allen Street	24'
Lemnah Drive	26' with 4' grass strip & 4' sidewalk (total 34')

The need exists to manage access and through traffic along the Federal Street corridor in ways that improve mobility and follow current roadway standards, while protecting and enhancing the economic vitality of the corridor. The need extends beyond vehicular traffic to include improved access, safety, and experience for pedestrians and cyclists. These combined actions are entirely consistent with the downtown master plan.

Roadway

The Federal Street corridor does not have a direct link to the Interstate Access Road (St. Albans State Highway) and would require a new roadway segment from Lemnah Drive to South Main Street to make the corridor a viable alternate route to Main Street (US Route 7). This proposed roadway link would complete the corridor and provide direct access to the Amtrak station and the commercial/industrial area within the Federal Street corridor, provide an alternate route for commuter traffic and truck deliveries, reduce vehicle delay in the downtown area and enrich the downtown experience, and thus increase the economic competitiveness of development and redevelopment opportunities in both the downtown and the Federal Street corridor.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

The corridor does have an extensive sidewalk system in place, however many of these facilities do not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for public sidewalks. Overall the corridor does not meet "Complete Street" standards. Pedestrians are hindered from traveling within the corridor and crossing to businesses and residences due to the poor existing sidewalk conditions, the lack of designated crosswalks, the long pedestrian crossing caused by the wide roadway width on Federal Street, and because the sidewalk does not continue south on Lemnah Drive. Bicyclists also are not well accommodated on Catherine Street, Allen Street, and Lemnah Drive due to the

existing roadway width of 24' to 34'. The minimum standard for travel lanes, pedestrian, and bicycle accommodations is 35' without parking, 43' with parking on one side, and 51' with parking on both sides. In all cases, the existing roadway width does not meet these minimum standards, and safety and livability are hindered with the current configuration.

Intersections

The intersections south of the intersection of Lake Street at Federal/Catherine Street do not have enough roadway width for a tractor trailer (WB-50 or 64) to complete a turn or travel through the intersection without occupying some of the opposing lane. The Right-of-Way width on Catherine Street does not have adequate width to construct a sidewalk, a bicycle lane on both sides of the street, and two travel lanes. The majority of the existing pedestrian facilities do not meet the current ADAAG for public sidewalks and in some locations sidewalks do not exist at all.

The intersection geometry of Lake Street at Federal/Catherine Streets is not well-defined due to Federal Street and Catherine Street being offset, the excessive extra pavement, missing sidewalk sections, and driveways that are not distinct. These issues, during peak periods, cause congestion, delay, and conflicts between all modes of travel. The sight distance is obstructed by utility poles, buildings, and vehicles parked on the north side of Lake Street. Pedestrians have a long way to travel to progress from one side of the street to the other on the southerly side of Lake Street, due to the lack of pedestrian facilities.

The intersection of Allen Street, Catherine Street, Market Street, and Stebbins Street has excess pavement that is not well-defined due to existing geometry, driveways that are not distinct, and sight distance which is constrained by the geometry and an existing building location.

The intersection of the Interstate Access Road (St. Albans State Highway) and South Main Street (US Route 7) lacks pedestrian or bicycle accommodations. It resembles a highway on/off-ramp due to the roadway width and geometry and lacks appropriate traffic control relative to the amount of vehicular traffic traveling through this intersection.

Overall, none of the intersections along this corridor meet "Complete Streets" standards.

Bridge

The existing Lemnah Drive Bridge is posted for 12,000 pounds, which does not meet the current AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specification for HL-93 loading (25 Ton). This proposed loading would accommodate truck traffic (i.e. WB 64) on the bridge for those vehicles traveling through St. Albans to another

destination and those trucks stopping at commercial and industrial businesses, such as the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc. and New England Central Railroad. The existing roadway width across the bridge of approximately 29' will not accommodate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, which require a minimum width of 39' (2-12 travel lanes, 2 – 5' bicycle lanes and 1 – 5' sidewalk).

Lighting

The Federal Street corridor lacks consistent adequate street lighting. Like the roads, the street lighting has been developed in segments over time and there are gaps where adequate lighting levels are not currently achieved. Appropriate lighting levels are important for pedestrian and motorist safety and this would be based on the VTrans Roadway Light Policy (0.5 to 2.0 foot-candles) and the standards from the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

Drainage

Portions of the Federal Street corridor are very flat and reportedly experience periodic minor flooding.

Access Management

Many of the existing residential and commercial driveways within the project corridor lack clear definition or do not conform to current driveway design standards. This results in inefficient parking and unmanaged vehicle and pedestrian conflict points, and it detracts from the overall character, safety and efficiency of the corridor.

Parking

The existing on-street parking is relatively informal and uncontrolled within the corridor. A portion of Federal Street is close enough to Main Street and the City parking lots that it should be considered part of the overall downtown parking scheme.

Aesthetics and Community Character

This corridor contains a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses with a varied roadway width, non-standard sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, poor roadway and intersection geometry, lack of access control, and varied or missing streetscape amenities. The result is that the corridor does not have an attractive, consistent, livable identity that would attract people to it for either residential or commercial purposes.

The City of St. Albans completed a downtown master plan in September 2009, which describes their vision for the section of the City bordered by Main, Federal, Lake, and Kingman Streets. The plan describes how this core area should look and feel when it is completed, and any development and investment in public infrastructure should reflect the City's vision.

This Purpose and Need Statement was reviewed and approved by the City Council for the City of St. Albans, Vt this 22 day of November, 2011.

By: 
Martin Manahan, Mayor