TRANSPORTATION PROJECT GUIDE

BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION

FEBRUARY, 2023 EDITION

Before

After

BCRC

Orchard Village - Applegate Apartments Path, Bennington, VT. Constructed 2021

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More projects and project catagories to come throughout 2023.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

POWNAL – WILLIAMSTOWN BIKE PATH CONNECTION

Project Description & Purpose

The project is to create a safe and inviting bicycle and pedestrian connection to bridge a dangerous 4-mile gap between Pownal VT's low-stress road network and the Williamstown Bike Path in Williamstown, MA, 1.5 miles south of the Vermont/Massachusetts border. To take full advantage of a new facility's potential as an active transportation corridor and recreational amenity, it should comfortably accommodate many kinds of users – from pedestrians out for a stroll to commuters on e-bikes.

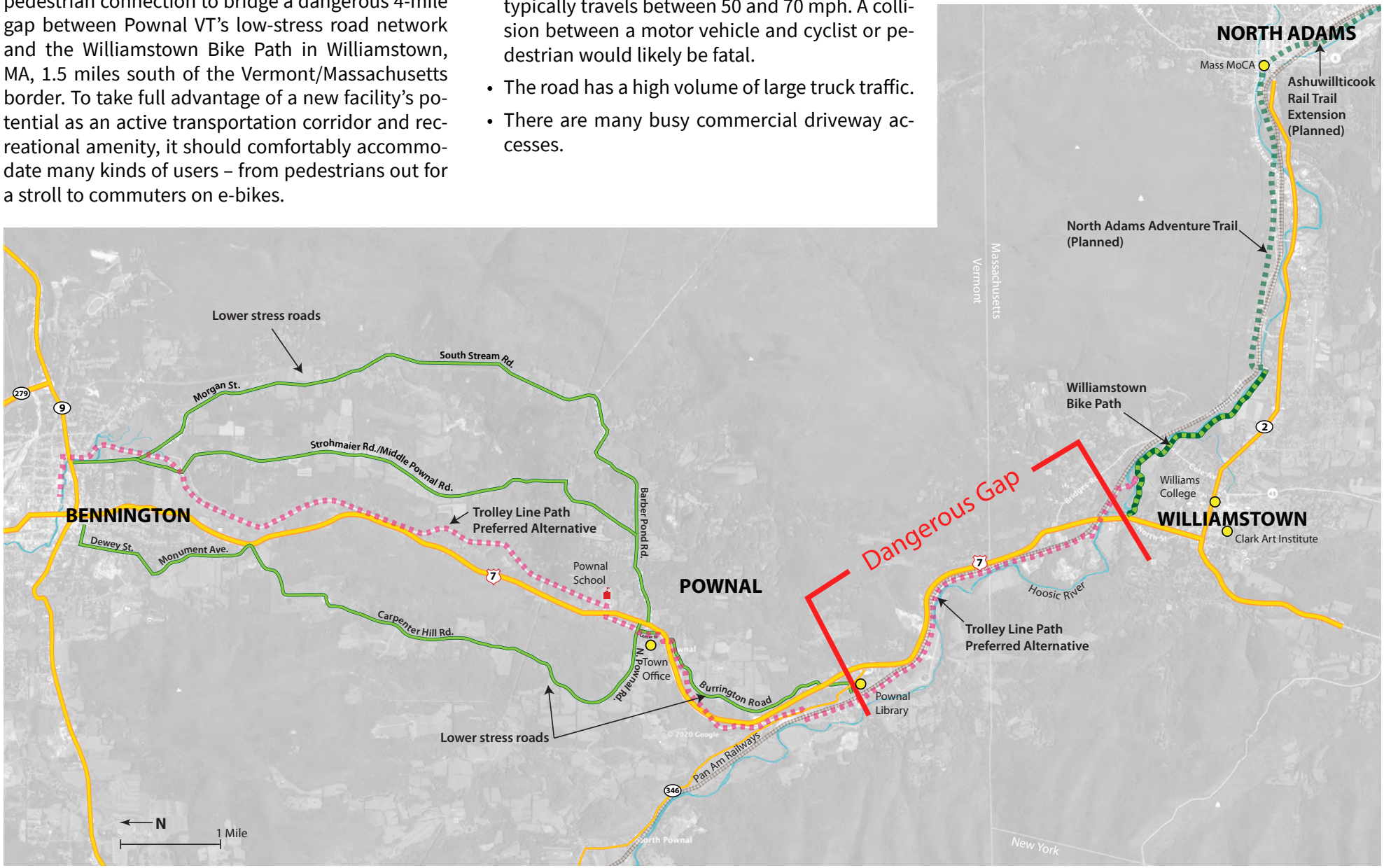
Project Need

There is no safe active transportation route for pedestrians and cyclists along the Route 7 corridor between Burrington Road in Pownal, VT and the Williamstown Bike Path in Williamstown, MA.

- Route 7 has a 50-mph speed limit, and traffic typically travels between 50 and 70 mph. A collision between a motor vehicle and cyclist or pedestrian would likely be fatal.
- The road has a high volume of large truck traffic.
- There are many busy commercial driveway accesses.

Project Benefits

- Bridges a dangerous gap between Bennington/Pownal, VT and Williamstown, MA.
- Creates a safe alternative transportation option along a major commuting corridor.



- Connects to the new Williamstown Bike Path, which will be extended to North Adams, MA and to a planned extension of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail to Pittsfield, MA.
- Encourages use of new efficient transportation technologies like e-bikes, which make longer and hillier bike commutes feasible.
- Promotes travel by healthy, low-carbon, low-cost transportation modes.
- Creates a valuable amenity for Vermont's tourist economy.
- Creates an equitable transportation facility not requiring car ownership or a driver's license to use.
- Completes several sections of the Trolley Line Path.

Project Status

- The project would complete sections 6-8 of the Trolley Line Path. A scoping study for the Trolley Line Path was completed in 2022.
- The Williamstown Bike Path was constructed in 2022.

Next Steps

- The next step for a physically separated bike/ped path is a detailed scoping study that focuses on the 4-mile project area described above. Ideally, the scoping study would be a collaboration between VTrans and MassDOT, because the project area straddles Vermont and Massachusetts.
- Low-cost, short term safety improvements such as shoulder rumble strips and access management should be implemented immediately, because it will take many years to design, permit, and construct a physically separated bike/ped facility.

To travel between Vermont's low stress road network and the Williamstown Bike Path, cyclists must travel on Route 7, which has a 50-mph speed limit, and traffic typically travels between 50 and 70 mph. A collision between a motor vehicle and cyclist or pedestrian would likely be fatal.

There are many busy commercial driveway accesses near on Route 7 near the Massachusetts/Vermont border.

The new Williamstown Bike Path constructed in 2022. A connection to the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail is planned.

There is no safe active transportation route for pedestrians and cyclists along the Route 7 corridor for 3.9 miles between Burrington Road in Pownal, VT and the Williamstown Bike Path in Williamstown, MA.

BENMONT AVE. – NORTH ST. CONNECTOR PATH

Project Description & Purpose

The project is to construct a 380-foot shared-use path to connect Benmont Avenue, the new Bennington Rail Trail, and North Street.

Project Need

The Bennington Rail Trail was constructed in 2022 along the abandoned rail corridor that runs north-south between Benmont Ave. and North St./Route 7, but the rail corridor is still a barrier between the residential/commercial neighborhoods on either side of it because there is no east-west bike/pedestrian route for 3,700 feet between County St. and Kocher Dr./VT7A.

Project Benefits

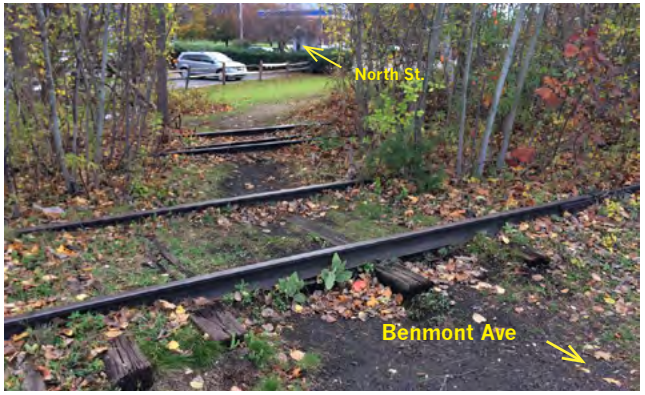
The connector path would connect Benmont Ave. and North St. creating a much-needed east west walking and bicycling route. It would link the Bennington Rail Trail to North Street and will make it much easier to walk or bike to the state office and court complex, the Vermont Veterans' Home, and the regional high school from the west.

Project Status

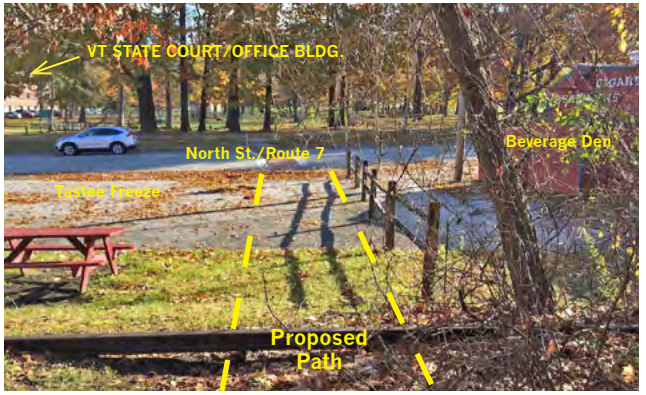
The project is recommended in a Bennington County Regional Commission report, the North Street Area Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Study. The Town of Bennington has an easement for the path between Benmont Ave. and the Rail Trail, and the Department of Public Works could construct that section immediately. The Town does not yet have an easement for a path between the Rail Trail and North St.

Next Steps

1. Construct path between Benmont Ave. and the Rail Trail
2. Get an easement and design and construct a path from the Rail Trail to North St.
3. Work with VTrans to evaluate moving the crosswalk across North St. to align with the new path.

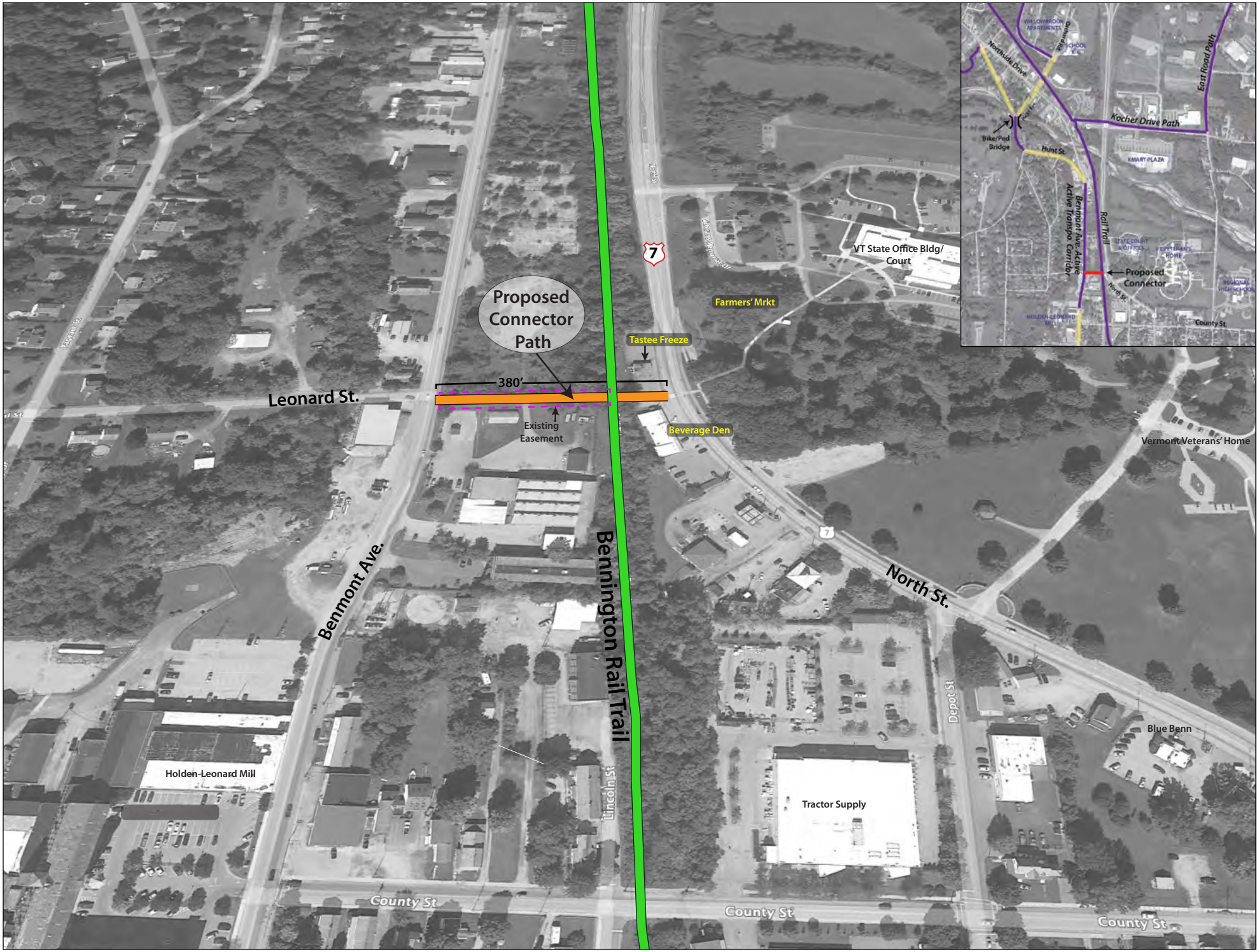


This worn "path of desire" between North St. and Benmont Ave. shows the need for a formal path.



The Tastee Freeze parking lot where the proposed path would connect to North St.

The newly constructed Bennington Rail Trail where the proposed connector path would intersect.


Proposed Connector Path
380'
Leonard St.
Existing Easement
Tastee Freeze
Beverage Den
Farmers' Mrkt
VT State Office Bldg/ Court
7
Benmont Ave.
Bennington Rail Trail
North St.
Vermont Veterans' Home
Holden-Leonard Mill
Lincoln St
Tractor Supply
Depot St
Blue Benn
County St
County St
County St
Northside Drive
East Road Path
Kocher Drive Path
Bike/Ped Bridge
Hunt St.
KMART PLAZA
Benmont Ave. Active Transpo. Corridor
Rail Trail
Proposed Connector
North St.
County St.

MANCHESTER – MANCHESTER VILLAGE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

Project Description & Purpose

The project's purpose is to create a safe, inviting cycling and walking route between Barnumville Rd. in Manchester and Prospect St. in Manchester Village.

Project Need

The project is needed due to the lack of safe and inviting infrastructure for cycling along the Main St./Route VT7A corridor. Despite the short distance between Manchester's village center and Manchester Village, few people choose to cycle for short trips due negative factors such as narrow or non-existent shoulders, high traffic volume (AADT 8,600 – 11,500), and sharp granite curbs. The corridor has several major destinations, including hotels, grocery stores, the Orvis flagship store, and several schools, including Burr & Burton Academy, making it an important route for transportation. However, the lack of safe infrastructure for cycling and walking leads many people to choose cars over bikes, and cyclists often resort to riding on the sidewalk, indicating a perception of danger while riding on the road.

A transportation survey of Manchester Village residents conducted in 2022 supports the need for the project.

- Only 3% of respondents said they feel "very safe and comfortable riding a bicycle on Route VT 7A."
- 77% of respondents said that Route 7A should be made safer for cyclists.
- Only 15% of survey respondents agreed that Manchester Village is a "very safe and comfortable place to ride a bicycle."

Main St./Route VT 7A has almost no shoulder and a sharp granite curb.

Project Benefits

The potential use of a safe and inviting cycling route along Main St./Route VT7A is high. Many trips are taken between Manchester and Manchester Village. A cyclist traveling at the moderate speed of 12 mph makes the 1.3-mile trip in 6.5 minutes. By creating a safe and inviting cycling route, the project can encourage more people to choose cycling as a mode of transportation, reducing traffic congestion, air pollution and promoting health and wellness. Walkways and cycleways physically separated from motor vehicle traffic will also increase pedestrian safety.

Project benefits include:

- Promotes travel by bicycle for short trips, a healthy, low-carbon, low-cost, and quiet transportation mode.

Many survey respondents said the sharp granite curbs on Main St./Route 7A. are a hazard to cyclists.

- Attracts tourists and visitors who are interested in cycling and outdoor activities. This could result in increased tourism and a boost to the local economy. A safe and appealing cycling route can also provide visitors with a new and unique way to explore Manchester and its attractions and enhance their overall experience.
- Provides an accessible mode of transportation that does not require car ownership or a driver's license.
- Enhances mobility for children.
- Reduces traffic congestion by promoting cycling to several schools, particularly for students of Burr & Burton Academy. Currently, few local students cycle to school. Each time a student bikes instead of being dropped off and picked up, four car trips through the village and the town are eliminated.
- Connects to key destinations such as the Orvis flagship store, Shaw's Supermarket, restaurants, and hotels.
- Creates a safe cycling route to Barnumville Rd. and Prospect St., two low speed, low traffic roads povpular with cyclists.
- Eases parking pressure during peak tourist season by replacing car trips with bikes. 12 parked bikes fit in one car parking space.

Project Status

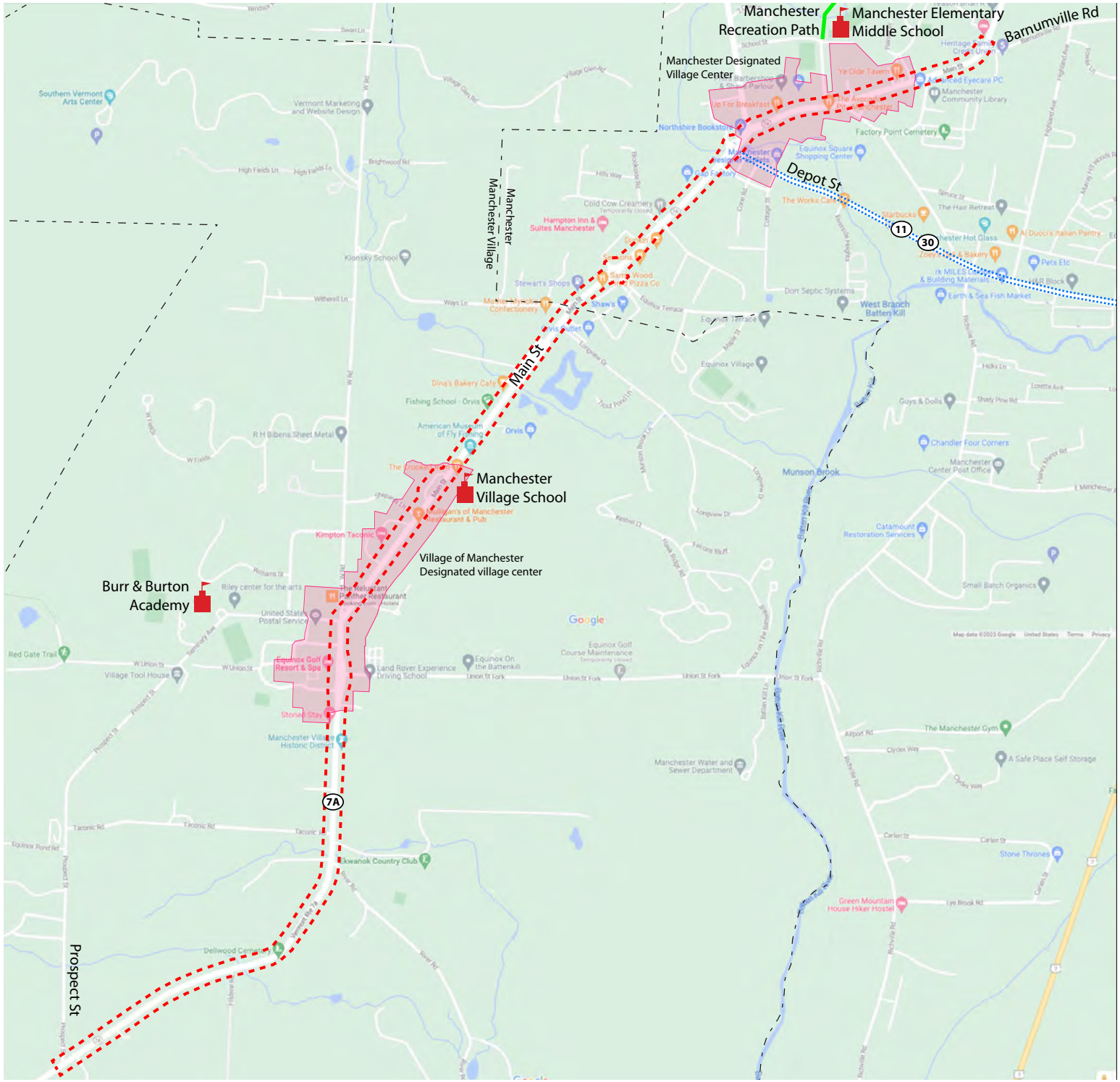
The project was identified in the Manchester Village Transportation & Land Use Study (2021). The scope and benefits of the project have been adopted by Manchester.

Next Steps

The next step is for Manchester and Manchester Village to conduct a joint scoping study to evaluate the project's feasibility and to identify a preferred design alternative. A scoping study is a prerequisite to apply for federal design/construction funds.

Many cyclists ride on the sidewalk on Main St., a sign they don't feel comfortable riding on the street.

Streets and roads in the Netherlands are designed to make cycling safe and inviting, and 28% of all trips there are made by bicycle. In the US less than 1% of trips are made by bicycle.



Manchester – Manchester Village Active Transportation Corridor

Project Area

Designated village center

Municipal boundary

Bike lanes

Shared-use path

0.5 Mile

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