Colchester VERMONT

MEMO From the Office of the Town Manager

To: Colchester Selectboard

From: Aaron Frank, Town Manager

cc: Norm Baldwin, Public Works Director

Date: April 14, 2025

Re: Update on Safety at the State of Vermont Highway U.S. Route 2 & Clay Point Road Intersection

Background: The purpose of this Memo is to provide an update on efforts to improve safety at the State of Vermont Highway U.S. Route 2 & Clay Point Road Intersection.

U.S. Route 2 and the intersection are owned and maintained by the Vermont State Department of Transportation (VTrans). The Town of Colchester cannot directly make changes to the intersection but can advocate for changes to be made here by the State through their transportation planning and programming processes. Over the past few years the Town has worked with VTrans and other entities to implement safety measures at this intersection.

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) has hired a consultant and begun a scoping study of the area. The study has a web page (https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/us-2-clay-point-road-intersection-scoping-study/) including notes and the presentation from the first meeting.

The remainder of this memo addresses A) Town Actions and Requests; B) Town Physical Changes; C) Next Steps; D) Town Request Chart; E) Site Photos; and F) Appendix including 1) Public input directly to the Town related to this topic; 2) Colchester Selectboard Information and Action Items regarding this subject; and 3) Colchester Selectboard Meeting Minutes regarding this subject.

A: Town Actions and Requests:

- **July 19, 2022:** The Colchester Selectboard sends a letter to VTrans requesting consideration of a speed limit reduction on Route 2. VTrans responds on September 20, 2022 noting:
    - Changes to speed limits are under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Traffic Committee,
    - They will perform a technical analysis to evaluate if a speed limit change is warranted and forward their recommendation to Vermont Traffic Committee,
    - They will perform a safety analysis of the corridor.
        - Initially, VTrans reports that their evaluation of the corridor did not reveal that any safety improvements or speed reductions were warranted.

- **October 25, 2022:** The Town meets with VTrans and the Vermont Traffic Committee and this results in the speed limit being lowered from 55 mph to 50 mph.
    - The Vermont Traffic Committee agrees to a speed reduction.

- The Town requests technical assistance from the CCRPC which receives state and federal funding for transportation planning and programming.
    - **October 16, 2023:** CCRPC responds with a Memo describing the history of the intersection and potential safety improvement options.

- **October 24, 2023:** The Colchester Selectboard sends a follow up letter to VTrans requesting consideration of further speed limit reductions and that the Town and VTrans collaborate to implement short- and medium-term safety improvements. These proposed safety improvements include:
    - Radar speed feedback guides
    - Dynamic warning signs
    - Extended edge-line and centerline rumble strips
    - Optical speed bars
    - Guard rail around jug handle islands

- **March 7, 2024:** VTrans formally responds to this request (10/24/23) and reiterates support for a scoping study with the Town and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC).

- **January 19, 2024:** The Town meets with VTrans and receives commitment to consider short- and medium-term safety improvements at the intersection. VTrans expresses support for a scoping study here to study long-term safety changes.

- **May 15, 2024:** Scoping study is approved, following a public hearing, as part of CCRPC's FY25 Unified Planning Work Program.

- **April 3, 2025:** CCRPC holds the first of two local public input meetings for the scoping study.

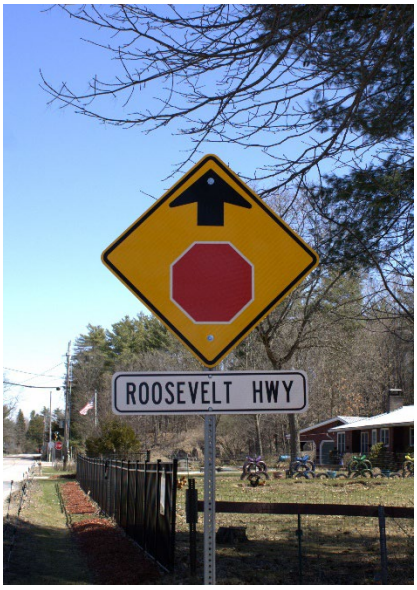
B) Town Physical Changes: During this time, the Town has continued advancing short-term safety improvement options on the Town Highways that fall under Town jurisdiction. The Town:

- Installed larger stop signs on all side streets approaching Route 2 with red solar powered flashing beacons.





- Installed advanced warning signs for the stop signs on the Clay Point Road Approaches.



- Proposed installing splitter islands on the Clay Point Road approaches – design is complete, waiting for approval and permitting from VTrans. Funding is included in the Town's FY25 Capital Budget program.

C) Next Steps: Scoping studies are how entities evaluate and consider potential changes to state highways. The State, via CCRPC, hires a consultant and studies options to achieve goals at a given location. The study is generally confined to options that are allowed on state highways according to strong federal guidance. The study will have additional public input near the end.

The Advisory Group, through their scoping process, will be recommending a preferred alternative. Once the Advisory Group has selected a preferred alternative, the Advisory Group will be seeking the endorsement from the Colchester Selectboard. Once an alternative is chosen, it can be requested for future planning, known as preliminary engineering, which is the first step in moving a project to construction. A final design would then be produced and, if needed, right of way acquisition would be obtained. After these steps are complete, construction of the selected alternative could begin.

All these steps would need to be included in multiple years of the CCRPC Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the State of Vermont Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). This process, realistically, could take ten years. Ongoing public and Selectboard support as well as Town Staff input and stewardship will be necessary to see changes come to fruition.

D) Town Request Chart:

What we have requested	From whom	Granted/Under Consideration/Denied	When
Speed Limit Reduction	VTrans/Vermont Traffic Committee	Granted	2022

Full safety review of US2/Clay Point Corridor	VTrans	Granted – VTrans said the evaluation did not reveal any safety improvements were warranted	2022
Secondary Speed Limit Reduction	VTrans	Denied – VTrans advised that the speed limit changes fall under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Traffic Committee – VTrans would *not* recommend any further speed limit changes to the committee	2023
What we have requested	**From whom**	**Granted/Under Consideration/Denied**	**When**
Radar Speed Feedback Signs	VTrans	Denied – Not allowed here	2023/2024
Dynamic Warning Signs	VTrans	Denied – Not effective here	2023/2024
Extended edge-line and centerline rumble strips	VTrans	Under Consideration – This request could be reviewed in further detail and possibly accommodated through the next VTrans paving project at this corridor	2023/2024
Optical speed bars	VTrans	Denied – Not an appropriate location	2023/2024
Guard rail around jug handle islands	VTrans	Denied – Not a standard application of guard rails	2023/2024
Splitter Islands on both Clay Point Road Approaches	VTrans/Town Project	Under Consideration – awaiting review and permitting from VTrans	2024
Scoping study with public input	CCRPC / VTrans Funded	Granted	2024

E) Site Photos:



Looking left from a Southbound approach on Clay Point Road



Looking right from a Southbound approach on Clay Point Road



Looking left from a Northbound approach on Clay Point Road



Looking right from a Northbound approach on Clay Point Road

F) Appendix:

1) Public input directly to the Town related to this topic:

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/220726_04b.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info220823_a5.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230822_a2.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a1.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a2.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a3.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a4.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a5.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a6.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/LCA230926_a7.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

2) Colchester Selectboard Information and Action Items regarding this subject:

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/220726_04b.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info220823_a4.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info220927_a2.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info220927_a3.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info221011_a3.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info221025_a2.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info221108_a2.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/231024_02.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/240213_04b.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/240625_05c.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/240910_06a.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info240924_d1.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

3) Colchester Selectboard Meeting Minutes regarding this subject:

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2022/jun28_22tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2022/jul26_22tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2022/oct11_22tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2023/jul25_23tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2023/aug22_23tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2023/sep26_23tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2023/oct10_23tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2023/oct24_23tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2024/feb13_24tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2024/jun25_24tc.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2024/sep10_24td.htm

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2024/sep24_24td.htm