

DRAFT RIP Comments and Response

FHWA			
Comment	Response/Action	Status	
1	Is there a way for a Story Map to have a Table of contents and numbered pages or other way of referencing certain sections?	Story Maps don't have a traditional table of contents but the navigation bar serves as a high level table of contents. There is no equivalent to numbered pages unfortunately. We've added a short intro to Story Maps to the beginning of the Plan to introduce the navigation bar.	Addressed – Navigation bar as TOC
2	Suggest the note on the non-federal share line b. be revised- "...Plan is incorporated (directly or by reference) into the state long-range transportation plan or metropolitan transportation plan.	Can do.	Addressed - Language has been updated
3	Long Range Activities. Suggest you clarify the reference to the 2108 LRTP. Should be the 2040 LRTP adopted in 2018. Same for the reference to the 2024 LRTP. The 2040 Plan will be updated in 2024. This would be consistent with the discussion in the Vermont Long Range Transportation Plan section. Also suggest that a statement be made that the RIP will be updated, at a minimum, when the LRTP plan is updated. That has typically been on a 5-year cycle.	Added the following language: <i>The LRTP is updated on a five-year cycle and going forward the RIP will receive substantial updates on the same five-year cycle. Annual updates to the RIP will include changes to the project lists to keep pace with the Capital Program and discretionary grant opportunities and may also include minor content changes. The FHWA will be notified of and consulted with on any and all updates.</i>	Addressed - Language has been updated
4	PROTECT funds are eligible for roads off the federal-aid system (local and rural minor collectors). Under the Prioritized List of Projects section, it indicates that the analysis was completed on all state-owned roads. How are roads not on the state system being addressed? We know the RPC's are using the TRPT to be able to assist the Towns.	The RIP analysis was done on the entire road network. The final draft of the RIP will include lists of all high flag locations that were identified including those not on the state system.	Addressed – List 1 includes locations on all public roads
5	Nice job on the identification and prioritization of projects for potential PROTECT funding. However, Resilience is only 1 of 8 criteria used in the VPSP2 process. Are there concerns about a high-risk resilience score not being enough to push a project ahead due to low scores in the other 7 criteria?	This is an ongoing conversation with Asset Management as VPSP2 continues to evolve. While the immediate focus is on harmonizing resilience efforts with the asset-driven projects in the Capital Program, we intend to establish a means of programming standalone resilience projects.	Ongoing – RIP implementation
6	In the section "Prioritized List of Projects", last paragraph, it states "... grant applications". Does this refer to BIL Discretionary grants and/or state grants such as a Municipal Mitigation?	The prioritized list is intended to inform resilience efforts in general, not only limited to PROTECT or other BIL programs. For example, to help select candidates for FEMA mitigation grant programs. The red text is added language intended to clarify this:	Addressed - Language has been updated

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		<i>These project lists represent potential candidates for investment of PROTECT formula funds or federal or state grant applications.</i>	
7	For each listed “Prioritized Project” suggest you add a column identifying the natural hazard/resiliency issue that is to be addressed.	The Identifying Hazards section has been updated to clarify that the only hazards addressed in this iteration of the RIP are inundation flooding and fluvial erosion.	Addressed - Language has been updated
8	In the “Reducing Repeat Damage Tool” the Table of Repeat Damaged sites was last updated 9/21. When will this Table be updated?	Previous Part 667 work has resulted in updated work flows that bring new DDIRs into the public database with internal communication about the appropriate time to update the repeat damage analysis. The Table of Repeat Damaged sites will then be updated and communicated as soon as reasonable but at a minimum with the next regular update of the Part 667 report in 2025.	Addressed – Periodic updates
9	The risk assessment was adequate in that it primarily focused on flooding as the primary factor in Vermont and acknowledged the changing climate, but wondering what data and methodology, if available, were used to account for future predicted storm events? It appears that a 2% past risk event was used. If you don’t have more refined modeling for future state that is ok but could clarify this. Consider expansion of risks discussed in the future, especially related to flooding including levee and dam failures and mudslides.	The TRPT is in part predictive since it incorporates river and road characteristics to assign vulnerability scores and does not only rely on past damages. The overall point about expanding the risk assessment to incorporate additional risks and more severe/frequent storms is well taken. This has come up as an area for further development in future updates and will be a focus of ongoing conversations with our stakeholders across state agencies.	Pending – To be included in future update
10	The first video of State St in Montpelier flooding would not load.	This is the first we’ve encountered this issue. We’ll continue to monitor to see if it keeps coming up. We’ve added a StoryMap guide explaining how to open media like this video in its original location. Hopefully that helps when these issues arise.	Ongoing – webpage/Plan maintenance
11	The project list spreadsheet was detailed but could benefit from a summarized version included directly in the story map that lists the project, location, and its priority level in addition to the spreadsheets that opens separately. Would suggest adding a header or title for each of the two spreadsheets.	Re headings: will do List one is now condensed to provide only this information however includes 876 locations so was not able to be included directly in the plan	Addressed – headings added
12	Suggest noting that that this plan focuses on transportation resiliency and to address why it does not include analysis of community infrastructure including buildings and housing, emergency management assets, and energy, water, and communication infrastructure. It appears that coordination with other State Agencies that are involved with community infrastructure beyond transportation is ongoing and would suggest looking for ways to acknowledge this more clearly in the plan.	Added the following language to the Identifying Hazards section: The State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) includes a thorough analysis of natural hazards that affect the state of Vermont across sectors. Whereas the focus of this RIP is on transportation assets, The SHMP hazard assessment considers impacts to community infrastructure more broadly including water and wastewater systems, electrical and communications systems, dams, housing, and essential services. Those interested in learning more are encouraged to explore the SHMP at the link below.	Addressed - Language has been updated

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		<p>Added the following language to the Long Range Activities section:</p> <p>The PROTECT program is still relatively new and the VTrans RIP will continue to be refined as national practices emerge. The project identification and prioritization methodology will be continuously refined as practices and guidance evolve, new tools and data become available, and resilience improvements are evaluated using the methods described above. For example, the methodology could even further highlight the opportunity to incorporate natural infrastructure into a project by factoring in the results of the Agency of Natural Resources Functioning Floodplain Initiative once those are available. Conversations have already begun with Vermont Emergency Management to more closely integrate VEM plans and projects that strive to mitigate a broad range of community infrastructure with the RIP. Over time, the RIP methodology will be expanded beyond existing capital projects and will be used to identify and program new projects where resilience is the primary impetus from the beginning.</p>	
13	Suggest future expansion of assessment of resilience improvement policies that may be more indirectly related to transportation, such as land-use and zoning changes, investments in natural infrastructure, or performance measures.	Can do. We will keep this in mind as we continue to collaborate with partners inside and outside the Agency with the aim to include more in upcoming RIP updates.	Pending – To be included in future update
14	Suggest expanding on how other modes (transit, bike/ped, etc) are included in the analysis, including the interdependency of users and assets/facilities, such as freight hubs or transit facilities. How were these modes weighted?	So far only fixed-route transit lines are included in the analysis, with vulnerable routes earning 1 of 8 possible points. We will explore opportunities to add modes and facilities such as rail and bicycle infrastructure and transit hubs in future updates.	Pending – To be included in future update
Executive Staff			
Comment		Response/Action	Status
1	Suggest working with VLCT on RIP/PROTECT outreach and guidance	Staff has begun meeting with regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs) and will be presenting on resilience topics including the RIP and TRPT at Municipal Day on October 20 th . We will coordinate with VLCT going forward as well.	Ongoing - Plan implementation
2	Did you incorporate/consult the hazard analysis from VEM’s Integrated Preparedness Plan	Not in this iteration of the RIP but will in future updates. Conversations are ongoing with VEM to incorporate projects from VEM plans into the project prioritization methodology – see below VEM comments.	Pending – To be included in future update
VTrans Design			
Comment		Response/Action	Status
1	It is not feasible or would include a substantial expansion of scope to add resilience elements to certain types of projects – such as signals projects.	Identified types of projects have been removed from the list.	Addressed – Lists have been updated

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2	Can stormwater projects be included in the project lists?	Stormwater was not included in the current version of the hazard analysis or project prioritization methodology. This will be revisited in a future update.	Pending – To be included in future update
3	It would be very difficult to alter the scope or funding for projects that are about to go out to bid.	Projects with bid and/or construction years of 2023 or 2024 have been removed from the list.	Addressed – Lists have been updated
VEM			
	Comment	Response/Action	Status
1	I'm happy to see the SHMP referenced! If you would like to reference the draft 2023 SHMP update, which will be finalized in November, it is available on our website: https://vem.vermont.gov/draft-2023-state-hazard-mitigation-plan	Thank you! I'll add a link and reference to the draft 2023 SHMP along with any other updates we make as a result of people's comments.	Addressed - Language has been updated
2	I'm curious why projects get flags/points only when in a DEC Tactical Basin Plan. Would there be value and interest in knowing if a project is within the planning or project area of a VEM project – either PA or hazard mitigation?	That's one area we want to expand on. I think we started with the DEC Tactical Basin Plans because the team was most familiar with those and they were relatively simple to incorporate into the mapping exercise. Both PA and hazard mitigation projects would be great to include wherever they have a transportation nexus. Happy to talk more about how we could make that happen.	Pending – To be included in future update
3	I'm new to the Reducing Repeat Damage Tool – this is less feedback on the RIP and more a comment that I'm going to be exploring the tool and may want to know more about how we can utilize it.	Glad to hear you'll find the Part 667 tool useful! It is a handy tool and we'll eventually be updating it to incorporate damages from the July flooding.	Pending – July damages to be included in future update
4	I'm trying to get a better understanding of the types of projects that will be prioritized through this tool, and the whole project development process. The story map states that: <i>"The initial version of the RIP focuses on harmonizing prioritized locations already in the VTrans Capital Program . The intent is to identify potential opportunities to integrate resilience into projects already initiated. Going forward, the methodology outlined below will also be used to inform programming of new projects through the Resilience Criteria of the VTrans Project Selection and Prioritization Process (VPSP2) ."</i> So if I'm understanding correctly, the projects prioritized (ie. Route 125 Middlebury – Hancock paving) are being identified for further analysis for resilience/hazard mitigation improvements rather than being the final project	You're understanding it correctly. Our team has identified these locations/projects as priorities, but now we're working to communicate that to relevant parties across the Agency to see if there are opportunities to incorporate resilience work (slope stabilizations, scour protection, drainage improvements, etc). We're also working to more formally insert resilience into the project development process so that when a project is proposed in one of these locations based on asset condition we can have the conversation about incorporating resilience components. The VPSP2 reference is part of that. We have these PROTECT formula funds that have to be used for resilience so this is how we're working to spend those and put them to a productive use. The reality is that some of these existing projects may be too far along for the scope to change to incorporate more resilience work than is already planned and something like an existing paving project may not present many opportunities to begin with. But it's worth "flagging" them either way.	Ongoing - Plan implementation

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	ultimately implemented? What will the next step for that project be?	When talking about new projects, we also have the opportunity to program projects solely for resilience – including nature-based solutions like floodplain restoration. That’s probably a little further down the line, but we do hope to use this Plan and prioritization method to identify opportunities for FEMA and FHWA PROTECT grant applications the next time they open up. That’s also where we would want to work with VEM!	
ACRPC			
	Comment	Response/Action	Status
1	We were intrigued that TriValley's "Snow Bowl Shuttle" route earned VT125 an additional "Flag" given that it's primarily a recreational route. It would seem that the needs for people in Hancock to get over to Porter Hospital would have been more urgent.	For consistency, we are including all mapped fixed route transit routes regardless of seasonality. Other seasonal routes are also included due to their importance for jobs access. Is the Hancock route an existing transit route or a planned route?	Pending – will be revisited in a future update
2	From a formatting perspective, it's hard to figure out the takeaway list or see the map with Structure and Road locations marked by Total Flags (you can miss it if you scroll past the first map at the beginning of "Project Identification Case Study" section of Project Prioritization)	Link to RIP analysis web tool added to first slide of case study and linked in the project lists narrative.	Addressed – Link added
3	The list of Project Priorities is challenging to read without the separate spreadsheet- and the spreadsheet lists the "Middlebury-Hancock" stretch of VT-125 multiple times- it might be reasonable to show the statewide map of priorities and flags again at the top of the Project Priorities section.	See above. In some cases, capital projects are listed multiple times because they span a large area and include multiple RIP locations. This is especially true for road projects such as “Middlebury-Hancock”. The final project lists have been updated to include unique IDs for each RIP location where possible (FAID or Structure ID) to better identify the location being listed.	Addressed – Project lists updated