



Highway 36

Veterans Memorial Highway

Association's Strategic Plan

February 11, 2011



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1. VMH36A Background

1.1 The Corridor

Highway 36 (designated Veterans Memorial Highway – VMH36A) is a north-south highway located in eastern Alberta, extending from the Town of Lac La Biche in the north to the Village of Warner in the south. It was given the name Veterans Memorial Highway in 2005 during the Province of Alberta's centennial, in honour of the province's military history, and for the contributions of Alberta's veterans.

The northernmost leg of Highway 36 begins 20 kilometers (kms) south of Lac La Biche, where it meets with Highway 55 to complete the route further north to Fort McMurray and Alberta's Oil Sands region, via Highway 63.

Highway 36 continues to stretch south through eastern Alberta, all the way down to Warner, where it meets with Highway 4 traveling southeast out of Lethbridge. From Warner, it is approximately 30 kms to Coutts at the US border.

The total length of Highway 36 is 626 kms (375 miles). [Click here](#) for a more detailed look at the entire route that Highway 36 follows through Alberta.

1.2 Membership

The following members contribute to and form part of the Association (sort by dues):

Regional Mun. of Wood Buffalo	88,131	County of Two Hills	2,801
City of Brooks	13,581	County of Smokey Lake	2,716
Lac La Biche County	9,123	County of Paintearth No. 18	2,126
Town of Taber	7,821	Town of Two Hills	1,232
County of Newell No. 4	7,101	Kikano Settlement	1,113
MD of Taber	6,714	Town of Viking	1,085
County of St. Paul	5,925	Town of Vauxhall	1,069
Saddle Lake First Nations	5,919	Town of Killam	1,019
Town of Vegreville	5,834	Village of Duchess	978
Beaver County	5,676	Fishing Lake Metis Settlement	952
Special Areas	4,729	Town of Castor	931
County of Warner No.5	5,776	Village of Warner	383
Flagstaff County	3,506	Village of Vilna	274
County of Minburn No. 27	3,319	Village of Alliance	197
Town of Hanna	2,847		



1.3 Board of Directors

The following is the composition of the current Board of Directors:

Chairperson: Jamieson, George, County of Minburn No. 27

Vice-Chairperson: Hansen, Arnold, Beaver County

Secretary-Treasurer: Yakielashek, Michael (non-voting)

Zone 1 Directors:

(Two 'Zone 1 Directors' positions are currently Open)

Zone 2 Directors:

Hansen, Arnold, Beaver County

Jamieson, George, County of Minburn No. 27

James, Bud, Town of Killam

Zone 3 Directors:

Yakemchuk, Elroy, County of Two Hills No. 21

Rajoo, Sonny, Town of Two Hills



2. Economic Development and Transportation

2.1 Vision Statement

The following is the Vision Statement representing the future aspirations of the Association:

“The Veterans Memorial Highway #36 Association is the catalyst facilitating a collaborative approach to the development of a viable international transportation route that enhances the economic opportunities for Eastern Alberta communities”

Supporting Principles:

We believe:

- Working together towards the common good of the Eastern Alberta geographic corridor.
- Retaining, sustaining and developing strong communities require continuous improvements to the economic diversity of the corridor.
- Engaging various partners and stakeholders in creating solutions to economic diversity and infrastructure development.
- Developing and maintaining international transportation infrastructure compliments economic diversity and is necessary to move products efficiently and safely in a north-south direction.

2.2 Mission Statement

The following Mission Statement reflects the purpose of the Association in order to accomplish the Vision:

“To advocate and promote the improvement and development of the Veterans Memorial Highway #36 as a local, regional and international transportation route, so as to maximize upon the resulting benefits to the eastern corridor communities”



3. Strategic Direction

3.1 Summary

These are the initial Strategic Priorities of VMH36A developed by member representatives and as agreed to by the Board of Directors:

Veterans Memorial Highway Association #36		
3.3 Governance	3.4 Advocacy	3.5. Infrastructure
3.3.1 Leadership & Organization	3.4.1 Communications & Marketing	3.5.1 Hwy #36 Needs Assessment
3.3.2 Assessment & Evaluation	3.4.2 Advocacy Representation	3.5.2 Hwy #36 Transportation Development Plan

The following is the implementation schedule related to the strategies:

#	Strategies	2011 (Q'tr)				2012 (Q'tr)				2013 (Q'tr)				2014 (Q'tr)				2015 (Q'tr)				
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
		Means Action Item																				
3.3 Governance																						
3.3.1 Leadership & Organization																						
1	Maintain efficient Governance model	█			█																	
2	Develop Action Steps	█																				
3	Maintain efficient Organizational Structure	█																				
4	Develop 3-Year Budget	█			█				█				█				█					█
5	Develop Board Policies		█																			→
3.3.2 Assessment & Evaluation																						
1	Annually assess results				█				█				█				█					█
2	Annually adjust Strategic Plan				█				█				█				█					█
3.4 Advocacy																						
3.4.1 Communications & Marketing																						
1	Develop Communications Plan	█																				
2	Improve Communications members	█																				
3	Utilize variety of media				█				█				█				█				█	
4	Increase messaging				█				█				█				█				█	
3.4.2 Advocacy Representation																						
1	Define specific contacts	█																				
2	Define clear messaging	█																				
3	Contact and make presentations		█																			→
3.5 Infrastructure																						
3.5.1 Hwy #36 Needs Assessment																						
1	Conduct research			█																		
2	Prioritize transportation needs				█																	
3.5.2 Hwy #36 Transportation Development Plan																						
1	Engage province to develop plan					█			█				█				█				█	
2	Facilitate development															█	█	█				
3	Advocate implementation of the Plan																			█		→



3.2 Desired Outcomes

The efforts and energy dedicated by VMH36A is expected to achieve long-term socio-economic sustainability within the Alberta eastern communities. To attain this environment, various infrastructure needs to be continually developed to support ongoing investment by stakeholders: provincial, community, business, industry, associations, etc.

VMH36A Vision is long term and provides a broad perspective of what can be achieved as an economic base using the Veterans Memorial Highway as an international transportation route. The following are some of the intended long-term outcomes:

1. An improved, efficient and safe north-south transportation link accommodating the movement of product and travelers between northern Alberta and southern USA.
2. An improved and efficient east-west transportation system that integrates with north-south routes.
3. Improved associated regional transportation services accommodating industrial and travelling public needs.
4. Support of Alberta government in the development of Alberta eastern communities.
5. Increased collaboration and socio-economic support of Alberta eastern communities for each to develop to maximum potential.
6. Increased and/or enhanced trade between Alberta and USA due to efficiencies in the movement of product.
7. Overall improved economic performance of Alberta eastern communities.

3.3 Governance

3.3.1 Leadership and Organization

Goal: To provide the leadership and organization to work towards meeting the Vision of the Association.			
Key Strategies (We will ...)	Success – Key Results (What do we want to achieve?)	Lead Role	Target Date
1. Maintain an efficient governance model that represents and carries out the needs of the membership.	a) Effective Board of Directors comprised of an executive and three zones with three directors each b) An efficient low-cost board, accountable to its members c) Annually update the Strategic Plan	a&b] Chair, Sec.Treas. c] Ex. Dir.	a&b] 1 st ¼ 2011; c] 4 th ¼ annually
2. Develop Action Steps to implement the Strategic Plan.	Board approved Work Plan	Ex. Dir, Board	1 st ¼ 2011
3. Maintain an efficient organizational structure accountable to the Board.	a) Part-time Executive Director b) Member EDO working group	Chair, Sec. Treas.	1 st ¼ 2011
4. Develop a three-year budget to reflect operations and implementation of the Strategic Plan.	a) Strategic Plan is supported by operations and needed funding b) three-year budget assists members understand funding needs	Sec.Treas.; Board	1 st ¼ 2011; annually
5. Develop Board policies that align with Vision and Mission.	a) Clarifies direction and how the organization will function and within what parameters.	Ex. Dir; Board	2 nd ¼ 2011

3.3.2 Assessment and Evaluation

Goal: To review and assess the organization and results achieved.			
Key Strategies (We will ...)	Success – Key Results (What do we want to achieve?)	Lead Role	Target Date
1. Annually assess and evaluate results achieved by VMH36A.	a) Strategies are monitored on a consistent basis b) Strategies achieved c) Stakeholder and member measured feedback provided	Board & Ex. Dir.	4 th ¼ Annually
2. Annually adjust the Strategic Plan to recognize accomplishments and refine future strategies.	a) Recognition and celebration of success b) Plans are updated and adjust to changing needs	Board & Ex. Dir.	4 th ¼ Annually



3.4 Advocacy

3.4.1 Communications and Marketing

Goal: To improve and enhance the Association’s profile internally and externally.			
Key Strategies (We will ...)	Success – Key Results (What do we want to achieve?)	Lead Role	Target Date
1. Develop a Communications Plan to guide the Association’s messaging internally and externally.	a] Identification of what is being marketed, to what targets, which stakeholders and when	Ex. Dir.	2nd ¼ 2011
2. Improve communications and education of members.	a] Compliments the Communication Plan b] Increased member awareness and advocacy of the Vision c] Possible increase membership diversity; e.g. industry, associations, etc.	Communica- tions Plan	2 nd ¼ 2011
3. Utilize various media to increase the profile and messaging of the Association.	a] Local and provincial media increased awareness and utilization b] Utilization of “social media” increases interaction and collaboration with stakeholders, government and public	Communica- tions Plan	4 th ¼ annual evaluation
4. Continually increase messaging that increases the profile of VMH#36 Brand.	a] Brand recognition on an international basis	Communica- tions Plan	4 th ¼ annual evaluation



3.4.2 Advocacy Representation

Goal: To annually pursue initiatives involving advocacy and public relations to improve and achieve the Vision and goals of the Association.			
Key Strategies (We will ...)	Success – Key Results (What do we want to achieve?)	Lead Role	Target Date
1. Define specific contacts that should be engaged in the discussions and decisions to enhance economic and transportation improvements.	A current list of key stakeholders: elected officials, municipal neighbours, industry, associations, international representatives	EDOs	2 nd ¼ 2011
2. Define clear messaging to be communicated with target stakeholders.	a] Consistent presentation of VMH36A objectives b] VMH36A have clear guidance on the messages to be communicated to others	EDOs; Communication Plan	2 nd ¼ 2011
3. Contact and make presentations on a continuous basis to the target stakeholders to advocate VMH36A objectives.	a] Engagement and collaboration with stakeholders to achieve and complete goals b] consistent alignment with Strategic Plan c] Decision makers are convinced to support and act upon VMH36A requests	To be allocated by protocol; e.g. Chair, Ex. Dir., EDOs, Board Members, etc.	3 rd ¼ start; annually

3.5 Infrastructure

3.5.1 Hwy #36 Needs Assessment

Goal: To identify highway improvements needed to complete an international transportation system.			
Key Strategies (We will ...)	Success – Key Results (What do we want to achieve?)	Lead Role	Target Date
1. Conduct research to determine the specific needs of the highway corridor.	a) Utilize existing studies and reports of government and all associations b) Poll and engage communities to identify hwy needs c) Comprehensive needs list; e.g. bridges, correction lines, traffic conflicts, safety issues, passing and multi-lanes, rest areas, highway services, etc.	EDOs	3 rd ¼ 2011
2. Prioritize the transportation needs based on the information gathered.	a) Create a draft list of needs by priority and geographic area b) Circulate draft list to communities for input and consensus building, ownership. c) Final priority list to be used in Advocacy Role	Ex. Dir., EDOs, Board Approval	4 th ¼ 2011

3.5.2 Hwy #36 Transportation Development Plan

Goal: To create a Hwy #36 transportation development plan.			
Key Strategies (We will ...)	Success – Key Results (What do we want to achieve?)	Lead Role	Target Date
1. Engage provincial government departments to develop a Transportation Plan based on the priorities needs list.	a) Alberta Transportation acts as Lead Role b) Collaboration of government departments addressing various scenarios; e.g. Economic & Tourism Development; Community Services; Agriculture; etc. c) Plan funding to complete	a) Advocacy Lead Roles b) Ex. Dir. & EDOs	a) start 1 st ¼ 2012 b) Ongoing c) Yrly Evaluation
2. Facilitate development of a Transportation Plan.	a) Stakeholders, members and province engaged in the process b) Plan completed	Board; Assigned Lead Roles	4 th ¼ 2014
3. Advocate implementation of the Transportation Plan recommendations.	a) Consistent implementation of recommendations	Advocacy Lead Roles	2019; 2024; 2029.



4. Appendices

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4.1 Planning Participants & Rating

First	Last	Organization	Position
Arnold	Hansen	Beaver County	Councillor
Kevin	Kisilevich	Beaver County	Community Development Officer
Barry	Morishita	City of Brooks	Councillor
George	Jamiesen	County of Minburn	Reeve; Chair VMHA
Lionel	Juss	County of Newell	Councillor
Molly	Douglass	County of Newell	Councillor
Lane	Johnson	County of Newell	Assistant CAO
Elroy	Yakemchuk	County of Two Hills	Councillor
Jennifer	Flossen	Flagstaff County	Economic Development Officer
Ben	Elfring	MD of Taber	Councillor
Dwight	Tollon	MD of Taber	Councillor
Larry	Davidson	Paintearth Ec Partner Society	Economic Development Officer
Herb	Cardinal	Saddle Lake First Nation	Public Works Manager
Mike	Bain	Town of Castor	Councillor
Garry	Devloo	Town of Castor	Mayor
Charles	Girard	Town of Hanna	Councillor
Norm	Storch	Special Areas	
Bud	James	Town of Kilam	Mayor
Diane	Gordon	Town of Killam	Councillor
Sonny	Rajoo	Town of Two Hills	Councillor
Roy	Ellingson	Town of Viking	Councillor
Peter	McArthur	Town of Viking	Councillor
Muriel	Fankhanel	Village of Alliance	Mayor
Mike	Yakielashek	VMH36A	Secretary-Treasurer
Dennis	Pommen	POMMEN Group	Facilitator

VMH36A 11.02.11 Workshop Evaluation	
Rating	n20
Would attend another workshop with this leader (s)	100%
Overall Workshop Rating	91%
Feedback Comments	
Location is good, great; good lunch; consider location South & North, perhaps 1 per year	
This is one of the best workshops I have been at	
Great start	
Great job Dennis; Good job! Very good;	
Very good - would be good to have a follow-up; develop operations plan	
Start later so people from further away have enough time to travel - 5:00 AM wake up	
Need to move forward and act with economic development focus	
I appreciated the printout of the session information gathered during the morning session	
Perhaps move some groups around, mixing participants	
Future session how to deal with the media; traffic evaluation - trucks/cars/holidays	



4.2 Environmental Scan (SWOT Analysis)

Strengths (current)	Opportunities (future)	Weaknesses (current)	Threats (future)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #36 is unique – this is a tall, wide & straight route • Existing infrastructure • There are other organizations to rely on similar work (Ports to Plains, Yellowhead Hwy Assoc., etc.) • Good member representation north-to-south • Diversity of the members • Shortest route USA border to Ft McMurray • Existing AT high load corridor • Governance model of 31 members - strong buy-in & organized • Winter weather pattern is better than Hwy #2 & open when #2 is closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden membership to community groups, FN, Hwy #41, trucking, tourism, etc. • Twin #36 due to fewer development constraints • Duplicate best practices of other organizations • Increase MLA awareness of #36 in general • Urban positive action • Safety issues • Develop & establish strategic stops – heavy loads, rest areas, services, etc. • Well run governance model & admin., unified voice, deliverables • 881 to become part of 36 – others become partners too • Brand development #36 • Challenge of communication large geographical area – USA connection too – use of video conferencing, social media • Blank sheet today – set direction without baggage • Communication, Marketing, Advocacy Plan • Alberta Provincial Election • #36 better grade – flat • Make #36 more convenient, shorter distance, bottlenecks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the Association • Lack of current infrastructure to carry heavy loads – bridges • Current Org – funds, member involvement, communication • Find the time to be the advocates for the Association • Provincial funding for the number of members involved • Communication – clear, pointed, target, message, overall; public lack of precise nature of our plan • Correction lines alignment to #36 • 2 lane Highway issues, safety, railways proximity to intersections, eliminate 90 degrees connections, etc. • Economic Development officers not involved yet • Unified voice for the corridor still to be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bypassing communities • Lack of Prov funds to #36 • Consensus & cooperation of stakeholder engagement, continuity • Divided loyalties of MLAs in the region • More traffic could be perceived as negative • Lack of awareness of importance of #36 • Between highway systems – pressure of diverting traffic, #41 corridor? Different types of traffic • Nothing gets done and group dies • Timeline – today vs. long-term