

## ASK THE EXPERT

### OnRoute Supervisor: Revolutionizing Transit Supervision



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*Product Manager for the  
Vontas OnRoute Supervisor*

Transit supervisors are always most effective when they are out in the field, ensuring safety and on-time performance. But being out and about often results in a disconnect with real-time information — data that could make the supervisor’s performance much more effective. What if your supervisors could have the latest information regarding incidents, accidents, service disruptions, and vehicle locations right at their fingertips?

Automation and technology have improved virtually every aspect of public transportation, providing tools that help supervisors manage real-time information flow. **Roger Lewis**, product manager for Vontas’ OnRoute Supervisor, offers his expert insights as to why an investment in this solution can save time, improve accident and incident response, increase safety, and enhance the passenger experience.

#### What is Vontas OnRoute Supervisor?

**A:** Supervisors are mobile. They require tools and software solutions that are also mobile. Vontas OnRoute Supervisor is a state-of-the-art, web-based application that tracks vehicle movement and incidents to support

transit personnel while in the field. It brings the power of dispatch to supervisors via smartphones and tablets, all without limiting the supervisor to their service vehicle or desk.

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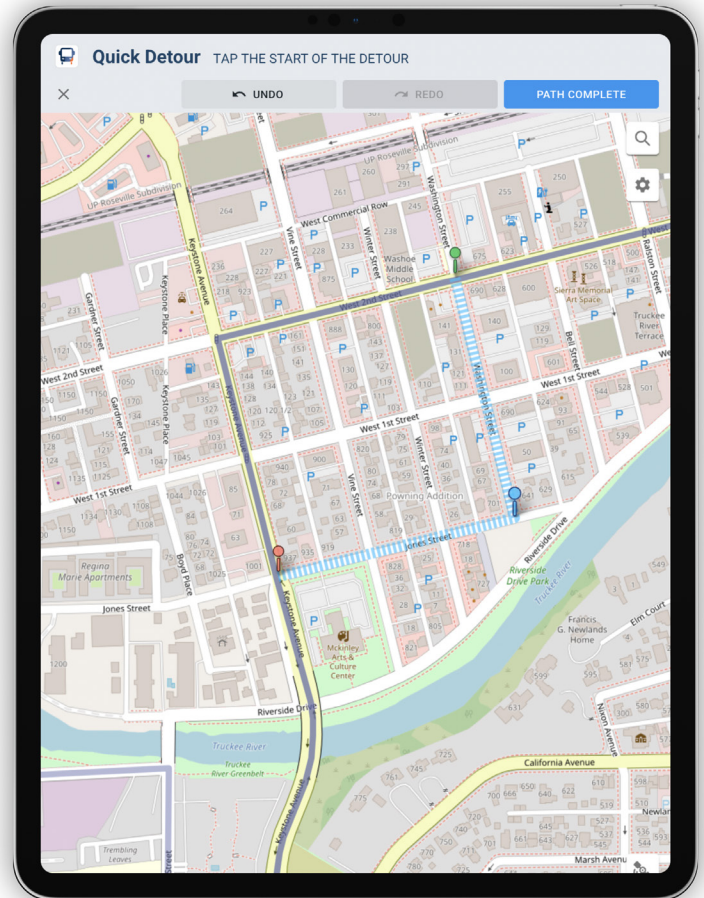
## What pain points does OnRoute Supervisor relieve?

**A:** The most important feature is that it eliminates or reduces traditional paper-and-pen methods that are more likely to include human error and require more time to disseminate information to the transit team. But there are several other features that address other day-to-day challenges for transit supervisors and managers:

- **Mapping Views:** The solution includes mobile-friendly live maps, which enable agency personnel to know exactly where fixed-route, supervisor, or other service vehicles are located in the field.
- **Incident Reporting:** With this supervisor software, reporting for incidents and accidents is more accurate and expedient, and it makes real-time data available to the whole transit team. The supervisors can record photos and videos right inside the tool, and the reporting also generates more standard incident reports, facilitating their review by management.
- **Service Disruptions:** Supervisors can not only view service disruptions; they can also create detours directly from a phone or tablet. Detour paths can be defined by simply pointing and clicking on the map, or even by driving the detour to record a new re-route in real time. This innovative feature elevates efficiency while ensuring that fixed-route vehicles can easily follow the newly created path.
- **Vehicle Updates:** Supervisor's software puts vehicle updates in the palm of your hand. The transit supervisor can see vehicle locations, OTP statistics, passenger counts, and pull-out performance, to name a few.
- **Real-Time Dashboards:** Gain instant insights into your agency's performance with up-to-the-minute metrics on overall OTP, route-specific OTP, pull-outs, service disruptions, and incident types.

## What technology is required to support the solution?

**A:** OnRoute Supervisor requires technology that most transit agencies probably already utilize. It requires



standard cellular networks and off-the-shelf smartphones and/or tablets. So, the learning curve is isolated to understanding the software itself.

The investment in new hardware is typically minimal, and because we have designed Supervisor following a standard software as a service (SaaS) model, a cost estimate to add the new tool is easily developed.

## Speaking of software, what features make OnRoute Supervisor user-friendly?

**A:** First off, we followed standard Google material design to ensure that this new mobile tool would feel intuitive to the user and work effectively on the vast majority of existing devices. We also took great care to make sure that it didn't become bloated with features that supervisors will most likely not need in the field.

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### Are there any barriers to implementation?

**A:** The most significant barrier we have experienced so far is that some field personnel feel like the technology has a “big brother” type impact because it allows for greater tracking of the supervisors in the field. But like so many other transit automation technologies over the years — such as on-vehicle camera systems and mobile data terminals — the transit employees quickly come to rely on the tools to assist them in performing their responsibilities more efficiently and to improve their own safety and security.

### Does OnRoute Supervisor have a positive impact on operational safety?

**A:** Its most important safety feature is that it empowers field personnel to make better, quicker, more effective decisions in the field and share critical operational information in real time. It fundamentally speeds up decision-making and allows supervisors to focus on their primary responsibility to ensure the safety and on-time performance of the transit service.

Another innovative feature is that the field personnel can utilize the CAD/AVL-based software to create service detours. They can record a route in real time to generate a detour for the operators and dispatchers to follow.

### How does it improve the passenger experience?

**A:** I think the best way to relay the positive passenger impacts is by way of a personal observation I made while on-site with our customer. I was doing some product discovery while shadowing one of their supervisors in the field. Unfortunately, this supervisor did not have our OnRoute Supervisor tool on their mobile device. The supervisor was approached by a passenger at a transfer center who had some questions about a service disruption. The supervisor was empty-handed, having no way to immediately call up the latest information for the passenger, and received no response when appealing to the dispatch team in the office. The passenger got frustrated and turned away quite angrily.

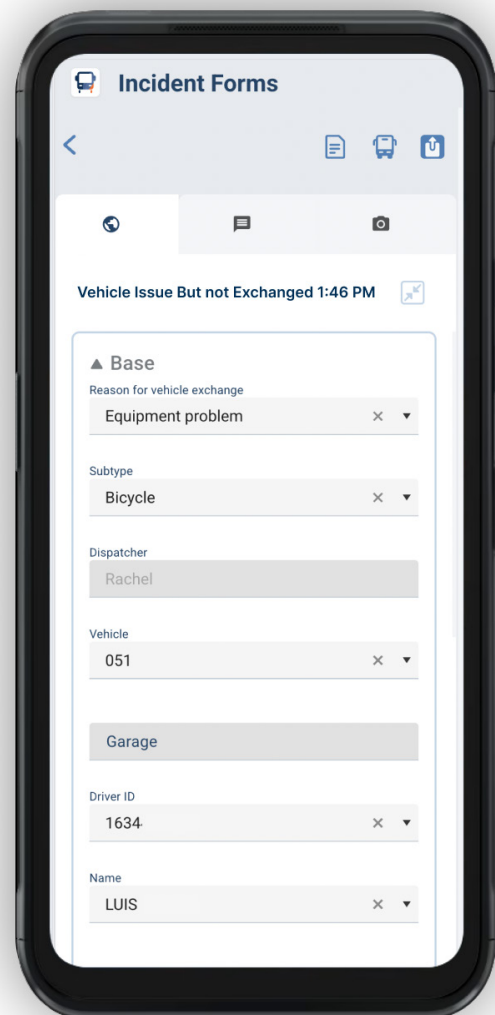
With our tool, the supervisor would have been able to pull up a set of data points that would have helped the

passenger or, at the very least, shown the passenger that the supervisor did all they could do to inform.

Of course, in the big picture, when supervisors have more time and information to effectively supervise safety and on-time performance, the passenger will ultimately experience fewer disruptions to service.

### How does an interested transit manager get more information?

**A:** Getting started with OnRoute Supervisor is as easy as using the tool itself. With just a few clicks, you can gather all the background information on our [website](#) or reach out directly to a Vontas account manager.



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