

Notes

Public Information Meeting
East Montpelier Village Safety Enhancement Project
9-19-2016

Attendees:

Kevin Russell, Community Development Services, Local Project Manager
Brian Breslend, DuBois & King
Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

East Montpelier Selectboard:

Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, Gene Troia, Kim Swasey, Carl Etnier
Members of the public – see attached sign in sheet

The project team introduced themselves and gave a visual presentation on the history of the project.

Study Reports:

Two studies were identified as the basis for the project being born, the 2001 *Village Study Report* and the 2012 *Village Safety Enhancement Scoping Study Report*. Kevin read the important findings that defined the purpose and need for the project (pgs. 5 and 2 respectively).

Village Committee:

As an outcome of the studies, the Town created the Village Committee to act as an advisory committee to the Selectboard and applied for funding to the Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Program to design and build a preferred alternative pedestrian facility as defined in scoping study report.

Project Development:

Upon receipt of the award from VTrans, in 2014 the Town hired Kevin Russell, Community Development Services to represent the Town as Local Project Manager. The Town then hired DuBois & King to design the facility and develop construction plans. Both consulting services were procured through a qualification based process with the participation and recommendation by the Village Committee.

The project is being developed under the guidance of the VTrans Municipal Assistance Bureau through a three-phase process necessary when using State and Federal funding: Phase A-Project Definition, Phase B-Final Design and ROW, and Phase C-Construction. Rachel Beauregard, MAB Project Supervisor provides valuable support to the project team.

Project Design:

Phase A of the project was completed on November 5, 2015 with the acceptance by VTrans of the Conceptual Engineering Plans and environmental documentation. During the period, the project team addressed several issues related to the design:

- Route 2 right of way determination – State has determined 3 rods though ample evidence exists for 4
- Alignment of the sidewalk – west side with crosswalk to east side
- Access management – number of curb cuts, sizes, locations
- Drainage impacts – improvements to drainage system including new cross-road culvert
- Utility impacts – no pole relocations, minor narrowing of sidewalk at one pole
- Coordination with Bridge 68 project – bridge project is picking up a significant section of the new sidewalk on the west side, major construction in 2018
- Property owner concerns – project team met with each property owner to address concerns

The preliminary engineering plans were colorized and presented to the public to highlight the 5' wide concrete sidewalk, marked crosswalks, granite curbing, and drainage improvements.

ROW:

The project will require the use of private land during the period of construction. Therefore, there will be temporary easements on all affected parcels as well as two minor permanent easements for the sidewalk. The Town hired a consulting attorney, David Rugh, Stitzel Page and Fletcher, Burlington, to assist with the ROW acquisitions. Once VTrans approves the draft plans and easement documents, the Town can establish values to and begin negotiating for easements. The valuations to determine just compensation will be done by an approved Waiver Valuation process using Town assessed values as a basis rather than formal appraisals.

Next Steps:

- VTrans approves draft ROW plans and easement documents
- Town and VTrans concur on value of easements
- Town negotiates for easements and certifies the ROW
- VTrans issues a State Highway Access Permit
- VTrans concurs with Town's certification and issues a ROW Clearance
- Enter Phase C - Construction

Schedule:

- Complete ROW process – February 2017
- Final Plans, Specifications and Estimate (PS&E) – March 2017
- Advertise for construction bids – April 2017
- Begin construction – June 2017
- Significant completion of construction – August 2017
- Close out project – October 2017

Culvert:

The project includes installing a cross-culvert at Watson/Roland and Hudson. D&K conducted a hydraulic study of the existing box culvert and due to the additional water that the project will convey to it, its current under capacity to carry the existing water, and the height of the invert, it is the consensus of VTrans and the project team that the culvert needs replacement. The culvert will be included with sidewalk construction project. However, the Town and project

team is negotiating the cost share of the culvert with VTrans to pay only its 10% share of the portion of the culvert that will be under the sidewalk.

Waterline:

Residents on the east side expressed concern for the private waterline that serves their homes. The waterline was not depicted on the engineering plans, however D&K has the information that was provided to them by the waterline owner. Members of the Board also expressed concern if the sidewalk was over the waterline and repairs are needed to the line in the future. The new drainage pipes on the east will be at a similar depth to the waterline. Brian will meet with property owners to confirm the location of the lines. The project team will investigate steps necessary to avoid conflicts with the waterline and to explore methods to minimize any disturbance to it during construction such as vibration from soil compacting, etc.

Utility Pole Impacts:

Can the utilities poles on the east side be relocated or placed underground? The project team determined that the sidewalk can be built alongside the roadway without relocating any poles. One pole in particular restricts the area so that the sidewalk will be narrowed to 4' wide for a short distance. To move that particular pole would require moving several along the line on that side to be relocated out of the right-of-way and closer to the homes. The expense of relocating the poles would be borne by the utility but the easement for the pole would be at the cost of the project. Relocating underground was not considered due to budget reasons.

Curb Cuts:

Mr. Lamb expressed concern for the possible loss of his second curb cut. VTrans specialists have commented that the curb cut should be closed, the project team has recommended closing the access to the Selectboard and the plans that VTrans has approved shows the access closed. The project team explained that each parcel on a State Route is legally entitled to one access. The curb cut in question does not meet current standards for access and arguably compromises the safety of the pedestrian and motorist. Mr. Lamb explained that the curb cut provides a safe and efficient access for large trucks that provide heating fuel to his residence and occasional use a by large RV. His concern was for the unsafe condition of having these vehicles stop on Route 2 and back into the main access. He also stated that the curb cut has existed since the early 1900s. The Town has worked to resolve Mr. Lamb's curb cut issue by communicating directly with the VTrans specialist Nathan Covey. Mr. Lamb has met with Nathan. The issue currently remains unresolved.

Screening:

Mr. Lamb also expressed concern for the impact that project will cause to his landscaping along the front of the property. He is concerned about the loss of screening and buffer from the busy road the current landscaping provides his home. The project team will be working with Mr. Lamb and other residents on the east side on a landscaping plan that will replace and install landscaping features that will improve the buffer and screening.

Crosswalks:

Will the crosswalks include pavement markings and signs? The Town has submitted plans for marked crosswalks and will provide a memo to VTrans seeking a warrant for including the markings in the initial construction for the Route 2 crosswalk. The project team is confident that the State Route crosswalk will meet the warrants for a village mid-block crosswalk under the 2015 *VTrans Guidelines for Pedestrian Treatments* and can be marked accordingly from the beginning. At the meeting, the LPM stated that the Town has purview over the Quaker Road crosswalk. However, this is in the State's ROW and is part of the Route 14 intersection project. Who will maintain the crosswalks in the future? The State will maintain the Route 2 crosswalk and the Town will likely maintain the Quaker Road crosswalk.

Maintenance:

Who will do the winter maintenance of the sidewalk? To the best of its ability, the Town will maintain the sidewalk. The Town can utilize the staff or seek a private contractor to plow the sidewalk. Coordinating with VTrans maintenance may provide some opportunity for the state and or Town to use the plow wing or other equipment to remove large volumes of snow during occasional events.

Kevin Russell, LPM 9-20-16