



Burlington-Winooski Public Meeting

Summary of the Public Forum Portion of the Meeting

January 23, 2024

The following is a summary of the public forum that occurred at the January 23, 2024, public meeting, held at the Winooski School District, along with the answers that were provided. Meeting attendees were both present in the meeting room and on-line. The audio recording was not entirely clear, and therefore portions of this narrative have been edited for clarity.

Commenter 1 Question / Comment: Have you been discussing a roundabout for the intersection portion of the project? Additionally, I would recommend having bike lanes separate from the pedestrian paths, especially as travel lanes on the bridge are proposed to be widened potentially causing increased vehicle travel speeds.

Answer (Josh Olund - HNTB): The roundabout alternative for the intersection was considered during the project scoping process, however it is no longer being considered as it was found to be too impactful to the surrounding area based on the size and available space. The project team has decided to go with a four-way intersection.

Regarding separated bike paths, we are planning for 12-foot shared-use paths on both sides of the bridge. We are still investigating approaches to improve bike and pedestrian safety, while also taking into consideration how it may change the way the bridge operates. We will be going out to the bridge to get some bike and pedestrian counts to better improve our awareness of where they are coming from and going to. This will help us make informed decisions going forward and is why we have not changed anything in that regard.

Commenter 2 Question / Comment: I think that there are a lot of people here that are more interested in why we aren't looking more into separated bike lanes. Why are we putting bikes and pedestrians in the same spaces instead of reallocating space for separate bike lanes? In the pictures you provided, you can see a bike lane physically separated from car traffic, with a separate pedestrian sidewalk. Can you talk about why you are not considering that?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We have talked about protected bike lanes as a project team and in this situation it's very difficult to perform maintenance. It's one thing to get a snowplow through a shared-use path trying to navigate the different features, it's a whole different situation trying to maintain safety with separated bike lanes during these times. We have been talking a lot as a team about what protected bike lanes may look like and it does not seem like it will be a feasible option moving forward.

Commenter 2 Continued: There are specific plows for sidewalks, correct?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We would need to have multiple plow trucks in the area at one time, with snow being pushed from the sidewalk into the bike lane and vice versa. This could affect the

Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance, among other things. It would be difficult to maintain these areas through snow conditions.

Commenter 2 Continued: So, you are not considering separated bike paths at this time?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): We are not, at this point, entertaining the idea of a barrier to separate of bikes and pedestrians.

Commenter 2 Continued: We have heard from a lot of people making comments that they would like bikes and pedestrians separated, and it is frustrating that you are not considering it.

Commenter 3 Question / Comment: It was interesting to see the different alternatives for bridge alignment and all of the possibilities, however it seems that there may also be different costs associated with some of the alternatives as opposed to the straight alignment.

I was also biking recently outside of New York City, and they had a shared use path with bike lanes with striping, so it wasn't separated, but was very safe and people moved through it well. I haven't seen any discussion of having that set up on this bridge within the paths. Additionally, I believe that 12 feet should be the absolute minimum for shared use paths and since this bridge is being designed to last for 100 years, is there any merit of adding say five additional feet to either side of the bridge to accommodate this?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): I appreciate that feedback on the use of striping to control bike and pedestrian movements. We are looking into the required reallocation of space, and we are considering that still to be able to make that informed decision.

Commenter 4 Question / Comment: I'm concerned about the increased lane width as it's going to increase the speed of the passing cars, specifically going from Burlington into Winooski and may make it dangerous for people trying to cross the street at that intersection. Additionally, you have not really heard our demands on reducing lane widths and the separation of bikes and pedestrians, which were widely accepted and preferred at the last public meeting. Thank you.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): Thank you for your feedback and understood. I mentioned early on that we are considering restriping lanes back to existing conditions. Part of what we are looking at is if you start to curve lanes, cars need additional room, which is why we have not settled in on an exact lane width depending on the alignments. It is still being considered.

Commenter 5 Question / Comment: I have commuted over this bridge from Burlington where I live to Colchester High School for about 40 years, usually on a bicycle from August to November. It is really important that we get the design of this bridge right, and I believe that requires having a separated dedicated pedestrian and bicycle lanes. Too often in transportation planning, the emphasis is put on more vehicles and traffic flow, so the short stick is given to bicycles and pedestrians. I think you should try to avoid that pitfall with this project, thank you.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): I appreciate the comments and want to reassure the audience that we are concerned with the safety of bikes and pedestrians.

Commenter 6 Question / Comment: I thought your whole team was receptive at the last public meeting at the O'Brien Community Center. I walked away feeling really positive about the unanimous feedback

you received from the community, and I was really looking forward to the changes that you were going to make in the design.

This meeting has been disappointing, it almost seems disrespectful that you would entertain our comments and then waste our time by not incorporating the comments you received about how the bridge should operate for the next 50 to 100 years. It seems like your time since the last meeting has been spent trying to come up with justifications and arguments as to why you can justify the existing design.

What I would like to see is separated bike lanes. We know that E-bikes are becoming more popular, which will alleviate a lot of the traffic across the bridge as people begin to switch their modes of transportation. We also know that E-bikes go much faster than normal bikes and they need to be separated from pedestrians. I'm at a loss, frankly, for why separate bike lanes are not being considered.

Regarding speeds, it seems that right now the 10-foot lane widths seemingly work with snowplows. I thought it was an interesting point that you brought up about how adding 1–2-foot shoulder on either side would help with snow removal as it would provide additional space for the snow. The existing lane and shoulder widths seem to work okay as is and works to slow people down while driving across the bridge during the time of year its most important for people to drive slowly. The speed limit is currently 25 miles per hour and people already drive too fast, so there is no justification in my mind why lane widths should be increased to 11 feet.

If you are going to continue to design the bridge to have four travel lanes, I urge you to consider making one of the lanes a dedicated bus lane. I also respectfully requested that your team spend a few days going over the bridge on a bike and on foot. Did anyone from the team do that and at what time of day?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): The team has spent time traveling across the bridge, however not multiple days' worth of time, and could not recall the exact time of day.

Commenter 6 Continued: Lastly, I would like for you to consider a protected intersection for cyclists. This intersection is very dangerous, specifically turning into/from Barrett Street. Bike protection should also be extended along Colchester Avenue. Physical infrastructure is needed to separate bikes from cars and pedestrians, paint is not enough. Again, I urge you to consider separated bike and pedestrian traffic on both side of the bridge.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB) Thank you for the comments and feedback.

Commenter 7 Question / Comment: The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) did a scoping study six years ago (pre-pandemic) and it is now a different world. This study presented four alternatives to the advisory committee that were all essentially the same design of a four-lane bridge with 11-foot lanes and multi-use paths. That doesn't seem like much of a choice.

I read the entire scoping study. You did traffic modeling on both a four lane and three lane bridge, and your models have a level of service (LOS) failure for a three-lane bridge by 2040, as well as a LOS failure for a four-lane bridge by 2040. I am concerned that no traffic model that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) or the CCRPC are going to produce will indicate the need for three lanes.

Additionally, the Global Warming Solutions Act has been passed in the time since the scoping study was done. VTrans has a decarbonation strategy in place that includes a reduction in vehicle miles travelled. If



we are building a 100-year bridge, I feel like a lane reduction is not an invaluable use of time for the bridge design.

The fact is that by the time you started public engagement, the project and the design have already been defined. So, all the feedback we are giving you doesn't matter since the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant already defines the project design and VTrans is moving forward with it. I can't really say I understand why we are here, when a lot of the feedback that we are giving you is not up for debate. These issues are materially important to the community, and it doesn't seem like a lot of features the community wants to see incorporated into the design, like separated bike lanes, are included in the scope of the project.

You ask us all to think about this bridge every day, and I do because I cannot stop thinking about it. We have the highest traffic deaths amongst any nation in the world. It does not seem like we can build anything that works, and it's unfortunate to see so many people be injured and killed. I can't stop thinking that one of these days a car will hit me on the bridge, and I will die. I don't want that to happen. Thank you.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 8 Question / Comment: I live close to the bridge, and often walk along the bridge with my grandson. I keep hearing comments from people saying, "everyone wants this" or "everyone in the community feels this way" and I think we need to be careful about these blanket statements. Not everyone in the community is here or watching online tonight, and there are a lot of viewpoints that are not being represented. Thank you.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 9 Question / Comment: Johns Hopkins Study suggests 9- and 10-foot lane widths as a standard for safety. The project team has been adamant about maintaining 11-foot lane widths, despite the evidence that this will increase speeds. The claim has been made that this is to protect busses, and yet Green Mountain Transit (GMT) says they have had 2 sideswipe encounters that have damaged mirrors in the last 12 months, 1 of which occurred on Shelburne Road, and the other which had no location tied to it. What is the reason the project team feels that 11-foot lane width is necessary? If keeping the bridge lanes 10.5 feet wide with a 1.5-foot-wide shoulder allows for separated bike ped infrastructure, why are we keeping implementing 11 feet. JHU called out VTrans as the first state agency to allow a 9-foot standard and yet VTrans has not created one road to this standard. Why?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): There are a lot of factors that go into deciding lane width, from road classification, vehicle speeds, traffic volumes, and truck volumes. These are all factored in when deciding what width, a lane should be and where it should be. In this case, the road classification, and road speed, as well as traffic counts, went into deciding what lane width would be standard. We are still considering this at a high level when looking at the alignment options of the bridge, which may be factored into finalizing the lane widths. Additionally, we have been in

communication with GMT to understand their concerns regarding lane widths, and the mirror damage was just a part of their anecdotal evidence for suggesting lane widths.

Commenter 10 Question / Comment: I have probably an unfavorable suggestion, which is that cyclists get off their bikes and walk them when crossing the bridge, as it is not a very long distance and won't add much time to people's commutes. Additionally in the future, there may be flexibility to turn a travel lane into a bike lane.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): I want to touch on that point. The existing bridge was originally a trolley bridge, and as traffic patterns changed, the design was altered. If travel patterns evolve in the future, then that could be a possibility.

Commenter 11 Question / Comment: This is such a long-term project, and we are in an ever-changing world, with many behavioral changes between generations. Have you looked into what projected behavior changes may be, specifically if more people begin to ride their bike over this bridge? Do you take projected changes into account when planning? Many people may decide they want to start biking across the bridge if they feel that it becomes safer. Additionally, how come it seems that the project scope does not extend into the circulator into Winooski?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): The CCRPC is currently performing a study to look at the circulator and potential improvements for safety, however that is not in the scope of this project. The project team has been discussing potential solutions for future behavioral changes in the way people cross the bridge. As previously mentioned, there may be an opportunity in the future to reallocate the space of a travel lane for other modes of travel. That is one of the reasons we will be getting cameras out to the bridge to collect accurate bike and pedestrian counts and to see where they are coming from and going to.

Commenter 11 Continued: It's really hard to predict how people's behaviors may change, but it is easy to predict that we will have increased climate change and climate policy, which will most likely see an increase in bicycle usage.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 12 Question / Comment: I'm curious what happens to all of these comments?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): All the comments that we receive whether they be from a public meeting, stakeholder meeting, or online are all discussed with the entire project team. We are collaborating with not only VTrans but the cities' as well as we work on their behalf. All the comments that we receive are considered.

Commenter 12 Continued: What came of the comments that were presented at the first public meeting?

Answer Cont. (Josh Olund – HNTB): We discussed getting additional traffic counts on the bridge, specifically for bikes and pedestrians. We discussed the physical separation of bikes and pedestrians and the associated maintenance, and the desire or undesired to move forward with that. We have discussed lane striping and the transitions needed from the bridge to the intersection and circulator. As we move forward in the decision making its important to think



about all the competing questions and comments we get from the different parties that use the bridge.

Commenter 12 Continued: As a frequent biker, I just have to say that I am tired of bike protection being paint on the ground, we need physical separation.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 13 Question / Comment: In your drawings of the intersection, it looks like you get rid of a strip of green space that protects the sidewalk. Is there any way that we can preserve some of the green space that protects from car traffic in this area?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): I don't believe we are proposing to remove that green space, we did not fully colorize our graphic so it may seem a little misleading.

Commenter 13 Continued: Are there any stakeholders or anyone on the project team that would be receptive to taking a walk on the bridge with members of the community to make observations and identify some of the major issues?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): That is absolutely something we can consider. We have been in talks with the Burlington Bike / Walk council and Local Motion, and I'm sure we could collaborate on something like you describe.

Commenter 14 Question / Comment: It is frustrating that despite the VTrans mission listed on the website, "Through excellent customer service, provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner", that the plan for this long-lasting future bridge does not address climate change solutions such as less fossil fuel consumption or the safety issues brought up in previous outreach meetings. I strongly encourage that if it is to remain a 4-lane project, the lanes should be 10.5' or less, especially if VTrans is actually interested in safety. Additionally, what are the environmental commitments you are planning for (as written in Future Schedule slide)?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): It is not specifically a goal of the project to reduce fossil fuel usage, and we are essentially replicating existing conditions in that regard. The environmental commitments you are referring to is mostly referring to the environmental permitting that needs to be completed to meet the environmental regulations for this project to move forward.

Commenter 15 Question / Comment: I am a bike commuter, and I cross the bridge on bike almost daily. I am very disappointed like many that there will not be dedicated protected bike lanes on the bridge and would like to note that it does add extra time to get off and walk it across the bridge, especially when commuting to work. I am also very concerned in the environmental impacts, and in particular regarding climate change. Burlington's Walk / Bike Plan specifically calls out eliminating traffic related bike and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries by 2026. Did the project team look into this plan at all when these alternatives were being discussed?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We have definitely taken a look at these reports, however I cannot say with certainty that they were taken into account when alternatives were being discussed back in 2018.

Commenter 15 Continued: Burlington's Bike / Walk Plan also mentions reducing single occupancy vehicle loads by 37% by 2026. Continuing to have four lanes of traffic across this bridge is not going to assist in doing that. It does not make sense that this will be reduced to three or even two lanes of vehicular traffic. The Burlington Climate Action Plan also states they would like to reduce community wide vehicle miles traveled by 10 % by 2025. We have had historic flooding this year, and once again we are thinking of this bridge in terms of cars and not people. I urge you to think more about climate change and people using other modes of travel during this project.

If all of the public comments you have gotten since September are in favor of reducing lanes and adding protected bike lanes, but that is not being incorporated into the design, then I am confused what all of us are doing here. Thank you.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 16 Question / Comment: Who specifically is saying no to the separated bike lanes? It seems that it has come up in discussions since the last public meeting, and I know you represent the views of those on the project team. I would like to apply pressure to those making the decisions that are not aligned with the majority of us in the community providing the feedback.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We take all the comments we receive back to the project's Technical Advisory Committee, which includes many of the people here tonight in the front row. It really is a consensus discussion, it's not just one person putting their foot down.

Answer Continued (Laura Wheelock - City of Burlington Public Works): We are partners with the City of Winooski, we currently maintain the existing bridge and own it 50/50 with the City of Winooski. I am going to bring up an example of separated bike and pedestrian lanes that you may be familiar with, South Union Street. It is a one-way street with parking on one side and a one-way bike lane that used to be a painted barrier but is now physically protected with bollards. This was not successful; we could not maintain the bike lane and keep it clear of snow with the sidewalk plow tractors.

This is a mechanical challenge as it relates to snow clearing. As we strive to protect the bike and pedestrian spaces on this structure, there is fear that snow will be pushed into vehicle travel lanes. Similarly, as we have been good at pushing snow, but not clearing snow out of these bike and pedestrian spaces. We want this to be a year-round successful facility. We have had many meetings as a design team to discuss this specific issue. We are struggling with finding a way to clear snow for pedestrians without throwing snow into a bike lane, it is hard to clear a bike path that is vertically, or barrier separated from pedestrians. It is not something we have solved in four months; it is not something we have solved in five years since we protected the bike lanes on South Union Street. This is not a four-month problem, unfortunately.

Commenter 17 Question / Comment: We are talking about the snow removal as though it is a year-round issue, and nowadays we only really receive around three months of snow. Are we really not going to have protected bike lanes throughout the year because of potentially three months of snow clearing?

Answer (Laura Wheelock - City of Burlington Public Works): Many of you have asked why you are sitting here tonight. The answer is so that we can have this discussion. Keep in mind we are proposing to have 12 feet on either side of the bridge, and additional space would cost the cities' 5% of that. We would have to take that money from the entire tax base.

You may not be happy with some of our answers tonight, however you are still providing us with valuable pieces of information.

Commenter 18 Question / Comment: Hypothetically, if you were to significantly alter the design of the bridge, would you need to reapply for RAISE Grant funding? If you were to change the design would this require a new scoping study and repeat the entire process of 2017? The purpose and need essentially wouldn't change if you just changed the bridge design.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): The purpose and need statement is a very prescriptive statement designated by environmental commitments in the National Environmental Policy Act (or NEPA) process. The purpose and need statement was agreed upon for both scoping studies. I do not know specifically the exact words of the purpose and need statement at the moment, so I'm unsure if significantly altering the bridge would still meet this statement.

Commenter 18 Continued: Hypothetically, if you were to try and reapply for the 2024 cycle of RAISE Grants which close at the end of February and said we have changed the design based on multiple public engagement meetings in the past year, do you know if they would say no or go ahead?

Answer (Carolyn Cota - VTrans): The original purpose was of applying for the grant was to find additional funds to allow this project to move forward. The project is \$60-\$70 million dollars, and the grant is for \$24.8 million. Missing the obligation date, altering the design significantly from what was stated in the application, or reapplying would jeopardize this funding and prevent this project from advancing.

Commenter 18 Continued: Don't we want less traffic through downtown Winooski?

Answer Continued (Carolyn Cota - VTrans): Maybe we do want less traffic in downtown Winooski, I don't live in Winooski, maybe more traffic is what we want. However, you want slower traffic, you want less traffic but the only way you can do that is if everyone is on a bike, which is not feasible as there are commuters that come from different regions.

[Note: A few members of the public then mentioned the potential to add more buses and carpooling options. These comments were not made from the podium but from the seated audience.]

I am going to end this discussion. The fact is in Vermont, busses do not serve all the population, especially in rural areas. We will continue to take more questions. We are hearing you, that is all I wanted to say.

Commenter 19 Question / Comment: I wanted to note that the John Hopkins Study that was mentioned earlier regarding lane widths was released in November 2023, so it is a relatively new study. Additionally, obtaining new walk and bike counts on the bridge over the next few months may be inaccurate, as walk

and bike activity decreases significantly in the winter months. These bike and pedestrian counts would also not reflect the peak usage of the bridge if the proposed multi-use paths are implemented.

I think that we can assume that bike and pedestrian travelers will increase over the next decade with the current transportation and climate policies and plans in place. We have often discussed how this is a critical throughway for cars, but it is also a critical access point for accessing Winooski and Essex Junction from Burlington (and vice versa). This is a regional artery for all bike and pedestrian traffic, and I do not believe this aspect is being taken seriously. Keep in mind, if we build it people will come, and even if we don't build it, people will still come.

From my understanding, the \$24 million from the RAISE Grant is for the bridge portion of the project, with the additional 20% of funding coming from the state and the two cities, and the intersection portion will use federal funds, is that correct?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): Yes, the intersection project is a separate bundle of money and is 100% federally funded. That is representative as part of the total \$68 million project as we try to talk about it as one project. The RAISE Grant is a portion of the federal funding that will help out obtaining additional federal funding for this project, but you are correct that at the end of the day it will be a 80% federal, 10% state, and 10% municipal split (5% for Burlington and 5% for Winooski) for the bridge. The funding we have committed from the RAISE Grant also allows us to have the money in place to move this project forward in the state capital improvement program.

Commenter 19 Continued: The traffic study for this project was done in 2017, and used data that was mostly collected in 2015 as well as 2017. It then uses the data from that time period to predict traffic modeling in 2025 and 2040. As far as I am concerned, it feels like that is a completely different world in terms of how we live today both in regard to driver behaviors and how people move around, but also in respect to climate change. Much of the active bike legislation at both the city and state level were not even drafted yet at the time the study was completed. My question is, do you know if these models take some of these factors into account?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): Based on some recent traffic counts, we have seen traffic rebounds to similar if not greater levels than the time the study was performed. We are still looking into reconfirming some of this data before moving forward, and we do have some fresh traffic counts from 2023 that we will use in our current modeling.

Commenter 19 Continued: ...The traffic models are showing a Level of Service failure in 2040 in the scoping study, and this may not be taking into account potentially 10,000-20,000 more residents moving to this area over the next 10-20 years. How is this being predicted and how will changes in housing locations and lesser commuters affect this analysis?

It is difficult whenever we have these holistic problems, and it seems like there is an unwillingness to collaborate. I certainly don't want to stop this project from happening, because we do need a new bridge. However, we shouldn't half fix the problem as that would just be a waste of money. There are people that would like to work with you on this, please reach out to us and take this seriously. I believe there are ways to be innovative so that we can solve everybody's needs.

Commenter 20 Question / Comment: Neither bikes nor pedestrians want to share a lane together. As I see it now, it's going from an existing four-lane bridge to a new four-lane bridge with some new sidewalks. I do not see this affecting the community in a positive manner in the long term. I am wondering if you are willing to temporarily close one lane in each direction to then see the traffic counts and impacts under those conditions.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): I like the creativity regarding the “trial period” that you mentioned, and it is certainly something that we can discuss further as a team.

Commenter 20 Continued: I also would just like to note that Montreal is known for their great bike infrastructure, but as soon as it snows during the winter it can be pretty terrible. I still believe that having good bike infrastructure for nine months out of the year would be worthwhile, even if we are unable to clear them from snow in the winter. Thank you.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 21 Question / Comment: My takeaway is that there may be in hindsight a simple solution that can be identified if we think creatively to solve some of these issues.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 22 Question / Comment: If it's acceptable to close two lanes of traffic for 16-20 weeks during the construction phase, why has it not been factored into consideration as a legitimate construction alternative? The one lane per direction analysis model appears to only be a short-term view. Would people's behaviors naturally not change over time, decreasing car traffic over the bridge and vehicles miles traveled in general?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We have some slides in our presentation that show the impacts to traffic in the area if we were to close the bridge down to two lanes which show a lot of red and a lot of intersections not operating well. These maps also already consider some detour traffic signal adjustments that would be made in order to help traffic move around the area during construction. These impacts could hurt the response times for emergency vehicles among other factors. Those lane closures and detours are only a short-term solution, which were identified during a risk-based assessment, and would have further impacts long-term.

Commenter 23 Question / Comment: I am a Winooski resident that works in Burlington, and I have had a lot of close calls when biking and walking on the bridge. I want to speak as a resident of Winooski who loves this city very much, and I think that having a place for pedestrians to walk and having spaces for bikers to ride is important for our city.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Josh Olund – HNTB asks the audience if anyone has feedback regarding the different bridge alignments.

Commenter 24 Question / Comment: As someone who used to enjoy driving fast, when I see the curved alignment, I think it may encourage people who like to speed and actually drive faster than a straight alignment. What methods were used to determine the curvature of the curved alignment?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): There are a lot of site constraints on both sides of the bridge, including rights of way, historic properties, and environmental resources. These constraints almost give us a natural curvature of the bridge. There are some slight modifications that could be made to a curved alignment if it were to be moved forward, this is conceptual at this point.

Commenter 24 Continued: Is there any consideration for a way we can build a bridge that enforces a 25 mile per hour speed limit?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): I cannot immediately think of any off the top of my head. However, with this type of curvature we would see what we call normal crowns where areas of the bridge will pitch away from the center. This would help to deter fast driving behavior naturally.

Commenter 24 Continued: I would encourage that if the curved alignment was to be moved forward, you think of ways to ensure that it would not have the opposite affect and make it more fun to drive on. Additionally, is there a chance that before or during construction we could survey the bridge to see how the traffic adjusts in the area if only a lane or two was kept open? If we reduced the number of lanes, maybe people's behaviors would change, and we could leverage that and almost force a modal shift.

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): If what your suggesting similar to the "trial period" that someone mentioned a few minutes ago, I cannot say that it is something that is currently planned, but we can continue to have discussions on.

Commenter 25 Question / Comment: Regarding the alignment, make sure that the bridge is aligned with Main Street as it is now. If it were to be unaligned it may preclude the future ability to make the Winooski downtown a grid system.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 26 Question / Comment: What if Winooski voters do not pass the bond this spring? What would happen then?

Answer (Jon Rauscher – City of Winooski): This will be on the bond vote for this fiscal year. If the bond does not pass, we would look to try again potentially with some revisions. If we ended up not having the financing, we would need to talk to VTrans on what we do with this bridge. We have an agreement with VTrans that dictates the city is responsible for funding our portion of the bridge, and we are looking to potentially add some language in the agreement that discusses what happens if a bond vote fails.

Commenter 27 Question / Comment: Did you do any studies to look at how the different alignments would change the flow of the river?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We will undergo a full hydraulic study that looks at river flows and all of the bridge implications on sediments and other factors. The current bridge has two piers in

the water, the proposed bridge will only have a single pier for either alignment. This will actually restrict the flow of water less than it currently does, which is an improvement over the existing conditions.

Commenter 27: How do we know if that is truly an improvement?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): We go through some in-depth analyses with our environmental engineers and then we match up that data with existing flood insurance mapping to get a baseline condition. We then incorporate our proposed changes into this modeling to see what effects it would have on flow and velocities. We use this data for our decision-making process as well as our environmental permitting process.

Commenter 27 Continued: Is there any way that we would be able to restore some of the floodplain?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): All of this will be considered and analyzed as we continue to develop the project.

Commenter 28 Question / Comment: Can you describe some of the advantages there would be for the different alignments?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): The straight alignment would have a shorter detour time but would be a riskier process with the accelerated construction. The curved alignment may have some increased detour times but could also have some natural traffic calming effects. Overall, they are different construction methods with different traffic implications. There may be some cost difference, however we are still analyzing this.

Commenter 28 Continued: Can you speak more on the rationale for why we need two-way bike traffic on either side of the bridge?

Answer Continued (Josh Olund – HNTB): That is a consideration. I know we have discussed new bike and pedestrian counts which will help us in our understanding how the bridge is used throughout different seasons. We will look into predictive modeling on how using different sides of the bridge would affect travel patterns. Right now, we are mainly focused on separating the shared use paths rather than deciding which side of the bridge the bikes will use, but we will continue to look into this.

Commenter 29 Question / Comment: Did you look at the impact to traffic on East Spring Street during detours? It's a common cut-through to avoid the rotary when traveling from Main Street or Malletts Bay Avenue to I-89 or Essex Junction and should be looked at.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): That is an area of interest that we will continue to focus on more as we evaluate the different detours.

Commenter 30 Question / Comment: Based on the historic status of the bridge, are there limitations on adding width to the bridge to support separated and protected bike and pedestrian lanes? This width potentially could be supported by supports under the lanes and attached to the main support structure under the bridge.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): In the context of the historical nature of the bridge, there are no requirements for how the bridge is proportioned.

Commenter 31 Question / Comment: As we are in probably the densest area of Vermont, I believe that this project deserves as much innovation as possible.

Josh Olund – HNTB acknowledged the individuals' comments and thanked them for their feedback.

Commenter 32 Question / Comment: We are curious if the Travel Survey is offered in multiple languages or with translation options? And what the outreach effort is to the diverse community of Winooski.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): The survey is currently not being offered in additional languages, however, all our resources on the project website are offered in various languages. We have an equity dashboard that looks at where additional outreach may be needed and where we can focus some of our public outreach efforts so that we can reach as many people as possible.

Commenter 33 Question / Comment: Should there be a distinct committee that talks about bicycle and pedestrian concerns? It seems like there are many people that have multiple questions and concerns.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We have been in discussion with the Burlington Walk / Bike Council as well as Local Motion so that we can discuss some of these concerns. However, that is something that we can consider as well.

Commenter 34 Question / Comment: I often walk the bridge. Sharing a path with bicycles is dangerous for walkers. Especially if more E-bikes come. What about one side for pedestrians only. You can share the other side. I would be willing to go out of my way to cross the street (at a signaled crosswalk, of course) to be on a pedestrian only path.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): That is something that we have discussed. The biggest challenge of that would be trying to regulate and enforce people to cross in multiple locations.

Commenter 35 Question / Comment: Will traffic lights be provided at Mill Street in Burlington?

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): Right now, the plan is to not use any traffic lights on Mill Street, it will turn into a stop condition. That is the plan we have been moving with so far.

Commenter 36 Question / Comment: I just want to mention again that having good bike infrastructure for nine months out of the year would be worthwhile, even if we are unable to clear them from snow in the winter. Thank you.

Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): We can certainly go back and discuss that further, however there would definitely be ADA and other considerations that would affect the winter maintenance.

Commenter 37 Question / Comment: If the bridge shifted alignment and kept two lanes of vehicle traffic open during construction, how much space would be dedicated to bikes and pedestrians? How does this compare to the space given to bikes and pedestrians with the unshifted alignment? I'm talking specifically about these conditions during construction.



Answer (Josh Olund – HNTB): Both alternatives would have the same amount of shared-use space during construction and would be equivalent in that factor.

At this point in the meeting, there were no further questions or comments from meeting attendees. Josh Olund, HNTB Project Manager, then stated that if something comes to mind after the meeting, individuals can always submit comments and/or questions on the project website:

<https://burlingtonwinooskibridge.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/>