BURLINGTON WINOOSKI BRIDGE

Summary of Public Meeting Held on January 23, 2024

The following is a summary of the public meeting held on January 23, 2024, at the Winooski School District Performing Arts Center, regarding the following projects:

Burlington-Winooski Bridge BF RAIZ(2): This project includes the replacement of bridge #150 carrying Routes 2 and 7 (Riverside Avenue in Burlington and Main Street in Winooski) over the Winooski River.

Burlington STP 5000(29): The project includes improvements to the intersections of Riverside Avenue/Colchester Avenue/Barrett Steet and Colchester Avenue/Mill Street.

The purpose of this public meeting was to provide a project overview and a summary of information collected since the previous public meeting (held on September 19, 2023) as well as review of the potential bicycle and pedestrian safety measures, potential bridge alignments, and potential traffic control methods.

Project Overview

The Burlington-Winooski Bridge is located between Burlington and Winooski, carrying US Routes 2 and 7 over the Winooski River. This project involves replacing the existing bridge with a new bridge that will better serve the multi-modal community. This project also includes redesigning the abutting intersection on the Burlington side of the bridge. The intersection consisting of Riverside Avenue, Colchester Avenue, Barrett Street, and Mill Street will be redesigned to improve safety and mobility with an emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Project Schedule

This project started back in 2017 with the Project Definition Phase, including the development of the Purpose and Need Statement and an alternatives evaluation that included the feasibility of reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes on the bridge. The traffic modeling completed as part of the Scoping Study concluded that in order to support the current and projected traffic volume the bridge needed to remain as four vehicle lanes. Other factors that influenced this decision include: the bridge is along a designated truck route, emergency access needs to be available in both directions over the bridge, the bridge serves as an emergency crossing if Interstate 89 or Lime Kiln is closed, and keeping four vehicle lanes allows for flexibility for future use or reconfiguration. The Project Definition Phase concluded in 2019 with a Scoping Report that summarized evaluations and identified a recommended alternative to advance – at this point, the project was “Defined”. In 2022 the project was awarded the Federal RAISE grant which allowed the project to move forward. Now in 2024, the project is progressing the design phase with construction scheduled to start in 2027.

Continued Public Outreach and Travel Survey

The project team is committed to continued public engagement as the project progresses. Public outreach has been accomplished thus far by receiving and responding to public comments, hosting public information meetings, attending community events and local government meetings, and

collaborating with key stakeholders. The project website is regularly updated with new information as it is available.

Additionally, the project team has distributed an internet-based Travel Survey to better understand how people are using the bridge. The intent of the survey is to receive feedback on the comfort level of the public regarding lane and sidewalk widths, transportation modes, and the frequency of bridge usage. The public was encouraged to take the survey prior to January 31, 2024, when the survey would close.

Potential Bridge Alignments

Three different bridge alignments are being considered. The first alignment would locate the new bridge essentially in the same location as the existing bridge. The other two alignments are a shifted curved alignment that relocates the bridge slightly to the east, but still overlapping the existing bridge location. These alignments differ in construction methods, traffic control, and mobility. A summary of the major features of the potential alignments include:

On-Alignment (straight):

- The majority of widening would occur on the west, or downstream side of the bridge.
- The new bridge would be built next to the existing bridge and then slid into place.
- A temporary 4-to-6-week bridge closure would be required.
- A vehicle detour route would be put into place; bicycle and pedestrian traffic would be maintained on site.

Shifted Alignment (curved):

- The majority of widening would occur on the east side of the bridge.
- An opportunity for traffic calming is present due to the curve of the road.
- The majority of the bridge would be built upstream from the existing bridge.
- A temporary 16 to 20-week closure of 2 of the 4 travel lanes on the bridge would be required; bicycle and pedestrian traffic would be maintained on site.

Intersection on the Burlington-side of the Bridge

The intersection reconstruction project involves updating signal timing and redesigning the geometric layout of the intersection to increase mobility, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and improve turning movements. This part of the project is currently focused on advancing the design, balancing the needs of all roadway users to maximize safety and capacity of intersection. There will be a public meeting later in 2024.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

A priority for this project is providing continuity and safe transitions for bicyclists and pedestrians through the intersection and over the bridge. The project team is currently evaluating potential signing and striping that can be used to encourage safe operation through the intersection and onto the bridge.

Additionally, the project team considering designs of refuge/belvedere locations and how these might be incorporated into the design of the bridge.

Next Steps

The project team will continue to evaluate constructability, schedule, and traffic control measures. This includes utility coordination, right of way, aesthetics, and continued public outreach. There will be a heavier focus on advancing the intersection design moving forward, starting with a public meeting planned for later in 2024.