

## **Summary of Public Meeting Held on September 19, 2023**

The purpose of this public meeting was to inform the public about the Burlington-Winooski Bridge Project and receive public feedback.

### **Overview**

The bridge was originally built in 1928, after the flooding that occurred in 1927. The bridge has been in place for about 95 years and is starting to experience deterioration that needs to be addressed. It is important to note that the bridge is currently safe for all users. The bridge is expected to remain safe for many years into the future until it is replaced. The current degradation includes packed rust on the girders, deck delamination, and substandard pedestrian/bicycle features.

A study was done in 2019 by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission that recommended the complete replacement of the bridge with a focus on improvements to pedestrian/bicycle accommodations. Part of the recommendations was to widen the travel lanes and shoulders and create a separated multi-use path for pedestrians/bicyclists. This new design would take the existing 10 foot and 6-inch-wide travel lanes and increase them to 11 feet wide bringing them to the State standard. The proposed new multi-use path will be 12 feet wide and have a physical barrier from vehicular traffic.

A similar study was conducted on the adjacent intersection on the Burlington side of the bridge. The Riverside Avenue, Colchester Avenue, Barrett Street and Mill Street intersection is geometrically complex, with multiple signals and shared bicycle/vehicle lanes. The study recommended a 4-way intersection with a focus on pedestrian/bicycle accommodation, mobility and safety. This project is addressing the 4-way intersection to improve movement, safety and limit conflict points/crossings to simplify traffic patterns for all modes of travel.

To-date, the bridge and intersection projects have been looked at separately, so the project team is in the process of combining the separate scoping report recommendations to ensure the projects complement each other moving forward. The entire project includes the bridge itself, and the Riverside Avenue, Colchester Avenue, Barrett Street, and Mill Street intersection on the Burlington side of the bridge.

### **Maintenance of Traffic**

Studies show that approximately 25,000 vehicles and 300 pedestrians cross the bridge per day. A goal of this project is to minimize impact to the traveling public while balancing the need to have a safe and efficient construction site. To accomplish this, the project will utilize a combination of temporary lane closures and a temporary bridge closure. A temporary detour, during the bridge closure, will be needed. The project team is still analyzing what the shortest vehicular detour will be and what effects that detour will have on adjacent roads and intersections.

Throughout the project (including during construction), pedestrian/bicycle travel will be maintained at the bridge location. This will be accomplished by implementing bridge phasing, which is when the new bridge is built next to the existing bridge on temporary supports. A pedestrian/bicycle path will be built separate to the bridge and utilities will be transferred to that structure. Once the new bridge is completed, a temporary bridge closure will take place so the existing bridge can be demolished, and the new bridge can be slid into its final location. The demolition of the existing bridge will require a

temporary 4-to-6-week closure to vehicle travel. More research will be completed to better understand the existing conditions and operations of traffic. The project team will coordinate closely with emergency services, transit providers, other community stakeholders prior to the temporary closure.

### **Design-Build Contracting**

Design-Build Contracting is a project delivery method that incorporates final design and construction into a single contract and places increased responsibilities on the contractor to reduce risks and costs to the State. This method of project delivery promotes innovation, improves design/construction efficiencies, reduces the construction costs, and reduces the construction schedule. This means that the Vermont Agency of Transportation will develop the design and construction guidelines but the final features (e.g., number of bridge supports, site restoration, etc.) may be the decision of the contractor.

### **Public Outreach**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation is committed to a public outreach process that is open and inclusive. This is being accomplished by hosting public meetings, attending community events, sending out direct mailers, door-to-door outreach, maintain an up-to-date project website, and offering translation and interpretation services at key points in the project. Public input is an important part of the outreach plan as it assists the project team by understanding the needs of the community, the impacts of the project, and potential ways to avoid or minimize impacts. The public is encouraged to visit the project website, submit feedback, and sign-up for email updates.

To-date, the project team has attended Winooski and Burlington Farmers Markets, the mural painting event hosted by Arts So Wonderful. Additional events will be attended in the future.

### **Costs & Funding**

The project received a federal RAISE Grant for \$24.8 million. The total cost of the project is conceptually estimated to be \$50-\$60 million. The cost for the intersection portion of the project is covered by 100% Federal funds. The cost for the bridge project is split between the City of Burlington (5%), City of Winooski (5%), State of Vermont (10%), and Federal funds (80%). Since the project has federal grant money, Vermont Agency of Transportation is obligated to improve safety, address pedestrian/bicycle accommodations, complement the natural and cultural environment, and provide an aesthetically appealing bridge.

### **Project Schedule**

2023 to 2026: Preliminary Design

2027 to 2029: Final Design and Construction