

Meeting Notes

Local Concerns Meeting

VT 2A-Industrial Avenue to River Cove Scoping Study / 195310861



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Date/Time: July 18, 2013 / 6:30 PM
Place: Williston Fire Station: Training Room
Next Meeting: TBD
Attendees: Christine Forde-CCRPC, Ken Belliveau-Town, Rick Bryant, Tim Noordewier-Stantec, Town Residents (see "sign in" sheet)
Absentees: None
Distribution: C. Forde, K. Belliveau, B. Hoar, J. Schultz, D. DeBaie, D. Grover, G. Edwards

Meeting Summary: Meeting was held to explain the project to the public and solicit comments. A number of concerns were raised regarding the poor existing traffic conditions in the study area and beyond. Most in attendance were disappointed that plans to construct the Circ were cancelled. There was near unanimous support to move ahead with an alternative improvement plan now. Another meeting will be scheduled to review alternatives after these have been developed and analyzed.

Discussion Items:

1. **Meeting Agenda:** Purpose of meeting was to understand the concerns of residents and roadway users. The extent of the project area was identified for the public. A presentation described the scoping study process, existing conditions, reviewed prior studies, identified potential alternatives (briefly), and opened the discussion to the public.
2. **Scoping Study:** Rick Bryant, *Stantec Consulting Ltd.*, presented findings from the work to date. The presentation included survey data, turning movement counts, volume-to-capacity performance assessments, current public transit options, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Wetlands were mentioned as potential environmental constraints, as they were present in three locations along VT 2A within the study area. Physical obstructions such as driveways, trees, and utility poles were highlighted as other possible constraints. In addition to existing performance assessments, Rick discussed a twenty-year traffic operations forecast that predicts motorist delays increasing significantly. The delays stem from the already over-capacity intersection of Industrial Avenue and VT 2A.
3. **Prior Studies:** The scoping area has been the focus of numerous prior studies. The aforementioned intersection has not been modified since 1996, despite the final recommendations of past studies. Some of the studies that affect the immediate project area or nearby locations include:
 - a. *Chittenden County Solid Waste District Plan (1996)*—Widening project

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- b. *Dufresne-Henry (2002)*—Recommended immediately adding a westbound left turn lane and upgrading signals
 - c. *Wilbur Smith (2003)*—Recommended widening VT 2A to three lanes and installing a median
 - d. *Williston-Essex Network Transportation Study (WENTS) (2013)*—Recommended adding westbound and eastbound left turn lanes, northbound through lanes, sidewalk to east side of 2A, widening shoulders, and multi-use path on Mountain View Road.
 - e. *Stantec Consulting Ltd. (2013)*—Recommended adding bike lanes to Industrial Avenue.
- 4. Potential Alternatives:** Several possible alternatives that either have been studied previously, or could be the focus of further research were identified. An incomplete list includes:
- a. For VT 2A-Continuing the proposed two-way left-turn lane southerly from River Cove Road to Industrial Avenue. (The two-way left-turn lane is part of a *VTrans* project that includes a new traffic signal at James Brown Drive.
 - b. Adding a dedicated left-turn lane on Mountain View Road at VT 2A.
 - c. Adding a second left-turn lane on the Industrial Avenue. approach and on the receiving bay on VT 2A
 - d. Allowing two lanes on Industrial Avenue to turn left, with the right lane having the option to go through or right
 - e. Creating a roundabout
- 5. Community Input:** Upon the conclusion of the presentation, discussion was opened to the public so that stakeholders could voice their concerns on community impacts:
- a. Access vs. Mobility: Concerns regarding access to VT 2A from driveways and side streets during busy time periods. Ken Belliveau addressed this issue by mentioning the proposed signal at James Brown Drive may help create traffic gaps long enough to allow side street access to VT 2A. One person expressed specific concerns regarding difficulties accessing Morgan Parkway.
 - b. Through Travel Delays: Left-turns from VT 2A were cited as an existing problem. Left-turning vehicles can quickly cause 4-5 car back-ups. Provision of a continuous two-way, left-turn lane for the entire length of VT 2A was suggested as a possible solution.
 - c. Speed Limit: It was suggested by multiple community members that the speed limit along 2A is too high, and should be lowered. High travel speeds are believed to be contributing to crashes and make it difficult for side street traffic to enter the roadway. Since this is a state highway implementing a speed limit change would require *VTrans* approval.
 - d. Safety and Noise: Noise was of particular concern to some residents.

One particular source of noise, which is also a major safety concern, involves the change in grade of the intersection. Evidently, the intersection is raised in the middle, and is uneven. Large trucks make significant noise from hitting the “bump” in the intersection. One concerned citizen described seeing a motorcyclist allegedly become airborne. Trucks using “jake brakes” were also cited as a concern as significant truck traffic is generated along Industrial Avenue.

- e. Directional Signs: It was requested that I-89 directional signs be added to VT 2A southbound at the intersection to prevent/reduce the number of people who make a wrong turn and turn around in driveways
 - f. Preemption: It was pointed out that the signal may not have preemption and that emergency vehicles wait a long time to clear the intersection
 - g. Roadway Widening: Concerns were expressed that roadway widenings would have an impact on residential properties abutting VT 2A. It was however recognized that there are fewer homes on the east side of the roadway. Underground utilities are also believed to be located on the west side of the roadway. Presumably the James Brown Drive project, which shows widening to the east, considered residential impacts and sidewalk/shared use path impacts that would result if the road were widened to the west.
 - h. Pavement: The condition of the pavement was highlighted as aging, and needing repair.
 - i. Network Operations: Some questioned the value in improving the VT 2A/Industrial Avenue intersection fearing that it would only increase the flow of traffic north to Five Corners in Essex Junction. Existing congestion in the Junction results in back-ups on VT 2A. These back-ups may only worsen if traffic can more easily head north from Industrial Avenue. (Similar concerns were expressed relative to traffic congestion south of the study area in Taft’s Corner.) Christine explained that the WENTS study sought to address this concern by looking at a wide network of roadways. Essex Junction is proposing roadway improvements as part of the Circ Alternatives to help relieve congestion in Five Corners.
 - j. Utilities: It was suggested that overhead utilities be moved underground. Ken explained that this is generally too costly to pursue for reconstruction projects.
 - k. Community Poll: An informal show of hands revealed that 8 of 9 community members present wanted to see something done to mitigate current traffic conditions
6. **Next steps**: In order to have a recommendation by October 2013, an official purpose and need statement must be adopted. Alternatives must be developed and evaluated. The alternatives must be presented at a future meeting, so that one may be adopted and gain local endorsement.

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The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.



Richard Bryant, PE
Senior Project Manager
Richard.Bryant@stantec.com