

**Interstate Exit 12 and Route 2A Scoping Study
Public Meeting #2 (Hosted by the Williston Planning Commission)**

www.ccrpcvt.org/exit12

DATE: Tuesday, October 1, 2013
TIME: 7:00 – 8:00 PM
PLACE: Williston Town Hall, 7900 Williston Road
PRESENT: Please see attachment

1) Welcome & Introductions

The meeting of the Williston Planning Commission was called to order at 7:08 PM by the Chair, Jake Mathon. Ken Belliveau, the Williston Director of Planning and Zoning, explained that there would be two presentations tonight; one for the Exit 12 and Route 2A Scoping Study and one for the Route 2A Study (from Industrial Avenue to River Cove Road). Scoping studies explore possible alternatives for improving transportation facilities (corridors, intersections, etc.). These studies are the result of Governor Shumlin’s announcement that the Circumferential Highway (CIRC) - as originally conceived - would not be built. The Circ communities (Williston, Essex, Essex Junction and Colchester) and the CCRPC were charged with studying the area’s transportation issues without the CIRC Highway. One of the primary recommendations of the Williston-Essex Network Transportation Study (WENTS) was to consider, in more detail, transportation improvements to Exit 12 and the surrounding area. The first public meeting was held in June and a final presentation will be made to the Williston Selectboard on October 21st.

2) Interstate Exit 12 and Route 2A Scoping Study Presentation

(see www.ccrpcvt.org/exit12 for the presentation slides)

Dave Saladino of RSG explained that the focus of his presentation is to discuss Exit 12 & VT 2A alternatives. The purpose of the scoping study is to: investigate transportation alternatives that address existing & projected **traffic congestion**, enhance **safety** for all users, improve **bike-pedestrian connections** through the interchange, and accommodate **economic growth** in the area. The Purpose & Need Statement, which was approved by the Steering Committee, is attached to this document.

Dave summarized the two comprehensive alternatives as follows:

Alternative 1: Expanded Diamond Interchange with new connecting roadway “Depot Street” and intersection with VT2A; Bike and Pedestrian Facilities; and VT2A Boulevard.

- 1A: Signalized Intersection at Depot/VT 2A
- 1B: Underpass and Roundabouts at Depot/VT 2A

Alternative 2: Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) with new connecting roadway “Depot Street” and intersection with VT2A; Bike and Pedestrian Facilities; and VT2A Boulevard.

- 2A: Signalized Intersection at Depot/VT 2A
- 2B: Underpass and Roundabouts at Depot/VT 2A

There was a question regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety with the DDI in Alternative 2. Dave responded that there is a debate among engineers about the best way to accommodate these users in a DDI. One member of the public doubted whether there is currently foot traffic in the interchange area; in response, Ken explained that hotel workers regularly walk from the bus stop (north of the interchange) to the hotels (on Hurricane Lane, south of the interchange). In addition, there is a discussion about a Park & Ride on the southwest corner of Exit 12 that would likely increase pedestrian traffic through the interchange. Ken also noted that the State Police have a communications tower that may be in conflict with the proposed driveway connection to “Depot” Street.

Dave explained the alternatives in more detail and showed a video simulation of traffic for each alternative.

Shannon Hiltner expressed concern about the existing roundabout at Maple Tree Place and asked if it would be reconfigured to accommodate additional traffic. Dave answered in the affirmative.

Dave summarized that congestion would be reduced in 2035 with both alternatives:

Congestion Summary – 2035 PM Peak Hour

	No Build	Alt 1 - Diamond Interchange		Alt 2: Diverging Diamond Interchange	
		1A: Signal at Depot	1B: Underpass & Roundabouts	2A: Signal at Depot	2B: Underpass & Roundabouts
VT 2A/Wright Ave and Connor Way	C	C	B	C	B
VT 2A/Marshall Ave	F	D	D	D	D
Depot St/Harvest Ln		A	A	A	A
Depot St/Trader Ln		A	A	A	A
VT 2A/Depot St		D	A	D	A
VT 2A/189 NB Ramps	E	C	C	C	C
VT 2A/189 SB Ramps	F	E	E	C	C

Dave described and showed illustrations of the Vermont 2A Boulevard cross sections as well as a set of short-term improvements that include a ten foot shared-use path from the State Police Barracks to Hurricane Lane with crosswalks and pedestrian signals at the ramps.

Donna Fellingner suggested that the path under the Interstate bridge should be cleared of brush and rocks for an easy short-term fix for pedestrian access. Eleni and Jesse Devlin (of VTrans) will follow up with VTrans District 5.

Dave presented an evaluation matrix depicting a variety of criteria for each of the alternatives. In general, the most obvious difference is the cost estimate of \$46-47 million for Alternatives 1A and 2A and \$58-59 million for Alternatives 1B and 2B. Kevin Batson asked about the condition of the Interstate bridges and Dave responded they are in good condition. Shannon asked about the timeline for reconstructing the interchange bridges and Dave responded that it depends on the phasing of the

project but it could be completed in two to three seasons; construction of all project components (Depot Street and VT 2A Boulevard) however will take longer but due to funding constraints, the individual project elements would likely not be constructed in immediate succession.

Kevin explained that the Planning Commission has never supported a Park & Ride lot in the southwest corner of Exit 12, especially since CCTA will not stop there. However, if it is to be built, the design needs to consider pedestrian access. Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC responded that it's possible there will be commuter service at this Park & Ride, but not local bus service. Meredith Birkett of CCTA explained that the current CCTA service cannot accommodate another stop, but they are open to discussing servicing the Park & Ride with a future new service.

Next Steps

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • Public Meeting #2 – Alternatives Review | October 1st |
| • Alternatives presentation to the Selectboard | October 21 st |
| • Draft & Final Scoping Report | December/January |

3) Questions & Comments

Dave asked if Commissioners had a preference for the Depot Street and 2A intersection configuration. Jake prefers the underpass to allow traffic to flow better. A member of the public noted that drivers take a short cut and speed on Maple Tree Place to avoid all the traffic signals on Route 2A.

Shannon asked about the aversion to roundabouts in Williston. Ken explained that a previously proposed roundabout in the Village became an emotional issue. It wasn't clear if citizens were adverse to roundabouts in general or only those in the village. The issues were about pedestrian safety, impact on village character, and right-of-way.

Q: If there was an Exit 12B, would it reduce the traffic congestion at Exit 12? Michele responded that it would reduce traffic at Exit 12, but a new interchange is not on the table at this time.

Q: It seems that most of the traffic is for retailers. Why not build an exit directly into the Walmart and Home Depot parking lot? Michele responded that the Federal Highway Administration will not allow exits that close together and does not look favorably on exits to benefit private entities.

Paul Laska: What is the time period and funding for this type of project? Michele explained that none of the funds have been allocated. When the Governor cancelled the Circ Highway, he made a commitment to the Circ communities to make other investments to provide relief from traffic congestion and increase safety. The CIRC Alternatives process has programmed \$25 million for projects in the CIRC communities. If the reconstruction of Exit 12 moves forward in the process, a funding package will be put together by VTrans. Projects of this size have extensive permitting, design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction timelines. The CIRC projects are expected to have a 10 year timeframe.

Kevin asked if it made more sense to remove the interchange reconstruction and move forward with the remaining projects. Dave responded that this was considered; the Advisory Committee didn't support this approach.

The Exit 12 public meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Study Contacts

Consultant Team Manager (RSG): [David Saladino – dsaladino@rsginc.com](mailto:dsaladino@rsginc.com)

CCRPC Project Manager: [Eleni Churchill – echurchill@ccrpcvt.org](mailto:echurchill@ccrpcvt.org)

Website: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/exit12/>

Participants

Last	First	Affiliation	Town
Batson	Kevin	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Besette	Andrew		Richmond
Davis	John		Williston
Fellinger	Donna		Williston
Hiltner	Shannon	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Laska	Paul	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Mathon	Jake	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Roeser	Donna		Williston
Walsh	Tom	Williston Planning Commission	Williston

Williston Planning Department Staff Present: Ken Belliveau

CCRPC Staff Present: Michele Boomhower, Eleni Churchill, Christine Forde

Exit 12 Scoping Study Advisory Committee Members Present: Meredith Birkett (CCTA);

Jesse Devlin (VTrans)

Consultants: Dave Saladino (RSG); Diane Meyerhoff (Third Sector Associates)

Written Comment Received

Donna Fellinger, Williston (several hundred yards south of exit 12)

I find the “design” or configuration of the meeting room – distancing from those in attendance. Why all the space in between?

I like the expanded diamond and diverging diamond – diverging diamond would need lots of education and repetition like building a model people can play with. I trust that excellent pedestrian safety will be provided sometime. Please do some clearing now.

Exit 12 Scoping Study – Purpose & Need Statement

Purpose

The purpose of the Exit 12 Project is to develop transportation system improvements that enhance safety for all users; reduce traffic congestion and facilitate mobility for people and goods; improve bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity; and accommodate economic growth in the Exit 12 interchange area and VT 2A corridor (in the vicinity of the exit).

Needs

Improve safety for all users in the project area

- *There is a need to address the High Crash Locations in the project area.* Based on the most recent VTrans High Crash Location (HCL) report, there are two identified HCL segments within the project area located along VT 2A at Marshall Avenue and adjacent to the I-89 southbound ramps. Also, analysis of forecasted traffic demand shows extensive off-ramp queuing leading to standing queues spilling back into the mainline of I-89, creating significant safety concerns.
- *There is a need to provide for safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian travel through the interchange area.* The missing VT 2A bicycle/pedestrian link between the State Police Barracks and Hurricane Lane creates significant safety concerns as pedestrians and bicyclists are currently using the unmaintained area behind the overpass bridge piers, and cross the interchange ramps at unmarked and unsignalized crossings. Experienced bicyclists that choose to travel on VT 2A, through the interchange area, are sharing the road with high volumes of cars and trucks due to the lack of adequate shoulders or designated lanes.

Reduce traffic congestion and enhance mobility for all users in the project area

- *There is a need for roadway improvements to reduce congestion and improve efficiency of the highway system in the project area.* Currently, traffic at the intersections of VT 2A with the Exit 12 ramps and Marshall Ave is experiencing long delays, especially during the evening peak hour of travel. In addition, long vehicle queues are formed during peak hours of travel at certain intersection approaches that negatively impact traffic flows on VT 2A and Marshall Ave. Based on projected population and employment growth for the area (including the adjacent Williston Growth Center); traffic congestion is expected to worsen considerably by 2035.
- *There is a need to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities that would connect the existing shared use paths and sidewalks north of Exit 12 with destinations south of the interchange.* Despite the fairly robust sidewalk and shared use path networks north of the State Police Barracks, there are currently no formal facilities through the interchange area to connect bicyclists and pedestrians to the various destinations located along Hurricane Lane (including hotels and offices) and the future Park & Ride location southwest of the interchange. Also, the existing I-89 overpass piers and adjacent Jersey barriers currently limit the available width of the VT 2A shoulders to approximately 1 foot through the interchange area which is not sufficient for safe on-road bicycle travel.

Accommodate Economic Growth in the project area

- *There is a need to provide the necessary infrastructure to support Williston's plan for dense mixed-use development in the Designated Growth Center and other high density parcels in the project area.* The Town of Williston was granted Growth Center status for the Taft's Corners area in 2007 and has made a concerted effort to focus the majority of future residential and commercial development in this area. Further, the Williston Comprehensive Plan calls for design conscious, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development and redevelopment patterns for the Growth Center as well as potential growth in the Ramsey and former Solomon parcels south of the interchange with reasonable transportation facilities to accommodate future mobility needs.

FINAL – September 5, 2013