



**CITY OF BURLINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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To: Burlington City Council  
Fr: Chapin Spencer, Director  
Re: **Railyard Enterprise Project Supplemental Scoping**  
Date: November 17, 2016

**Summary:**

City staff seeks City Council concurrence to further evaluate the Railyard Enterprise Project (REP) Phase 2 Alternative 1B (see Figure 1) through supplemental scoping, and explore the feasibility of implementing this alternative with state and local funding. The REP Steering Committee will be reconvened to oversee this effort. Most of the funding for the supplemental scoping will be provided by the CCRPC. The City will hold off on entering the federal environmental permitting process (NEPA) until the completion of this supplemental scoping effort when the City Council in partnership with VTrans will decide on whether to pursue this project with or without federal funding. We expect the scoping process to take approximately 11 months.

**Context:**

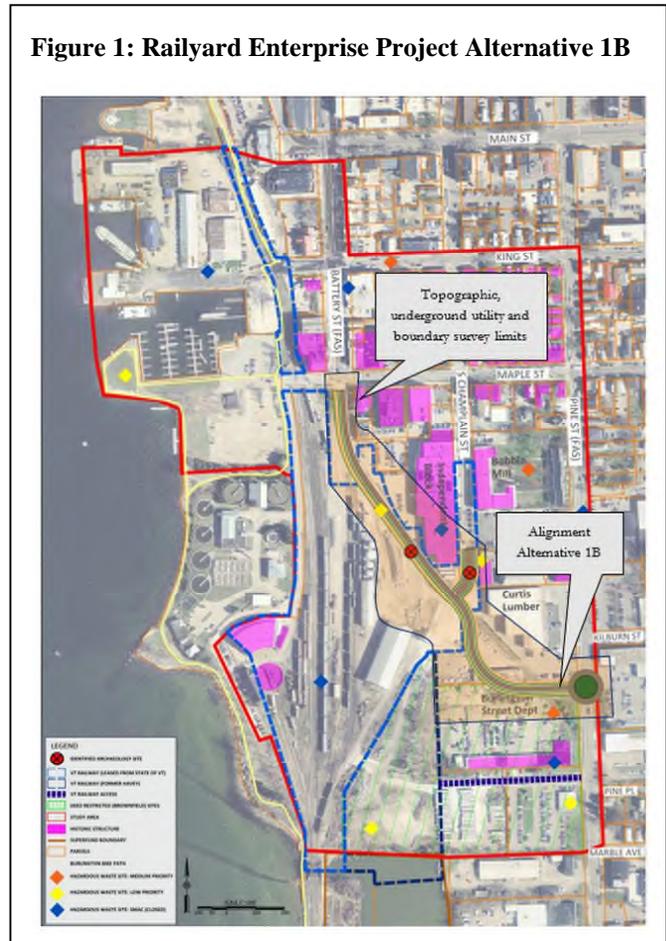
As you recall, the City Council approved advancing three REP Phase 2 alternatives into NEPA on December 21, 2015. The CCRPC and consulting team completed the scoping report this fall. The full scoping report can be reviewed here: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/railyard-enterprise-project/>.

The NEPA process is a requirement for federal financial participation and for a project this complex it can take many years and cost millions of dollars. It is not a process that the City controls. It requires a project to meet federal standards and be consistent with federal regulations. Given the likely complexity of the project, and the desire to see if there is a way to bring this project to construction more quickly and more affordably, the City and VTrans propose to evaluate the viability of delivering the most modest of the alternatives (1B) without federal funding and process. Variations of Alternative 1B will be investigated using detailed topographic/boundary and utility survey as well as detailed archaeological/historic and other resource data to provide the City, VTrans and stakeholders information on risks and opportunities so that we can decide the best way to proceed with implementing the Railyard Enterprise Project.

Non-Discrimination

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at 865-7145.

**Figure 1: Railyard Enterprise Project Alternative 1B**



Additionally, in reviewing the public comment and final report, the City and VTrans reflected on some of the goals for the project:

- **Timeliness:** Stakeholders expressed a desire to see this project developed quickly to reduce traffic in the King St. and Maple St. neighborhoods – both from existing traffic as well as future traffic after the completion of the Champlain Parkway. It is also recognized that the NEPA process might take years to complete due to various challenges in the REP project area and costs escalate the longer a project takes to develop.
- **Local control:** Several residents, property owners, and City Councilors were concerned with various alternatives that had significant impacts to private buildings, and they wanted a process that would give full consideration to alternatives that minimize those impacts.
- **Feasibility:** We received many public comments suggesting the project be modest in scale, fit into the context of the area and be able to address issues through innovative design. In addition, advancing the Pine to Battery connection first and then evaluating the grid streets concept (included in other Phase 2 Alternatives) at a later stage may make the effort more manageable.

### **Supplemental Scoping Goals:**

The overall goal of evaluating Alternative 1B further is to give the City and its partners enough information to determine whether the Railyard Enterprise Project should be developed with state and local funding only, thus avoiding the federal process. To this end, the supplemental scoping will help us understand to what extent a modest Alternative 1B can:

- Minimize impact on railyard operations,
- Minimize impacts to structures outside of the railyard,
- Minimize permitting requirements,
- Minimize environmental impacts,
- Expedite the project development process,
- Expedite project schedule,
- Limit risk, liability and overall construction costs

The CCRPC will continue to manage the scoping project and DPW will remain the lead department for the City.

### **Steering Committee:**

The following people served on the initial project Steering Committee.

- Amy Bell, Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans)
- Karen Walton, Green Mountain Transit
- Michele Boomhower, VTrans
- Rodger Brassard, Ward 5
- Julie Campoli, Burlington Resident
- Frank Cioffi, GBIC
- Chapin Spencer, Burlington DPW
- Chris Jolly, Federal Highway Administration
- Matt Mahoney, King Street Neighborhood Redevelopment Corp.
- Mary Anne Michaels, VT Railway
- Neil Mickenberg, Burlington Resident
- Michael Monte, Champlain Housing Trust
- Andy Montroll, CCRPC Board
- Peter Owens, Burlington Community & Economic Development Office
- Joan Shannon, Burlington City Council
- Jason Van Driesche, Local Motion
- David White, Burlington Planning & Zoning

The attached resolution calls for the Steering Committee to be reconstituted to guide this supplemental scoping. Should any member of the Steering Committee choose to not serve during this phase or there were staff changes, the resolution calls on the Mayor to appoint a replacement who represents the same stakeholder group.

## **Costs**

The supplemental scoping will largely be funded by the CCRPC with the City providing a 20% local match. The final scope of work for this supplemental scoping effort is included in your packet. The overall budget is \$170,378 (including all survey, utility and resource investigation work), but the CCRPC's contract with the consultant only commits us through Task 3 which is expected to be completed within FY'17. The total cost of this FY'17 work will be approximately \$110,000 -- \$22,000 of which would be the City's local match obligation. The City's staffing, local match, related stormwater planning, and legal expenses during this phase are accommodated in DPW's FY'17 budget. After Task 3 is completed, we will present three alternatives to the City Council for consideration. If the Council selects an alternative for further exploration (Task 4), City staff will bring forward any additional approvals at that time.

Developing estimated construction costs for local/state funded Alternative 1B will be a key component of the supplemental scoping. While we expect the total projected construction cost of the local/state Alternative 1B to be less than the original 1B Alternative, the City contribution would likely be greater as there would be no federal funding with this approach. The additional cost would be balanced by the likely benefits of a faster timeline to construction and more control in the design process. The Council will get to evaluate the federal vs. local / state options when this supplemental scoping is completed.

## **Timing**

- We estimate the supplemental scoping process will take approximately 11 months.
- To get the scoping process moving, the Steering Committee will be reconvened soon after a positive Council outcome on November 28th.
- The project team will provide an update and preliminary results of the REP supplemental scoping (completion of Task 3) to the City Council in the spring of 2017.
- Final results will be presented to the City Council in the fall of 2017 for the council's decision whether to advance this project with local and state funding only or advance the project into a NEPA process.

For additional background on this project, please see the attached City Council December 15, 2015 memo. Feel free to contact me with any questions ([cspencer@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:cspencer@burlingtonvt.gov)).

cc: Eleni Churchill, CCRPC Senior Transportation Planner  
Michele Boomhower, VTrans PPAID Director