

**Railyard Enterprise Project (REP)  
Scoping/Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study  
Public Meeting #1 Notes**

<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/transportation/scoping/railyard-enterprise-project/>

DATE: Thursday, March 7, 2013  
TIME: 7:00 – 9:00 PM  
PLACE: Burlington City Hall  
PRESENT: Please See Attached

**1) Welcome & Introductions**

Peter Owens of the Burlington Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO) and Michele Boomhower of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) welcomed everyone to the first public meeting of the Railyard Enterprise Project.

**2) Public Comment**

A Public Comment Period was added at the request of a number of participants who couldn't stay for the entire meeting:

**Rachel Siegel, Ward 3 City Councilor:** There are two things that I am passionate about regarding this project. First, whatever is developed should serve the local community – it shouldn't be all high end boutiques. Second, this grid street project is not a solution to the Champlain Parkway, but will offer some sort of relief. I'm concerned about the timing – 4 to 6 years. This concerns me greatly. The Champlain Parkway and this project are separate, but I hope traffic can be diverted from Pine and Maple before the Champlain Parkway comes to fruition. I'm concerned about the impact of traffic on these family neighborhoods.

**Keith Brenner:** I work in this neighborhood and want to see ecosystem restoration considered in this project. We need to increase resiliency against flooding by building waterfront buffers.

**Craig Carlson:** I want the water treatment plant to be living machine. It would clean the water but also be a boon to who we are as a community. Why do we need to bring more cars into the city? I'd like to see a monorail that would run through the trees at water level and electric street cars, water taxis, and bicycle lockers.

**Will Bennington:** I work in the neighborhood and feel it is a special place. I just found out about this meeting and would like better outreach, especially to Front Porch Forum. I want this project to include equity and universality and develop things that people can access regardless of their incomes. This area is not just the businesses or the railway, it's also a neighborhood. I would like to see ecosystem resiliency as part of waterfronts across the

country and the world. We need to build resiliency from flooding. When we pour concrete, we erode the dynamic elements and fundamentally change the ecosystem.

Michele asked that participants let us know how best to reach them; her organization is working hard to make very broad appeals through both traditional and nontraditional outreach forums.

**Jacob Albee:** I own southernmost buildings on Battery Street. Moving the street and the associated cars (Southern Connector) does not solve the traffic problem. It solves it only briefly and moves the problem away from Pine and Maple only temporarily.

### **3) Presentation of the Study Activities and Existing Conditions**

Bob Chamberlin of Resource Systems Group (RSG) explained that the the Railyard Enterprise Project (REP) will develop multimodal transportation facilities for the Waterfront south area that: enhance local circulation; advance economic growth; improve access to the Vermont Railway rail yard; and enhance neighborhood livability. He described the VTrans Project Development Process:

- Problem Identification and Authorization to Proceed
- Project Definition: Scoping/Conceptual Design/Environmental Review and Permits Design: Preliminary & Semi-Final Project Plans
- Right-of-Way Acquisition
- Final and Contract Plans
- Construction

Bob described the scoping process, which includes project identification, project design/scoping, and design and construction. The Railyard Enterprise Project (REP) will follow a Federal Highway Administration Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process that will streamline the project development process and expedite construction of the project.

Bob described the makeup of the project Steering Committee and outlined the scope of work, to include the following tasks:

1. Project Kickoff & Data Gathering (*Feb-April*)
2. Local Concerns Public Meeting/Draft & Final Purpose and Need Statement (*March-April*)
3. Develop Alternatives (*April-June*)
4. Evaluate Alternatives & Identify Constraints (*May-September*)
5. Alternatives Presentations (*September-November*)
6. Draft & Final Scoping Report (*November-December*)

Rick Sharp, of Burlington Segways will open his business this summer next to Curtis Lumber. He will offer Segway rides on the bikepath. He feels that Segways represent a new form of transportation that can reduce the need for cars downtown. It's an alternative form of transportation that uses less energy and creates less pollution. He would like this plan to be friendly to Segways.

#### **4) Small Group Work**

##### ***Group 1 Facilitators: Sandrine Thibault & Meredith Birkett***

- If the justification is traffic alleviation, then this is not enough reason for the project; it's just moving the problem from one area to another. The project needs its own justification
- We should invite fewer cars to the waterfront
- Union station should offer passenger rail
- Easier access to the bike path and Lake from Pine Street/Pedestrian access
- Wider sidewalks for a variety of users and more bike paths
- Understand the need for rail transport and uses
- Keep the rail uses for the future
- Go down underground or up above the rails to provide access and park space
- Likes the idea of a monorail
- Ferry property = redevelopment
- Community center in the area – indoor like the Miller center
- Likes connectivity – can be for people, bikes, and cars
- Potential of 8 city blocks. Intensive development could be like Church Street shops/housing/jobs
- Prime land for salt?
- Get certain density in area
- Build upon the good things already happening on Pine Street (DDC, Maltex, etc.) and artsy businesses
- What type of neighborhood? Urban like downtown or like Five Sisters?
- Look to other models of “eco districts”
- How do we keep walkable neighborhoods with trucks in the mix for rail yard access?
- Dedicated continuous bike lanes
- Need to develop with resiliency in mind (flooding)

##### ***Group Red Facilitators: Eleni Churchill & Beth Isler***

- Reopen possibility of diagonal access through rail yard? This project is **separate** from Champlain Parkway
- What is driving mode behind study? Trucks? Rail?
- Bike-friendly drainage
- Fix sidewalk gaps
- How does it coordinate with Champlain Parkway?
- Is there priority of Champlain Parkway over this?
- Need additional transit capacity in the Pine Street corridor
- Need connection on Pine Street for alternative transportation
- Shared use paths, hawk signals
- Safety Concerns - Pay attention to Lighting
- Lighting on Pine Street is lacking
- East-west bike connections
- Safety, isolation of bike path
- Replace 4-way stops with mini roundabouts on King and Maple
- How will people move? SOV? Walk? Transit? Bike?
- Complete Streets
- More bike parking

- Increased parking demand from increased density/mix of uses
- Don't decrease boat access

**Group Blue Facilitators: Bob Chamberlin & Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro**

- Bike path connection from Pine
- City should have acquired the Havey parcel – now lost opportunity
- Quality lighting with aesthetics
- Provide truck access to Pine from south end of rail yard
- Bike path from Pine at southern edge of REP
- Continue Marble Avenue along south boundary of REP
- Extend S. Champlain St. to southern boundary of REP
- Bike/ped connection through Bobbin Mill parking lot
- Current terminus of Battery is terrible for bike/ped
- Rail spur alignment bus only
- Rail spur alignment may not be good for neighborhood
- Look for other infill areas
- Create identity and sense of place through improvements
- Create space for public art
- REP to provide relief to King and Maple neighborhood from Champlain Parkway
- Create safety buffer between railroad and other multi-modal users
- Create an environmental buffer between railroad and other area
- Any new streets in grid should be “complete” streets
- Trees, trees, trees
- Pleasant pedestrian experience
- Consider roundabout at south end of rail spur alignment if it becomes a road
- Maybe rail spur alignment is one-way road going south
- Benches, trash/recycle containers
- Railroad connection for Curtis Lumber
- Consider truck only connector between Pine and railroad at south edge of REP (through Havey property)
- Green roofs on buildings
- Set aside some area for mixed use or affordable housing – not high-end retail
- Artist and entrepreneurs – keep enterprise zone
- Infill behind Independent Foods where big parking lot is now
- Access and activation on both sides of buildings
- Park and Ride at Gilbane lot or up at Interstate 189
- Retrofit for innovative stormwater keeping in mind environmental hazards
- Rain gardens and other Low Impact Development (LID)
- Develop S. Champlain between King and Maple
- Lake Champlain Transportation – green/public space. Bring LCMM back to do something
- Green all along the Lake
- Underground overhead utilities to create better streetscape

**Group Gold Facilitators: Mark Smith & Jason Charest**

- Burlington's last industrial neighborhood

- Provide incentives for development
- Trucks on King and Maple are a concern – access to Pine Street?
- Access from Pine Street to the bike path
- Concerned with noise from train activity
- Facilitate alternate modes, decrease auto travel
- Don't move one neighborhood's problems to another
- Could railroad turntable be viewable from the bikepath? (really cool)
- Could the Champlain Parkway run parallel to Champlain St. and follow an alignment to Lakeside Ave.?
- Southern breakwater?
- Move the ferry south to Perkins Pier
- What can we do to make something happen? Not continue spinning wheels
- Conflict between various uses – walk the tightrope
- Industrial district accessible by bike/ped – more like limited access (liability), visually accessible
- Barge Canal ice skating
- Elevated multi-use path to see rail yard

### **5) Report Back**

The groups summarized their discussions.

### **6) Wrap-Up, Thank You, and Next Steps**

Michele Boomhower thanked everyone for coming and for the spirited discussions. The presentation and meeting notes will be posted on the website.

CEDO is undertaking a complementary effort to this scoping study. The City will receive technical assistance from Global Green who will focus on improvements in the area that do beyond transportation (including LEED certification, land use, and form-based code). There will be a community workshop in June to look at resource efficiency, healthy communities, and environmental responsibility.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45PM.

### **Contact Information:**

Robert Chamberlin, RSG  
 Consultant Team Manager  
[robert.chamberlin@rsginc.com](mailto:robert.chamberlin@rsginc.com)  
 802-383-0118 x317

Eleni Churchill  
 CCRPC Project Manager  
[echurchill@ccrpcvt.org](mailto:echurchill@ccrpcvt.org)  
 802-846-4490 x11

## Public Meeting Participants

Last	First
Adams	Jason
Antczak	Ed
Antczak	Willa
Baird	Joel
Baldwin	Norm
Bates	Carolyn
Bates	Karen
Bell	Gillian
Bennington	William
Biehl	Janet
Brooks	Adam
Brotz	Erik
Brunner	Keith
Carlson	Craig
Catlett	Charles
Conant	Steve
Curtiss	Elizabeth
Erickson	Christina
Fanslow	Greg
Floegel	Mark
Gitajn	Rachel

Guyette	Aaron
Hart	Eric
Jany	Jennifer
Lalumiere	Raymond
Marius	John
Masters	Ruth
Matthews	Lynne
Nelson	Elisa
Nevajda	Milan
Redington	Tony
Sankowski	Stan
Sharp	Rick
Siegel	Rachel
Smith	R. Paul
Sullivan	Jim
Thibault	Sandrine
Thomsen	R. Hayden
Truex	Bill
Van Driesche	Jason
Whitney	Mark
Wood-Lewis	Michael

## Steering Committee Members Present

Last	First	Organization
Bell	Amy	VTrans
Birkett	Meredith	CCTA
Boomhower	Michele	CCRPC
Cioffi	Frank	GBIC
Goodkind	Steve	Burlington DPW
Jolly	Chris	Federal Highway Administration
Mickenberg	Neil	Burlington Resident
Montroll	Andy	CCRPC Board
Owens	Peter	Burlington CEDO
Shannon	Joan	Burlington City Council
Spencer	Chapin	Local Motion
White	David	Burlington Planning & Zoning

## Others Present

CCRPC Staff: Jason Charest, Eleni Churchill

CEDO Staff: Jennifer Green, Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro

Consultants Present: Bob Chamberlin, Susannah Drake, Beth Isler, Diane Meyerhoff, Mark Smith

## Written Comments Received

**On Wed, Mar 6, 2013 at 8:15 AM, Jeanne Keller wrote:**

Here are my thoughts: Build a parking structure on the K-Mart Plaza site in S Burlington and have FREQUENT bus shuttle service into downtown. Make the busses express busses until they reach the BED area, to speed up the transit from the parking to downtown. (Overcome as much resistance against park/ride as possible this way). Have busses running every ten minutes during rush hour and every 15 after than (like most CCTA buses). Busses returning to the parking would be express once they leave BED ----- much speedier return to your car when you need to get to car during the day.

Locating the parking there, at the foot of I-189 will divert traffic from coming into downtown on Main St and on Colchester/Pearl, which are the biggest bottlenecks right now.

Parking is also very close to the Hannfords', Lowes, etc, so people can do their shopping for dinner before going home. (Maybe even do a cut-thru road behind K-mart to the grocery store to make it even easier?)

Deal with the realities of why people insist in single-occupant commuting ----- I need my car to shop at the end of the day, I can't wait for a bus, the ride into town takes too long, I might have to get to my car during the day for an emergency at home and don't want to waste time.....

Figure out how to make the parking less expensive than the options downtown and maybe we have a big VOILA.

People along Pine St might not like frequent busses ----- but the alternative is an expressway going thru their neighborhood, and being choked in car traffic all day.....

If we can all be pragmatic about this, maybe there's a solution. So that's my final advice – encourage pragmatism.....

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**From: Vicky Smith**

**Sent:** Monday, March 04, 2013 1:21 PM

**To:** Eleni Churchill

**Subject:** King Street Center

Dear Eleni,

I'm unable to attend this Thursday's public meeting regarding the Railyard Enterprise Project, but want to express my concern as director of King Street Center. When the Railyard Enterprise Project was announced, we were given the impression that it would provide relief to the King Street neighborhood from the impact of the Champlain Parkway. Now, we are told it may take 6 years to complete, meaning King Street neighborhood children and families are likely to suffer the negative impact of the Parkway for years before the Railway Project begins to provide relief.

I am asking that the primary or one of the primary Purposes and Need for the Railyard Enterprise project be to provide relief to the adverse impact of the Champlain Parkway on the King Street neighborhood. The Railyard Project is a great idea, but I wonder if there is any hope for a "phasing" of the project as has been discussed - a roadway from Pine St at Kilburn or one of the other streets near Kilburn to Battery Street. Any connecting roadway to provide relief??

Thank you.

Best, Vicky Smith, Executive Director, King Street Center

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**From: Rebecca Ryan**

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 06, 2013 2:09 PM

**To:** Robert Chamberlin; echurchill@ccrpcvt.org

**Subject:** Comments: Railyard Project

Dear Mr. Chamberlin and Ms. Churchill, I am unable to attend the March 7 hearing so please accept email comments (and attachment) instead. On behalf of the American Lung Association staff and volunteers, I request that the main purpose for the proposed Railyard Enterprise project is to provide relief from the adverse public health impacts of the Champlain Parkway on the King Street neighborhood. The Railyard Enterprise project is a good idea, but only if it is designed to directly help the King Street area in the near future. I have attached a resolution adopted in June 2012 by the American Lung Association in Vermont Leadership Board that outlines the reasons why we oppose the Champlain Parkway route through the King Street neighborhood and why we support an alternative route. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you. Sincerely, Rebecca

Rebecca Ryan | Director, Health Education and Public Policy | Vermont  
American Lung Association of the Northeast

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**Railyard Enterprise Project Study – Public Meeting #1 Evaluation Results**  
**March 7, 2013 - 7:00-9:00PM – Burlington City Hall**  
**13 Responses Received (Revised March 14, 2013)**

**1. How did you hear about the Meeting? (check all that apply)**

a) Email from Friend/Colleague	<b>2</b>	g) Burlington Free Press	<b>0</b>
b) Email from Sponsors	<b>3</b>	h) Seven Days	<b>1</b>
c) Email from Other	<b>1</b>	j) Television	<b>0</b>
d) City's BUZZ	<b>2</b>	k) Ward 5 NPA	<b>0</b>
e) City/CCRPC Website	<b>0</b>	l) Other ( <i>please describe</i> )	<b>1</b>
f) Front Porch Forum	<b>7</b>	<b>UVM Staff Meeting, Local Motion Email</b>	

**2. Please rate the following aspects of the meeting:**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Fantastic</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Terrible</b>
Welcome		<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>		
Presentation		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Small Group Work	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>		
Wrap-up		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
Physical facilities for this event		<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
Amount of time allowed for input	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>		
Overall value of this event to you	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>		

- Thanks.
- Felt rushed, would have liked to view ideas on wall; needed more time for small group work and more time for input.
- Use of less jargon in the presentation would be helpful – not everyone is “in the loop.”
- More opportunity for wider comments to the whole group. Some people had the chance, but not all.
- Contois Auditorium is terrible acoustics.
- Make sure to focus on complete streets, bike and pedestrian friendly, reducing car traffic, ensuring continued rail and water access.
- Sounds like there is a consensus about vehicle traffic in the area!
- The presentation was too much about “process.”
- The initial presentation was terrible. The project should have been clearly explained in the regional context of what else is going on. There should have been reference maps for the regional plan this is part of. There should have especially been clear info about how the Parkway fits in with this.
- The maps for small group were inadequate. There should have been clear physical designation of impediments, such as environmental, historical. There should have been clear info on the legal status of Pine St. rail tracks. Also, there should have been flooding overlays, from high water in 2011 and the average spring and fall impacts.
- It appears that there was not a clear traffic projection going forward. So what are we trying to accommodate? In the absence of projections, there should have been current counts, separated by vehicle type. Also, what kind of trips are cars making?

**3. Anything else you'd like to share with us?**

**Carolyn Bates:**

- Have tours of RR destination point
- Historic street building – historic museum
- Green infill trees gardens and amount of grass on all land that is open space. Great ideas.

**Tony Redington:** Get a competent sub for roundabout analysis feasibility (RSG is not competent!). Connection to parkway is fuzzy. Have key stuff online so we can use iPads, etc.

**Karen Bates:** Plan for stormwater management up front.

**Rick Sharp:** I believe it's time to finally clean up the last ugly industrial uses of the waterfront to the south of the ECHO Museum. I would start with the parcel closest to the beautiful waterfront we enjoy north of ECHO. I would propose converting the ferry dock repair facilities to on-site artists' studios mixed with small bars and restaurants and possibly space for a farmers market. The idea is to capitalize on all the tourists drawn to the waterfront and sell them local goods to support a flourishing arts community. Ferry repair facilities could be relocated to someplace else on the lake. The ferry repair facilities are located on filled land. It belongs to the people of Vermont under the public trust doctrine. It's time for us to take it back and put it to a use that benefits the City today – tourism. I enjoyed the meeting.

**Elizabeth R. Curtiss:** Last night's meeting about the Railyard Enterprise Project Study was frustrating for the following reasons (see meeting comments), but it did educate me and I appreciate this information. Attendance might have seemed small, but all constituencies seemed to be represented. Certainly, the community aspect redeemed it for me, and my facilitators were caring, attentive listeners. Thank you. Although this is a negative assessment, I appreciate the change to meet, and the openness and commitment of the presenters. I am a former member of the Governor's Rail Council and advocate for more intermodal, rail-based progressive planning.

**Anonymous:**

- It would be good to have the major landowners represented so we know their major limits and willingness to adjust.
- Let's think "big" – eco-districts are being developed around the country – what are they about? How can we use these ideas/apply them here?



For a thriving New England

CLF Vermont 15 East State Street, Suite 4  
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www.clf.org

March 6, 2013

Robert Chamberlin, RSG Consultant Team Manager  
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC Project Manager

Re: Railyard Enterprise Project – Purpose and Needs

Dear Bob & Eleni,

Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) offers the following comments on the purpose and need for the Railyard Enterprise Project (REP). CLF supports the REP as a refreshing project concept that has the potential to improve access and quality of life in this area of Burlington.

A particularly important aspect of the Railyard Enterprise Project is that it has the potential to address some of the negative impacts on the King Street neighborhood that would be caused by the Champlain Parkway. CLF identified these impacts in its letter of June 29, 2012 to the Burlington City Council (attached).

While the Railyard Enterprise Project holds much promise, the timing of this project is critical. Ideally, this project would replace the Champlain Parkway or be constructed prior to the Champlain Parkway.

Efforts to improve traffic calming and more robustly accommodate busses, bicycles and pedestrians in the Champlain Parkway project remain important. These same issues are important for the REP. The King Street neighborhood should not have to shoulder an unfair share of the Parkway's impacts, while other neighborhoods are protected.

CLF supports a purpose and need for the REP of providing relief from the impact of the Champlain Parkway on the King Street neighborhood. Particular attention should be paid to opportunities to phase the project in manner that addresses impacts to the King Street neighborhood as quickly as possible.

CLF also supports a purpose and need that strongly recognizes opportunities for increasing reliance on modes of travel other than single occupancy vehicles and improving mobility and access to services and city resources for residents in the area.

CLF looks forward to seeing this project improve transportation and quality of life for the City's residents and businesses.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Levine  
Senior Attorney  
Attachment



For a thriving New England

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June 29, 2012

Honorable Miro Weinberger, Mayor  
Burlington City Hall  
149 Church Street  
Burlington, Vt. 05401

Honorable Members of the Burlington City Council,  
City Hall  
149 Church Street  
Burlington, Vt. 05401

Honorable Brian Searles, Secretary  
Vermont Department of Transportation  
One National Life Drive  
Montpelier, Vt. 05633-5001

Re: Champlain Parkway – Impact on King Street Neighborhood

Dear Mayor Weinberger, Members of the City Council, and Secretary Searles,

Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) is concerned about the impacts of the proposed Champlain Parkway on the people and environment of the King Street neighborhood. CLF applauds the recent decision of the Burlington City Council to take affirmative steps to explore alternatives to the Champlain Parkway's proposed route through the King Street neighborhood.

Conservation Law Foundation is a regional non-profit environmental advocacy organization dedicated to the protection of New England's environment. Our aim includes a healthy environment for all New England inhabitants. Throughout New England, CLF has worked for decades to reduce the environmental impacts of transportation by making it easier for people to get around without destroying our neighborhoods or natural resources.

Over the past years, the King Street area has developed into a wonderful residential and mixed income neighborhood where many families with children, seniors, and persons with disabilities live. It is home to a high concentration of low income and minority residents. The State's and the City's investments in this area have been significant and have helped make this area the vibrant and thriving neighborhood it is today. Because of this, it is troubling that this community would shoulder an unfair share of the Parkway's impacts, while other neighborhoods are protected.

The 1997 Final Supplemental Impact Statement affirmed that one of the "Project Purposes" of the Champlain Parkway is to "eliminate the disruption to local neighborhoods" by means of re-routing through traffic to "reduce traffic volume levels along neighborhood streets." (1997 FSEIS P.1-10). The 2009 Final Environmental Impact Statement predicted that the Champlain Parkway will "become the major routing for north-south traffic

in the area.” (2009 FEIS at 1-16.) As the Parkway would channel the flow of through traffic to reduce disruption to local neighborhoods, it directs this traffic directly through the center of the King Street neighborhood. The Parkway is projected to result in a 29% increase in traffic, including truck traffic, with an estimated 46% increase in traffic during peak hours. The placement of the Parkway through the King Street neighborhood will unreasonably exacerbate traffic, pollution and noise in this neighborhood.

The project’s sacrifice of the King Street neighborhood, which would unfairly bear more impacts than other neighborhoods, raises concerns of environmental justice. “Environmental justice is a growing effort to address a dangerous divide: Minority and low-income communities tend to encounter far greater environmental risks and far less protection than more affluent, white communities.” Cheryl Katz and Jane Kay, *Pollution, Poverty, and People of Color: Can Multiculturalism Create Environmental Justice?*, Scientific America, June 5, 2012, available at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=can-multiculturalism-create-environmental-justice>. The King Street neighborhood should not become an environmental sacrifice zone.

Regard for equity demands that this neighborhood not bear a disproportionate share of the environmental and community burdens. Based on the City Council’s Resolution, CLF is encouraged that Mayor Weinberger and the City Council will now look at these very issues and consider alternatives to the Champlain Parkway’s current proposed route through the King Street neighborhood. CLF looks forward to working with City and State officials and community leaders to develop a sound transportation solution that does not unfairly impact the King Street neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Levine  
Senior Attorney