

**Railyard Enterprise Project (REP)  
Scoping/Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study  
Steering Committee #6 Meeting Notes**

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

**DATE:** September 4, 2014  
**TIME:** 6:00-8:00 PM  
**PLACE:** Burlington Department of Public Works, 645 Pine Street  
**PRESENT:** Please See Attached

**1) Welcome & Introductions**

Michele Boomhower of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) welcomed everyone at 6:07PM and introductions were made.

**2) Public Comment Period:** There were no comments.

**3) Review Updated Purpose & Need (P&N) Statement**

Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC reviewed the revised Purpose & Need (P&N) statement (attached). She explained that over the past few months, the City has been working with VTrans, FHWA, and the CCRPC to address concerns voiced by Steering Committee members and the public regarding the P&N developed last year. Acceptance of this new statement (July 2014) by the City, FHWA, and VTrans will allow this Railyard Enterprise Project to move forward.

Chapin Spencer of DPW thanked FHWA and VTrans for their participation in the process and feels that the new statement provides an accurate and strong foundation to move forward. Chris Jolly of FHWA is pleased that the City's concerns were addressed now rather than later in the process. This statement is the foundation for all the alternatives as well as the environmental document. Chris Cole of VTrans is also pleased with the outcome and thanked FHWA for their flexibility and willingness to work with the City and VTrans. Peter Owens of CEDO noted that this is a case where input of many voices made a difference. There were many people involved and everyone is on the same page now. Neil Mickenberg believes that the statement is a vast improvement over the previous version.

Michael Monte of Champlain Housing Trust supports the revised P&N but is concerned about the constraints in the project area, especially the availability of right-of-way. He's concerned that we might achieve only some of the goals, followed by some very difficult decisions. We may not succeed 100 percent with this statement; the more we try to do the more difficult it will be to succeed at all levels. Joan Shannon agreed that there are many stumbling blocks to be

expected along the way. She asked if the order of the need statements is prioritized and Eleni responded that they are not. Eleni explained that some of the criteria developed to evaluate the alternatives will be based on the project needs and a decision would be made to weight the needs/criteria at that point. The Steering Committee will have the opportunity to comment on the criteria and possible ranking of needs.

In response to a question about Vermont Railway reaction to this project, Eleni explained that the Railway is actively participating in the process as members of the Steering Committee and preliminary discussions with them were positive. Chris Cole explained that Vermont Railway's support is contingent upon which alternatives move forward and their impacts on the railyard.

#### **4) Discussion of Process Moving Forward**

##### ***4a) Draft Alternatives***

Eleni explained that the process to move forward includes these first steps: 1) rescreening of the full set of *Draft Alternatives* based on the revised Purpose & Need, 2) developing a new list of *Draft Alternatives*, 3) developing screening criteria, and 4) evaluating the *Draft Alternatives* using the screening criteria. These steps will be completed by early October and a summary memo describing the process and preliminary outcomes will be shared with the Steering Committee and other stakeholders via e-mail.

Bob Chamberlin of RSG reviewed the sixteen draft alternatives developed last year. The presentation is available at: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/transportation/scoping/railyard-enterprise-project/>

##### ***4b) Phase 2 Alternatives***

Bob explained that the evaluation of the “new” draft alternatives will narrow the list to a second set, called *Phase 2 Alternatives*, which will be subject to a more thorough evaluation (including traffic modeling and congestion analyses, railyard impacts, etc.) to determine whether they meet the P&N and to identify impacts to various resources.

The *Phase 2 Alternatives* will be presented to the Steering Committee and other stakeholders in October. In November, the evaluation criteria for the *Phase 2 Alternatives* will be developed with input from the Steering Committee and other stakeholders including Resource Agencies. A comprehensive evaluation of the *Phase 2 Alternatives* will be conducted during the winter months (2014-15) with input from the Steering Committee, Resource Agencies and other stakeholders.

##### ***4c) Reasonable Range of Alternatives***

Following that work, a “reasonable range of alternatives” will be selected for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The selection of the alternatives will involve the Steering Committee, Resource Agencies, a stand-alone public meeting, and City meetings. The result of this work will be a Scoping/Planning Environmental Linkages (PEL) Report in the spring of 2015. Following the PEL Report, the City, FHWA, and VTrans will undertake the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

There was discussion about narrowing the alternatives and the EIS process. It was re-iterated that the scoping/PEL process will narrow the alternatives to a reasonable number (possibly 3 to 5) for evaluation in the EIS. The City will manage the EIS under an agreement with VTrans and in partnership with FHWA and other stakeholders. It was emphasized that this process will be collaborative and that the EIS process would produce a *Preferred Alternative* which will then be reviewed by FHWA.

Kaitlin O’Shea of VTrans briefly explained the Historic Preservation Section 4(f) process. This rule states that a transportation project cannot adversely impact resources such as public parks, public and private historic structures, etc. unless no other feasible and prudent alternative exists. This is part of the evaluation and ultimately the approval process of a *Preferred Alternative*.

**5) Wrap-up**

The next meeting, at the end of October, will feature a presentation of the Phase 2 alternatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 PM.

**ATTENDEES - Members Present**

First	Last	Organization
Amy	Bell	VTrans
Meredith	Birkett	CCTA
Emily	Boedecker	Local Motion
Michele	Boomhower	CCRPC
Chris	Jolly	FHWA
Neil	Mickenberg	Burlington Resident
Michael	Monte	Champlain Housing Trust
Peter	Owens	CEDO
Joan	Shannon	City Council
Chapin	Spencer	Burlington DPW
David	White	Burlington Planning & Zoning

**ATTENDEES - Others Present**

First	Last	Organization
Ilona	Blanchard	Burlington Resident
Bob	Chamberlin	RSG
Eleni	Churchill	CCRPC
Tom	Longstreth	ReSource
Diane	Meyerhoff	Third Sector Associates
Scott	Newman	Burlington Resident
Kaitlin	O’Shea	VTrans Historic Preservation
David	Saladino	RSG
Sandrine	Thibault	Burlington Planning & Zoning

## Purpose and Need of Railyard Enterprise Project

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### Purpose

The purpose of the Railyard Enterprise Project is to develop a network of multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements in the Pine Street and Battery Street area, which incorporate the principles of Complete Streets, and to: 1) support economic development in the area; 2) improve Livability of the surrounding neighborhoods; 3) enhance multimodal travel connectivity between the Pine Street corridor and Battery Street in the Burlington Waterfront South area; and 4) improve intermodal connections to the Burlington Railyard, a National Highway System (NHS)-designated intermodal facility.

### Need

**1) Develop supporting infrastructure to be consistent with the long term vision of PlanBTV (Downtown and Waterfront part of the municipal plan) associated with the Railyard Enterprise Project area, that supports economic development in the area and enhances Railyard operations.**

There is a need for a new street network between Pine Street and Battery Street and related infrastructure to support economic development in the area. PlanBTV has identified the Railyard Enterprise Project area as prime for infill, mixed use development to increase economic activity and to provide accessibility to underutilized lands adjacent to the Railyard.

**2) Improve Livability and connectivity in the Railyard Enterprise Project area.** There is a need to improve the livability of residential areas and emerging mixed-use districts in the Railyard Enterprise Project area. Livability can be enhanced by dispersing traffic and reducing vehicle queues at neighborhood intersections, including the intersections of Pine Street with King and Maple Streets. Additional transportation connections between Pine Street and Battery Street, that do not involve Maple or King Street, will help improve Livability and travel conditions for all users in the Railyard Enterprise Project area.

**3) Enhance multimodal travel connections and choices in the Railyard Enterprise Project area.** There is a need for additional multimodal connections in the Railyard Enterprise Project area to support transit system performance, enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility and facilitate travel from existing neighborhoods to Battery Street, the Waterfront, and Lake Champlain. There is also a need to create safe, efficient, and dedicated pedestrian and bicycle connections from Pine Street neighborhoods between Maple Street and Lakeside Avenue to the Waterfront, the Burlington Bike Path, and Lake Champlain and improve access from the King Street neighborhood.

**4. Improve connectivity and access between nearby streets, including Pine Street and Battery Street, and the Burlington Railyard, a NHS-designated intermodal facility, while reducing the impacts of freight operations on adjacent neighborhoods.** There is a need to improve connections to the Railyard in a way that enhances its operations while also reducing the impact of freight operations on adjacent neighborhoods. PlanBTV recognizes the importance of the Burlington Railyard to the City's economy and environment.

Revised 7-15-14