

**Interstate 89 Exit 12 & VT 2A (Exit 12 Project) Scoping Study
Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Notes**

DATE: Thursday, September 5, 2013
TIME: 1:00 PM
PLACE: Williston Police Station, 7928 Williston Road

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tim Baechle, IBM
Amy Bell, VTrans
Ken Belliveau, Town of Williston
Meredith Birkett, CCTA
Michele Boomhower, CCRPC
Katelin Brewer-Colie, Local Motion
Jesse Devlin, VTrans
Bruce Hoar, Town of Williston
Matt McMahon, GBIC
Jeff Nick, JL Davis Realty
Todd Shepard, Town of Williston
James Whitcomb, VT State Police

OTHERS PRESENT:

Austin Feula, RSG
Rachel Beauregard, VTrans District 5
Curt Carter, GBIC
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC
Rick McGuire, Town of Williston
Corey Mack, RSG
Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates
David Saladino, RSG
Jason VanDriesche, Local Motion

1) Welcome & Introductions

The meeting began with Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC welcoming everyone and introductions were made.

2) Meeting Purpose

David Saladino of RSG went through the scoping project's timeline and explained that the goal of today's meeting is to finalize the Purpose & Need Statement and review the Exit 12 build alternatives and preliminary results.

3) Approval of Purpose & Need Statement

The Advisory Committee approved the revised Purpose & Need Statement (see attached).

4) Review of Study Alternatives

David presented the two comprehensive (longer-term) alternatives and a proposed short/medium term alternative:

Alternative 1: Expanded Diamond Interchange

Alternative 1 includes an expanded Diamond interchange at Exit 12 (requires reconstruction of existing bridges); a new roadway, "Depot Street" connecting VT2A with retail centers east and west of 2A; and a VT2A "Boulevard" cross-section. Alternative 1 includes the following two sub-alternatives for the new Depot St/ VT2A intersection:

- Alternative 1A: A signalized intersection at Depot St/VT2A
- Alternative 1B: An underpass and roundabouts at Depot St/VT2A

Responding to a question about the future of the State Police barracks, James Whitcomb of the Vermont State Police indicated that there is no new information regarding the future of the State Police barracks in Williston. However, he is concerned about police access and security with the addition of Depot Street. There was a brief discussion of possible access locations from the barracks to Depot St.

Jeff Nick of JL Davis Realty asked if the proposed Depot St alignment could be shifted to the north (especially west of VT 2A). Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC noted that this is a scoping study; details will be examined closely as the project moves into the design phase.

The group asked that the presentation be revised for the public meeting to include the following:

- Improving the graphics to clarify that VT2A remains under the Interstate
- North should remain at the top of all the maps/slides
- Depot Street should be located as far away from the State Police barracks as possible to address security and access issues
- Hotel and historic building accesses need to be clarified for Alternatives 1B and 2B.
- Bicycle/pedestrian facilities need to be clarified and noted on all maps.

Rachel Beauregard of VTrans District 5 is concerned that the roundabouts will create too much confusion for drivers and will also be more difficult to plow in the winter. Amy Bell of VTrans is concerned with Right-of-Way impacts of the Underpass/Roundabout alternative for Depot St. She asked that the alternatives should be evaluated for the “Least Environmentally Practical Alternative (LEPA).” Eleni indicated that environmental and other impacts will be evaluated for each alternative and presented in the Evaluation Matrix.

Alternative 2: Double Crossover Diamond Interchange

Alternative 2 includes a Double Crossover Diamond (DCD) interchange at Exit 12 (requires reconstruction of existing bridges); a new roadway, “Depot Street” connecting VT2A with retail centers east and west of 2A; and a VT2A “Boulevard” cross-section. Alternative 2 includes the following two sub-alternatives for the new Depot St/VT2A intersection:

- Alternative 2A: A signalized intersection at Depot/VT2A
- Alternative 2B: An underpass and roundabouts at Depot/VT2A

Amy asked if the bicycle/pedestrian facility could be down the middle of the DCD interchange. Dave will examine this option.

The group asked if the study team considered roundabouts at the new intersections of Depot St with Trader Lane and Harvest Lane instead of signals. Dave will investigate whether roundabouts will work at both of these intersections (for all alternatives). Jeff Nick noted that roundabouts decrease the amount of developable land. Todd Sheppard of the Williston Police

expressed concern for the existing roundabout in Maple Tree Place with the addition of four new roundabouts; its capacity is limited and it may function poorly. Dave will look at the existing roundabout more closely.

Ken Belliveau of the Town of Williston is concerned that the trip generation assumed for the southwest quadrant (2 parcels) is too high. Dave will review the trip generation of the two parcels with Ken.

The group asked that the consultant team investigate the following:

- Reduce trips generated by the southwest quadrant parcels which might help reduce I-89 southbound off ramp traffic turning right (south) on VT2A
- Add roundabouts instead of signals at Depot St intersections with Trader Lane and Harvest Lane

Short/Medium Term Recommendation

Recognizing the amount of time that may be needed to reconstruct Exit 12, the consultant team presented a short/medium term solution. Under the short/medium term alternative, northbound left turns would be prohibited on VT2A at the I-89 northbound ramps to allow for continuous availability of two northbound through lanes through the interchange. The displaced northbound VT2A left-turns would either use a U-turn lane at the VT2A/Depot intersection (under Alternatives 1A and 2A) or via the Depot Street roundabouts and underpass (under Alternatives 1B and 2B). A southbound right-turn lane at the Exit 12 northbound ramp would also be added.

The group decided that the prohibited left-turn lane and the U-turn should be removed from the recommendation due to potential driver confusion, traffic congestion, and the amount of land needed for the U-turn. However, the group agreed to include the construction of Depot Street as Phase 1 of either Alternative 1 or 2.

VT 2A Boulevard

The group discussed the “boulevard” section of VT2A. It was decided that the boulevard cross-section should extend from Depot Street north to US 2/Taft’s Corners. The group supported the VT2A boulevard concept. Rick McGuire of the Town of Williston noted that this idea is consistent with a study from ten or so years ago that was well received by the town.

Phasing of the Exit 12/VT2A project (major components: interchange area, Depot St, VT2A Boulevard) was discussed by the group. All committee members agreed that Depot St should be constructed first (Phase 1) to provide for alternate routes that will decrease traffic congestion on VT2A. Ken Belliveau of Williston would like to see the Boulevard as Phase 2 (before the reconstruction of Exit 12). Amy suggested that the boulevard construction should occur after the interchange reconstruction due to the space needed for bridge work and the potential for the boulevard improvements to be negatively impacted by the interchange construction.

Dave presented a preliminary evaluation matrix for build Alternatives 1 and 2. It was agreed that this matrix will be revised based on the discussions/recommendations of the committee. Michele asked that the project components be broken down for the cost estimates.

5) Next Steps

Dave will send a revised presentation to the group prior to the public meeting on October 1st (hosted by the Williston Planning Commission). Depending on feedback from the public meeting, the advisory committee may meet prior to the Williston Selectboard meeting on October 21st.

Diane Meyerhoff will send public meeting information to the Advisory Committee for distribution.

Michele thanked everyone for their work on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM.

FINAL – September 5, 2013
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.