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McFARLAND JOHNSON
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MEETING NOTES

PROJECT: Winooski/Burlington Bridge over Winooski River **DATE OF MEETING:** June 7, 2017
Scoping Study

LOCATION: Chittenden County RPC Conference Room **TIME:** 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

SUBJECT: Advisory Committee Meeting #1 – Project Kickoff

ATTENDED BY:

CCRPC:	Peter Keating, Eleni Churchill, Jason Charest, Marshall Distel
McFarland Johnson (MJ):	Wade Brown, Brian Colburn
VTrans	Amy Bell, Richard Hosking, Jonathan Griffin
Burlington Ward 1 NPA	Wayne Senville, Richard Hillyard
Burlington Planning	Nicole Losch
Winooski Public Works	Peter Wernsdorfer, Ryan Lambert
UVM Medical Center	David Keelty
CATMA	Sandy Thibault
GMT	David Armstrong
Local Motion	Katelin Brewer-Colie

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Welcome / Introductions – Peter Keating
2. Scope of Work Overview – McFarland Johnson
3. Advisory Committee Discussion / Input
4. Other Items and Next Steps
5. Next Meeting

NOTES ON MEETING:

This was the first of four planned Advisory Committee meetings. Peter Keating began the meeting with a welcome followed by introduction of the attendees. Wade Brown and Brian Colburn then provided an overview of the significant tasks and milestones of the bridge scoping study which included the proposed advisory committee meetings and the bridge/traffic alternatives to be evaluated. The following is a summary of the topics and discussion that occurred among the group.

Bridge – existing and proposed

- VTrans note that, besides being in disrepair, the existing bridge rail is historic and non-compliant with current standards. The historic character of the railing must be considered in all rehab and replacement alternatives. In addition, the existing sidewalks contain multiple utility ducts, as observed by Dick Hoskings in 1975.
- Both cities have been approved for a grant to rehabilitate the east bridge rail as an interim solution to extend its service life.
- The existing sidewalks are cantilevered from the exterior steel girders using steel knee braces. This is an uncommon structural approach to supporting the sidewalks. It makes widening the existing superstructure impractical and therefore a widening is not one of the proposed alternatives.
- The existing bridge's type of steel was determined by test samples under a previous load rating study by Hoyle Tanner Associates.
- VTrans requested that seismic be considered during the development and evaluation of the bridge alternatives.
- VTrans requested that impacts, including the area of impact, be identified for the abutments and pier work.
- Accelerated bridge construction techniques will be considered in the alternative evaluation. VTrans noted a recent deck replacement project on the interstate used drop-in precast deck segments at night to allow travel to remain open during peak travel times.
- Burlington floated an 'blue sky' idea to help minimize traffic impacts during construction by designing separate side-by-side bridges built at different times. It was noted that this would pose a challenge due to the limited site width before and after the bridge.

Roadway / Traffic – existing and proposed

- Traffic is heavy across the bridge and through the north and south approaches during peak travel times. The existing limited curb-to-curb space on the bridge provides only enough room for four narrow lanes without shoulders. It was noted that traffic was backing up that day (June 7) around noon when one lane southbound was closed for workers.
- Winooski noted that the new circulator configuration is intended to function with either two lanes or one lane traveling south toward Burlington.
- Burlington's Riverside/ Colchester intersection, just south of the bridge, was recently studied by Stantec. The study evaluated proposed intersection geometry of both a three-lane and four-lane alternative. Stantec's study concluded two lanes must remain northbound but one lane southbound (3-lane bridge) may function adequately.
- RSG (subconsultant to MJ) is currently evaluating traffic for both a three-lane and four-lane alternative. The traffic evaluation will be used to help determine, which one of these alternatives, or if both, will be carried forward in the proposed bridge alternatives. The evaluation by RSG will be completed prior to the next AC meeting.
- A question was posed whether it was feasible to switch lanes during the day from one to two lanes to accommodate peak and non-peak travel. It was noted that such a solution requires ample distance for signage to be effective, and therefore was not an option to consider further for this site.

Bike and pedestrian crossing

- The need for adequate bike and pedestrian accessibility has been an on-going subject at this site. The existing bridge does not contain designated bike lanes, therefore cyclists must either cross on the sidewalks, intended for pedestrians, or share an already narrow lane with vehicles. Dubois and King recently completed a study evaluating alternatives for a separate bike/pedestrian bridge over the Winooski River. In summary, the study concluded that the best alternative for such a bridge would cross alongside the existing bridge, either the east or west. The bridge's cost was estimated at approximately \$3M.
- Each of the proposed bridge alternatives for the scoping study will provide mobility to three forms of travel (vehicular, pedestrian and bike). As noted previously, the existing bridge is not suited for widening therefore the rehab alternative has been scoped to include a separate bridge alongside for pedestrian and/or cyclists. The other bridge alternatives (superstructure replacement with substructure widening, and bridge replacements) are proposed to include space for bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles.
- Questions and discussion focused on timing of a separate bike/pedestrian bridge and the possibility of using either a temporary bike/pedestrian bridge or a permanent one alongside a new bridge alternative built in the future. VTrans noted that state funding is limited therefore may be available sooner for a bike/pedestrian bridge.
- It was noted there will be challenges due to the site's geometry (vertical and horizontal) to integrate pedestrian and bike travel into the approaches before and after the bridge. It was also noted that bicycle travel within designated bike lanes across the main bridge is not ideal either due to the high traffic volume and the complexities along the approach roadways.

Other conditions and influencers

- The alternative evaluation will include life cycle construction costs to capture a reasonable comparison between the costs for rehabilitation and replacement alternatives. MJ will work with VTrans on applicable guidelines related to duration of comparison (50, 75, or 100 years).
- CCRPC stated that a recent archeological study identified historic resources at the northwest and southwest quadrants of the bridge.
- A new hotel development is planned to be placed in the open space to the east of the Winooski circulator.

Other items and next steps

- VTrans requested that the alternative evaluations be presented to them in a meeting prior to presenting to the City Councils.
- The traffic analysis by RSG, and the archeological/historic assessment by Hartgen Associates will be completed prior to the next meeting.
- The CCRPC will use their regional model to compare various scenarios for potential impacts caused by bridge lane closures during construction.
- A draft Purpose and Need Statement will be developed prior to the next meeting, which is planned for late July. The meeting's purpose will be to discuss the findings of the traffic evaluations and to further develop the Purpose and Need Statement.

Submitted by:

Wade Brown
McFarland Johnson, Inc.

cc: Attendees