

Winooski Avenue Corridor Study

Public Participation Plan

The Public Participation Process

The Winooski Avenue Corridor Study will include a broad and equitable **public participation process** that will both keep the community informed and incorporate insights and ideas from the community.

Winooski Avenue is home to small businesses, community spaces, New Americans, long-time residents, college students, business services and more, and it is a connecting route for people traveling around the City and beyond. The project team will do its best to conduct this study in a way that involves and considers this unique diversity of stakeholders and contexts.

The public participation process will be informed by the **Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's (CCRPC) Public Participation Plan** ([link](#)) and the **City of Burlington Public Works' Public Engagement Plan** ([link](#)). This project falls under the **Collaborate** category on the Spectrum of Participation ([link](#)), which means that the project team will partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

The public participation process will be guided by the Project Steering Committee, which includes staff from the City of Burlington's Department of Public Works (DPW), the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), and a team of technical experts (Burlington-based consulting firm RSG and subconsultants).

This Plan

This **Public Participation Plan** is a static document that will guide the project team's public participation process from the beginning to the end of the study. It includes as much detail as possible; some specifics will be determined closer to when they occur (such as meeting dates).

A key piece of this plan is its **Equity Impact Worksheet** (attached), which lists questions pertaining to impacts, barriers, and accountability of the public participation process. The answers to these questions are described in the worksheet and are reflected in this plan.

Public Participation Objective:

The public will be engaged during every stage of the study using a variety of tools and formats to arrive at recommendations that reflect the needs of the community and minimize undesirable impacts.

Public Participation Elements

1. Stakeholder Interviews
2. Project Advisory Committee
3. Public Forums
4. Continuous Communication

1: Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholders in this study are the people, groups, and communities that may be impacted by changes to the Winooski Avenue corridor or have a role in public decision making. At the outset of the study, the Steering Committee identified stakeholder groups who would benefit most from direct interviewing rather than general public outreach.

Stakeholder groups to conduct focused interviews with include those representing:

- Public Health & Safety: Fire and Police Departments, VT Department of Health
- Students/Schools: Edmunds, Sustainability Academy, and Integrated Arts Academy
- Colleges: UVM, Champlain College, and CATMA
- Under-Represented Groups: AALV and others to be identified
- Community Spaces: VFW, churches, ONE Community Center (off-street), Munt Family Room (off-street)
- Businesses on Winooski Avenue
- Local Motion

At the outset of the study:

The Steering Committee will conduct in-person interviews with these groups to gain an understanding of their perspectives of and desires for the project corridor. Another outcome may be to determine how the Steering Committee can best reach out to these groups' constituents for general public outreach throughout the study.

Throughout the study:

After the initial interview, the Steering Committee and the stakeholders will identify the best ways to continue communication and engagement as the study progresses.

2: Project Advisory Committee

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will be comprised of representatives from various City and community entities and will help guide and inform the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will convene meetings with the PAC at strategic points over the course of this study to get input on draft deliverables and upcoming steps.

The following is a list of groups represented on the PAC:

- Department of Planning and Zoning
- City Council

- Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO)
- Burlington Business Association
- Church Street Marketplace
- Old North End Arts and Business Network
- Burlington Walk-Bike Council
- Green Mountain Transit
- AARP Vermont
- Central District: one resident representative
- East District: one resident representative
- South District: one resident representative

At the outset of the study:

The Steering Committee will convene a kickoff meeting with PAC members and confirm roles and responsibilities.

Throughout the study:

The Steering Committee will plan and conduct five PAC meetings (including the kickoff meeting) throughout the study, aligned with major project milestones. PAC members may choose to participate in other public forums and engagement activities for the project, and they will help share project information and public engagement opportunities with their networks.

The public is welcome to attend the committee meetings as observers and will be offered a chance to provide direct input during a public comment period.

Meeting dates will be posted on the City, DPW, and CCRPC meeting calendars, and meeting agendas and notes will be posted on the project webpage.

In order to remove barriers to allow for meaningful and diverse community involvement, a stipend through the CCRPC will be available to PAC members who would not otherwise be able to participate. This stipend is intended to address barriers to participating such as missing work, child care, and transportation costs.

3: Public Forums

Three public forums will be held throughout this study. Public notification for these meetings must be conducted at least two weeks prior, and advertisement should be in several different formats to reach as many stakeholder groups as possible.

At the outset of the study and in consultation with the PAC:

- The Steering Committee will determine the basic format and content of public forums to be conducted throughout the study. Factors such as location along the study corridor, season and weather, and availability of stakeholder groups should be considered when determining when and where to conduct the forums.

- The Steering Committee will determine the best methods of notification for each stakeholder group.
- The Steering Committee will determine whether and how to translate meeting notifications and to offer interpretation services during forums.

For each public forum:

- Initial advertisement and a meeting agenda should be posted at least two weeks prior to the forum. At minimum, advertisement methods should include:
 - Email blast to the PAC, project contact list, area Councilors, and Public Works Commission Chair and Vice Chair
 - Front Porch Forum
 - DPW's social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter)
 - Update to the project webpage ([link](#))
 - Post to DPW, City, and CCRPC meeting calendars
- Additional advertisement and/or reminders should occur leading up to the forum using platforms that will reach a diversity of stakeholders.
- If the forum involves review of project reports or other documents, the project team will ensure documents are posted on the study webpage at least one week prior to the forum.
- At the forum, a sign-in sheet will be available for participants. This will help the project team understand the depth and breadth of its outreach efforts, and allow people to choose to be added to the project contact list.
- At the forum, the project team will collect public feedback through note-taking or another feedback mechanism.
- After the meeting, the project team will compile meeting notes and post on the project webpage.

Toolbox:

Advertisement formats (beyond the minimum formats described previously) may include:

- Door flyers
- Postcards
- Flyers at businesses along the corridor
- Paid advertisements in Seven Days or North End News
- CEDO's weekly newsletter

Public forum formats may include:

- Traditional presentation
- Pop-up demonstration project
- Walk-bike tour
- Workshop
- Open house
- Guest speaker

4: Continuous Communication

In addition to public forums, the Steering Committee will use a variety of platforms and strategies to keep the public informed and gather public feedback throughout the study.

At the outset of the study and in consultation with the PAC:

- The CCRPC will host and populate a project webpage on its website and include an introduction to the study and contact information. The webpage will include an option to sign up for project-related emails.
- The DPW will include a prominent link to the project webpage on its website.
- The Steering Committee will develop contacts for minority populations (if not already represented in the PAC) for assistance obtaining feedback, disseminating project updates, and possibly translating project materials.
- The Steering Committee will determine which materials should be translated into other languages and which languages to translate to.
- An announcement will be made through Front Porch Forum and DPW social media that this project has begun and asking people to sign up to be on an email list.

Throughout the study:

- The CCRPC will update the study webpage with the following materials as they are available:
 - Project documents
 - Meeting notices and agendas
 - Presentation slides
 - Meeting notes
 - Links to surveys, feedback forms, and other public feedback tools.
 - Project updates
- The public will be informed of significant project updates through:
 - Email blast to the PAC, project contact list, area Councilors, and Public Works Commission Chair and Vice Chair
 - Front Porch Forum
 - DPW's social media platforms
- Consider coordination with Local Motion for pop-up demonstrations, Bikes Mean Business program, and the Everyday Bicycling Project.
- DPW and CCRPC will coordinate to attend other community events as they occur to share information throughout the study.

Toolbox:

Public feedback (outside of public meetings) may be gathered in various interactive, convenient ways, such as:

- Direct emails to project team
- Online surveys
- Crowd-sourced mapping (such as Wikimapping)

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- Liaisons that are members of NPAs, churches, schools, community centers, and other organizations that may make announcements and gather feedback at their meetings and forward to the project team.
- Pop-up meetings