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July 22, 2014

Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager
Town of Richmond
P.O. Box 285
Richmond, VT 05477

Michele Boomhower, Assistant/MPO Director
Chittendon County Regional Planning Commission
110 West Canal Street, Suite 202
Winooski, VT 05404

Re: Richmond BF 0284(28) US 2, Bridge 32 over Snipe Island Brook

Dear Mr. Urbanik and Ms. Boomhower,

A Regional Concerns Meeting for the above-referenced project was held on June 23, 2014 to present several alternatives to the public (see attached attendance sheet). Representatives from the town of Richmond attended the meeting as well as several adjacent property owners and other members of the public. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the decisions that have been made and how we plan to advance this project after receiving this public input.

At the Regional Concerns Meeting, VTrans made a recommendation to replace the entire bridge rather than try to maintain any of the existing structure. A four week bridge closure was proposed while traffic was routed onto an off-site detour while the reconstruction was underway. This would not add any miles to the through route distance since US 2 runs parallel to Interstate 89 and would result in an end to end distance of 31.0 miles. The end to end distance is the distance from one end of the bridge to the other end measured along the detour route. A local bypass route that locals and emergency responders could use to circumvent the bridge closure is also available that would add 0.75 miles to the through route distance and would result in an end to end distance of 7.75 miles.

The decision to recommend a short-term closure was primarily based on the desire to expedite the project development process to allow construction to take place sooner. A bridge closure typically minimizes impacts to adjacent property owners and environmental resources and therefore can be expedited due to the smaller scope. A short project delivery time was considered very important since it is impossible to anticipate when conditions will worsen and require an emergency closure in the event that public safety is compromised in any way.

Additional details of the recommended scope of work and an evaluation of other alternatives considered is included in the Scoping Report which is available for viewing at:

https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/vtrans/external/Projects/Structures/13C070

There was a lot of good discussion and many valid comments made at the meeting (see attached meeting notes). We were asked to coordinate this bridge project with a reclaim project on US 2 being developed by the Paving section at VTrans if possible. We contacted the Paving section and will try to work the schedules so that construction takes place during the same year however it may not make sense to delay either of these projects to wait for the slower one. Another change as a result of this coordination is that we plan to increase the roadway shoulders in the area of the bridge project from 3 feet to 4 feet to match the typical used on the reclaim project. We understand from the Paving section that the additional shoulder width in this area would be appreciated by the public.

We were also asked if we could do anything about a curve in the road approximately 0.2 miles west of the subject bridge. The proposed project limits for the bridge project extend less than 300 feet to the west and this curve is considered outside the scope of our project. While we understand that there are commonly substandard features outside our limits, it is important that we keep our project scope small in order to focus on the deteriorated bridge.

The width of the existing Right-of-Way (ROW) along this portion of US 2 was also questioned. Mr. Urbanik felt that the actual ROW width was 4 rods rather than the 3 rods we show. We looked into this further and still feel 3 rods is appropriate and that we could not defend a 4 rod ROW based on the available information.

A meeting was held with Structures management to discuss the comments received at this meeting and to decide on the best way to proceed. As a result of that meeting, the decision has been made to continue with our recommended alternative and replace the bridge using a four week maximum bridge closure while traffic is detoured onto the state roads as shown at the meeting. The only notable change would be the increased roadway shoulder width as described previously.

It is understood and acknowledged that there could be some delay by emergency responders during the closure but whether this is considered a significant delay and is a justifiable reason for not proposing a four week closure is the debate. We take emergency response very seriously when we propose a bridge closure. The decision is reached primarily on the extra distance to travel during the closure, the duration of the closure and whether a local bypass route is available. For this project the end to end distance on the detour route is 31.0 miles and the end to end distance along the local bypass route is 7.75 miles. These distances are within the limits used on previous successful projects involving bridge closures and are considered acceptable. We will also continue to work with the Town of Richmond and other surrounding towns and emergency responders as the project is developed to coordinate the closure so that proper advance time is provided for planning purposes.

In closing, I would like to note that the proposed project has many advantages and is our best attempt to balance the many constraints on this project. Structures management is involved and ultimately makes the decision whether a closure is appropriate after carefully reviewing the

details of the project. We understand that closing a bridge can be a significant impact but we have found that this approach of concentrating the work in a short period of time is generally preferable to spreading the construction work out over several months or possibly years.

In the near future we will be submitting Conceptual plans that are based on the recommendation provided in the Scoping Report as presented at the Regional Concerns meeting. We also anticipate holding another public meeting during the design phase of the project to keep the public informed about this project and to work out additional details related to the bridge closure.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact me at the above address or by email at chris.williams@state.vt.us or by phone at (802) 828-0051.

Sincerely,

Christopher P. Williams, P.E.
Structures Senior Project Manager

Attachments

cc: David Blackmore - DTA #5 (via email)
Amy Bell - VAOT Planning Coordinator (via email)
Kristin Higgins – Design Project Manager (via email)
Wayne Symonds – Structures Program Manager (via email)
Jesse Devlin – Highway Safety and Design Program Manager (via email)

2

ALTERNATIVES PRESENTATION MEETING - ATTENDANCE SHEET

Project:	Richmond BF 0284(28)	**Meeting Date:**	Monday, June 23, 2014
Description:	US Route 2, Bridge 32 over Snipe Island Brook	**Location:**	Town Center Meeting Room 203 Bridge St. Richmond, VT 05477

Name	Company	Phone	E-Mail
Christopher Williams	VTrans	828-0051	chris.williams@state.vt.us
Gary Sweeny	VTrans	828-0049	gary.sweeny@state.vt.us
MARY F O'NEIL		434-2894	KERRY@GMAVT.NET
Thomas O'Neil		434-2894	tfoneil@ymail.com
A. EGLI	VTrans	828-2614	anthony.egli@state.VT.US
Geoffrey Urbanik	Town of Richmond	434-5170	townmgr@gmavt.net
Christine Forde	CCRPC	846-4490	cforde@ccrpcvt.org
BRIAN ESSER		233-2933	BRIAN.ESSER@GMAIL.COM

Meeting Notes - Alternatives Presentation

Richmond BF 0284(28), 13c070
Meeting Date: June 23, 2014

Town Center Meeting Room
203 Bridge St.
Richmond, Vermont 05477

Chris Williams, Gary Sweeny, and Anthony Egizi representing Vt. AOT

Discussion before the meeting began: US Route 2 reclaim project is planned for 2016. Mr. Urbanik would like to see both reclaim project and bridge 32 done at the same time. To be Continued….
Also, can we do anything about the curve to the west of the bridge? It is a sharp curve and there have been two fatalities there recently. **We can look into it.**

Chris presented the power point for the project including alternatives, pictures, drawings, costs, deficiencies, and traffic maintenance for the new project. He specifically noted that this is a State project; the bridge is owned by the State. The power point and the scoping report can be viewed in the project folder on the Z: drive and on the external webpage at:

https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/vtrans/external/Projects/Structures/13c070

The recommended alternative for this project is complete replacement of the bridge with traffic maintained on an off-site detour.

Following and during the presentation, the following discussions were heard:

Key to narrative below:	Input from Community:	Normal font
	Input from VTrans:	**Bold font**

1. Power point presentation lasted one hour.
2. There was a question about the time required for design. **Approximately two years.**
3. Mr. Urbanik stated that he believes the ROW is 4 rod. **Anthony stated that he had done the research and he is quite confident that it is 3 rod. This is to be confirmed.**
4. There was a question about future maintenance costs between the two alternatives discussed. **The future maintenance costs will be fairly close to each other. You could argue either way.**
5. What will bikers do? **Bikes are not allowed on the detour, I-89. We will try to publicize the closure in advance so that all the major cycle clubs are aware of the closure. We could possibly sign a bike route.**
6. Would there be a temporary bike/pedestrian bridge? **Generally no, it would have similar impacts to a vehicle temporary bridge.**

7. How does the next decision get made? **We will get together with our management and proceed to conceptual drawings.**
8. The speed limit is 50 mph? Can it be reduced? **We have a process for determining speed limit, which involves a traffic study to determine how fast people drive and what the speed should be based on conditions. It would be a separate project from the bridge.**
9. **It was suggested that the intersection of Snipe Ireland Road and US 2 should be improved.**