

Highway Division  
Asset Management Bureau  
Corridor Management Section

March 25, 2021

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**Richmond - Bolton STP 2924(1) New Project Summary**

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Below is a response to the documents received from CCRPC regarding the Richmond - Bolton STP 2924(1) project and NPS.

Responses to the Memo are in red text and within pages 1-4

Responses to the New Project Summary RPC Input Questionnaire are in red text and within pages 5-7

Thank you for sending the New Project Summary (NPS) for the Richmond - Bolton STP 2924(1) Project. We understand that this project is well into the preliminary design stage and that VTrans and the Town had discussions already, but we would have appreciated this summary earlier in the process to have more time to review and document all major issues from the local and regional perspective.

Thank you for taking the time to provide input in such a short time frame. While the NPS was provided later in the preliminary design phase than ideal, many of the discussions with the Town this past Fall served the intended role of the NPS by providing the Project Manager with an awareness of community concerns and initiatives ahead of preliminary plans. The NPS for this project was prioritized above recently programmed projects in order to document the complexities of this segment of roadway. An NPS is typically used for projects scheduled for construction 2-3 years out. The NPS summary is a new initiative, and we are still learning how long it takes to complete the summary documents.

The CCRPC and Town views this project as a unique opportunity to meet the shared interests and goals of VTrans, the Town and the region in support of active transportation, public transit, and a vibrant Village center. The Town also notes that they have communicated their goals and expectations verbally in the past, and the comments in this document are the same as communicated to VTrans and CCRPC before the NPS was developed.

We are continuing to evaluate what is possible as part of this project. This project has an associated scope with limitations and is focused on improving the pavement structure and overall longevity of the surface condition. Since the project is a reclaim paving project, there are some opportunities where certain elements could be constructed as part of the project such as widening of shoulder. However, the project is constrained by scope, schedule and cost. Specifically, this project will remain fully within the existing state ROW and will not process stormwater permitting due to roadway expansions. Although the project has limitations, there are opportunities to work together to incorporate project enhancements that could be incorporated as non-participating and be coordinated together with this project. VTrans will happily discuss coordinating the non-participating municipally derived and designed projects for the

shared interest of all parties.

CCRPC staff met with Richmond staff and officials Monday, March 8th to review the NPS and especially the recommendations to address safety, bicycle/pedestrian travel, parking, and the operations of the new signal at the US-2/Bridge Street/Jericho Road intersection in the Village. Below, we offer our combined local/regional comments:

- We appreciate the thorough safety analysis for this segment of US-2, and we agree with most of the safety recommendations. The Town requests additional information on the proposed left turn lane on US-2 at the intersection with Kenyon Road, the proposed left turn lane at the Park & Ride, as well as details for the proposed centerline rumble strips, in time to allow comment and influence on the final design.

The items noted above and in the NPS are currently being evaluated by the design team to ensure warrants are met and design minimums can be achieved for turn lanes. The preliminary plans are scheduled to be complete this spring and will be sent to the Town for review and comment. Regarding Centerline Rumble Strips (CLRS), the project length will be evaluated based on set criteria, and CLRS will be installed where the criteria are met. Some examples of the criteria are as follows:

- \* Pavement width (lane and shoulder) is 14 feet or greater in either direction
- \* AADT of 1500 VEH or greater
- \* Speed limit is 45 or greater

CLRS will be discontinued at centerline breaks for side roads and where any portion of a residence falls within 100 feet of centerline. For the latter, the CLRS will terminate 100 feet on either end of the residence. Finally, this element will be part of the preliminary plans submittal this spring.

- As stated in the NPS, the entire segment of US-2 is designated as a High Use/Priority corridor for bicycle travel in the VTrans On-road Bicycle Plan and is also designated as a High Priority/Feasibility corridor in the Regional Active Transportation Plan. Based on the significance of US-2 in bicycle travel in the region we ask that the shoulders be 6 ft throughout the entire project with the exception in the Village area where the built environment is different, with parking and sidewalks on one or both sides of US-2. Having 6 ft shoulders are particularly important in the segment between the Village and the Richmond Park & Ride since access, by bicycle, to the facility and the only public transportation service (LINK Express) available to Richmond residents is a significant local and regional goal. The desire to improved safety for cyclists by having a continuous 6 ft shoulder throughout the US-2 segment was discussed at all previous meetings that the Town had with VTrans. As soon as they are available, the Town would like detailed information on the design elements of the bicycle facilities in time to provide comments that will be considered in the final design.

We recognize that the installation of wide shoulders (6 Ft) on US-2 between the cemetery and the railroad area will require removal of soils and replacement of previously installed retaining walls, but we feel this is necessary to accomplish state, regional and local goals.

As noted, the project will not be obtaining ROW to complete the work. In some areas, adjacent slopes may be steepened slightly to achieve some wider shoulders, but only when the work will result in a stable slope that remains within the State existing ROW. In the segment discussed, the design is currently meeting or exceeding minimum shoulder width standards at 4 feet. The design team will be evaluating the section to determine if wider shoulders are feasible for the majority of the stretch within

the scope limitations. Note that this may not be reflected in the Preliminary Plans but is being worked on. Although this project will not meet all expectations, the project will not preclude the Town or Agency from doing more in the future.

- The Town supports providing parking where feasible and would like clear delineation of the locations of parking on US-2 in the Village area. The Town would like vertical curbing and sidewalks to be installed in the Village. The NPS does not mention sidewalk improvements and we believe that investments in pedestrian infrastructure beyond crosswalks are needed to help support regional and local goals of promoting walkable, livable, and healthy communities. The Town is again noting the desire that this project includes features similar to the nearby town of Waterbury, including sidewalks, curbs, and parking. The Town would like to discuss the specific locations and details of these features with VTrans in time to allow comment and influence of the final design.

This project will address design elements and features that are feasible within the scope. As noted below, sidewalks are not considered a participating element in this project, but VTrans is open to having discussions with the Town on how a municipal sidewalk and potential stormwater project could be coordinated with the US2 work. The Town could investigate the options available to municipalities through the VTrans bike/ped programs, more information is available at <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped>. The small grant program may possibly be coordinated with this project. Sidewalk installation and curbing is also possible after this project, as the paving will not preclude future projects that address pedestrian infrastructure.

- The full replacement (with mast arms) of the signal at the US-2/Bridge Street /Jericho Road intersection is appreciated. We understand that a left turn phase from Bridge St will be included in the programming of the new signal but are concerned that the NPS also associates this feature with a possible (future) exclusive left turn lane on Bridge Street. The Town has been very clear in all previous conversations that a left turn lane at this location is not feasible due to impacts to surrounding buildings in the historic commercial center of Richmond and the associated elimination of scarce parking in this area. We would like a clarification whether a left turn arrow will be implemented without requiring an exclusive left turn lane on Bridge Street.

The NPS intends to recommend incorporating a left turn signal as feasible/allowed by State and Federal standards with the upgrade of the full signal system. The project is not proposing a left turn lane on Bridge Street (this is in line with previous discussions) and the recommendation in the NPS install the new signal such that future projects at the intersection are possible. The design will outline a traffic signal infrastructure that is set back from the curb line to allow for future work between existing curb and the new signal system in the event the set back is needed.

- Finally, we believe that while new, the NPS has great potential as a tool for engaging the Town and the RPC early on in the process of designing a significant transportation project, and we encourage you to strengthen it by including a Municipal Comment section in addition to the RPC Comment section.

The NPS Questionnaire is designed to create a framework for the RPC to provide planning input and VTrans Response to Richmond - Bolton STP 2924(1) NPS

identify information that was missed. The NPS questionnaire and document is a tool for the RPC to collaborate with municipal staff as needed depending on project scope and land use setting. The NPS is intended to create greater awareness and expectations for all parties. Each RPC is welcome to work with municipalities and provide municipal specific input as appropriate. Thank you for the suggestion and we will evaluate this comment as we continue to evolve the NPS content and outreach.

## New Project Summary RPC Input Questionnaire

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This project, **Richmond - Bolton STP 2924(1)** is located on US Route 2 (US2) in the towns of Richmond and Bolton. The project extends from Richmond mile marker 0.000 to Bolton mile marker 1.860 (ETE 48.647 to 56.886). The total project length is approximately 8.239 miles. The project limits begin at the Williston-Richmond town line and end approximately three quarters of a mile west of Bolton Village.

1. Are there any town highway projects, or municipal operations planned that might be impacted by this project or coordination needed?

The Town is currently considering a sewer line extension project from the current end of the sewer line on West Main Street (approximate location: MM 2.45) to the Richmond Mobil gas station (approximate location: MM 1.30). This sewer line extension project was discussed during October 22, 2020 meeting between the Town and VTrans project staff. Coordination of both projects was verbally agreed upon during that meeting. The town will confirm the sewer line extension project and its details in summer 2021.

This information is added to NPS and the Project Manager will reach out to discuss further.

2. Is there a local business association, chamber of commerce, regional development corporation, or downtown group that we should be in contact with?

The Town recommends contacting the Western Slopes Business Association (WSBA).

This information is added to NPS.

3. Is this project on specific routes that school buses or students use to walk to and from school?

School bus routes utilize the entirety of Route 2 within the town, and cross Route 2 at the Route 2/Bridge Street/Jericho Road intersection. Students also use the Route 2/Bridge Street/Jericho Road intersection to cross Route 2 to reach the school on Jericho Road.

This information is added to NPS.

4. Are there any bicycle and/or pedestrian specific concerns within the project limits?

The Town has numerous concerns on the lack of safe and continuous bicycle facilities along the Route 2 corridor as well as pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and crosswalks) within the Village area. Specifically, the Town has the following bicycle and pedestrian concerns with the project as proposed:

- The four-foot shoulders for the majority of the project are vastly inadequate, especially in regard to the Route 2/I-89/Route 117 intersections (MM 0.943 to MM 1.217), Route 2 alongside the cemetery approaching Richmond Village (MM 1.217 to MM 2.500), and Route 2 past the village towards the Andrews Community Forest (MM 2.940 to approximate MM 4.000). The latter segments have narrow to no shoulders, and poor sight distances for vehicle and bicycle traffic.

The project will be looking to maintain consistent lane and shoulder widths wherever feasible at a minimum in accordance with the Vermont State Standards. Where bridge infrastructure, significant slopes, or ROW impacts may be encountered, the project will install the widest shoulder feasible. The shoulder width of 4ft meets or exceeds the Vermont State Standard.

- The five-foot shoulders from MM 1.217 to MM 2.500 are severely deficient for pedestrian and bicycle traffic flow. The Town currently has no bicycle, pedestrian, or transit facilities between Richmond Village and the Park and Ride. Without the inclusion of adequate bicycle and pedestrian on Route 2 between Richmond Village and the Park and Ride, the Town concludes that the recommendation does not align with VTrans "Vermont Long Range Transportation Plan" and its goal of improving the condition and performance of multimodal transportation facilities.

As noted above, the project will install a minimum 4 foot shoulder as possible. The NPS notes the desire for wider shoulders within this segment, and the design team will be evaluating the potential impacts to ROW or other resources. Please reach out to the Project Manager if additional information is needed.

- The sidewalks along Route 2 within the Village area are either failing or not properly buffered for safe pedestrian use and they need to be upgraded as part of this project.

Sidewalks are considered non-participating items and are the responsibility of the municipality unless impacted directly by VTrans construction activities. Sidewalk work will not be included with the project as a participating cost, however similar to the waterline discussion, if the Town develops a project to address the sidewalks VTrans can and will coordinate with the Town's project, either as a non-participating element with the US-2 project or by coordinating construction schedules and potential for overlap of construction activities.

- The Route 2/Bridge Street/Jericho Road intersection lacks features for safe crossing by persons with disabilities. The design of this intersection should be ADA compliant so it could be used safely by pedestrians of all ages and capabilities.

The new signal system will include ADA compliant crossing infrastructure (push buttons, count down pedestrian signal heads, etc.). Additionally, existing sidewalk ramps will be evaluated for compliance and will be upgraded if necessary with this project to meet current standards. Please note, sidewalk and ramp work will be confined to the ramps and immediately adjacent panels as necessary.

5. Are there any transit specific concerns within the project limits?

The lack of public transit, between the Richmond Village and the Park and Ride as well as between the Riverview Commons Mobile Home Park (one of the areas in town with affordable housing) and the Park and Ride is a major issue for the Town. If expansion of public transit services is not feasible at this time, then providing safe bicycle and pedestrian connections (mainly wide shoulders) from these areas to the Park & Ride facility is crucial to provide access to transit (LINK Express).

This segment of roadway will see an improvement of additional shoulder width. The distance from the Park & Ride to the North end of Richmond village is approximately 1.35 miles and approximately 1.02 ( 76%) of the shoulders are currently between 2-3 ft wide. The desired shoulder width of 6ft can not be built out as part of this project. The amount of earthwork and permitting required is beyond what is possible, however, this project will not preclude the Town or Agency from doing more in the future.

6. Are there any existing, pending, or planned development proposals that would impact future transportation patterns? Please provide a map, if appropriate.

The Town is expecting buildout of a commercial planned unit development consisting of office uses, a restaurant, and light manufacturing uses off Willis Farm Road (approximately 830 West Main Street). Buildout is anticipated over the course of five years, and it may include increased turns at the Route 2/Willis Farm Road intersection primarily during peak hours. The town is also expecting buildout over the course of 10 years of a 45-unit Planned Unit Development at Jolina Court--approximately 0.20 miles from the Route 2/Bridge Street intersection. Currently, 14 residential units have been built. Anticipated indirect impacts upon buildout may include increased peak hour traffic from Bridge Street onto Route 2 and from Route 2 onto Bridge Street. The town is discussing plans for possible redevelopment of the Mobil gas station at 1436 West Main Street. Project construction and expected impacts are to be determined.

Noted/Added to the NPS.

7. Are there any scoping studies or Master Plans developed through programs such as Better Connection or Municipal Planning Grant that we should be aware of?

The Town and the CCRPC are currently conducting a Bridge Street Corridor Study and a Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan for areas north of the Winooski River. Both projects are slated to be completed in July 2021.

Noted/Added to the NPS.

8. Are there any intersection counts within the project limits that could be useful in determining design features such as turning lanes? No recent TM counts are available.

Noted/Added to the NPS.