

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – August 22, 2023

Committee members present: Chris Cole (Chair), Cathleen Gent (Vice Chair), Jon Kart, Allen Knowles, Susan Wells, Cameron Wong

Others present: Keith Osborne (Town Planner), Jason Charest (CCRPC), Lisa Kory, Jeanann Adams, Mark Fausel, Clara Knowles. All attended remotely.

A quorum was reached and the Chair convened the meeting at 5:37 PM.

Abbreviations used in RTC minutes: ARPA = American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; CCRPC = Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; D&K = Dubois and King; GMT=Green Mountain Transit; PPL = Project Pipeline Document; RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; RVC=Riverview Commons; SB = Selectboard; TAP=Transportation Alternatives Program; THBC = intersection of Thompson Rd, Huntington Rd, Bridge St, and Cochran Rd; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; VDH = VT Dept. of Health; VPSP2=Vermont Project Selection and Project Prioritization; VTRANS=Vermont Agency of Transportation;

1. Welcome and Public Comments: No public comments for items not on the agenda.

2. Revisions to Agenda: None

3. Approve Minutes from August 8, 2023, meeting: Knowles noted that the draft minutes list him as present, which he was not. Osborne will make this correction. **Motion by Wells, seconded by Gent, to approve the minutes as corrected. Passed unanimously.**

4. In progress projects:

a) Cochran Road Corridor Study: Charest reported that the designated consultant, WSP, is interested and will reply soon on availability. Gent queried whether WSP will attend the next RTC meeting. Charest said the plan was an initial meeting with WSP, himself, Gent and Osborne. It was noted that the available consultants are all busy this year, and WSP has not actually committed to this project yet.

b) Route 2 Pinch Points: The final report from Stantec has been received and distributed by Osborne. Gent noted that locations 2 & 3 will be addressed by a planned VTRANS project scheduled for 2026. Cole noted that other locations involving culverts would eventually be addressed by VTRANS maintenance cycles, but that the entry/exit to the village at locations 10 & 11 would not ever be addressed by VTRANS in normal maintenance. Because village entry/exit is necessary to access the entire corridor, it should be put forward as a priority. Charest noted that Stantec recommended that next step be Richmond and CCRPC submit to VPSP2 (VERMONT PROJECT SELECTION AND PROJECT PRIORITIZATION) for this to become a VTRANS project.

Motion by Kart, seconded by Gent, that RTC accept the Stantec US-2 Pinch Points Final Report as written, forward it to the SB with the RTC recommendation to prioritize locations 10 & 11, and work with CCRPC to submit to VPSP2. Approved unanimously.

Osborne and Charest will coordinate scheduling for SB presentation.

c) THBC Intersection – Preferred alternative: Cole gave a brief recap of the history and status of this initiative, which has two primary goals; first to improve safety and the ability of pedestrians to traverse the intersection, and second to reduce motorist confusion about right-of-way in what is currently a non-standard traffic situation. The “preferred alternative” was created after the Town could not agree on one of the original 3 options proposed by the consultant (VHB), and the traffic engineers at VHB declined to put their names to a “no build” option, as they felt the current situation was unacceptable.

Charest gave a recap of the FY2021 study, including the Bridge St. traffic count of 5400 vehicles/day, and 6 crashes between 2015-2019, and noted that although the preferred alternative had already been accepted by the SB, the public meeting 2 years ago had been poorly attended and next steps had not been taken. Thus, further public comment has been solicited at this meeting as part of RTC moving this project forward.

Public comment ensued for the next hour, following two main themes. One theme, put forward by a number of people who traverse the intersection as pedestrians, is that the intersection is difficult and dangerous to traverse and impedes their ability to travel in Richmond on foot, including impeding the ability to get children to the day-care on Thompson Rd, impeding the ability of residents of Richmond Terrace to walk to village services and destinations, impeding the ability of residents of Cochran Road to walk to village destinations, and impeding the ability of village residents to access the commercial and health care destinations on Huntington Road. It was noted that by discouraging pedestrian travel, the current situation increases motor vehicle travel and resulting congestion in the village. It was noted that the bottleneck that determines driving time through the village is the section of Bridge Street from Railroad St. through the US-2 intersection, and slowing traffic through the THBC intersection would not worsen that. Residents who live near the intersection recounted frequent “near miss” traffic situations, horn blowing, and shouted imprecations involving drivers who seem confused by the unusual traffic right-of-way at the intersection.

A second theme was put forward by people who basically feel there is not a problem, and see no need for change and the involved expense. These people reported traversing the intersection by motor vehicle, being familiar with the right-of-ways, knowing work arounds, and seeing little pedestrian travel.

Plans from the report were reviewed. Specifics of the preferred alternative and rationales were discussed, including the “mountable” central island, the yield sign on Bridge Street, tightening turning radii (“squaring up” the intersection), curbs with ADA ramps and tactile pads, and shortening crosswalk distances with bump-outs. It was noted that this is the least expensive alternative developed, other than “no build”.

5. General Updates: The meeting time having run out, these were truncated.

a) Share the Road update – deferred to next meeting.

b) Western Gateway update – Gent reported the Alternative Presentation/Public Comment Meeting occurred August 10, 2023. The consultant will next prepare a final report for RTC review and SB presentation.

c) Cochran Road Speed Tables – Osborne reported installation is in progress.

6. Agenda Items for Next Meeting: Cole, Gent and Osborne will prepare the agenda for the next meeting

7. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Wells, seconded by Knowles. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.

Minutes by Allen Knowles