

## Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – September 26, 2023

Committee members present: Cathleen Gent (Vice Chair), Keith Jennings, Jon Kart, Allen Knowles, Susan Wells

Others present: Keith Osborne (Town Planner), Jason Charest (CCRPC), Kevin McCarthy (WSP), Erik Maki (WSP)

All attended remotely.

A quorum was reached and the Vice Chair convened the meeting at 5:35 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 September 12, 2023, meeting:** There were no corrections or additions.  
**Motion by Wells, seconded by Jennings, to approve the minutes. Passed unanimously.**

**4. Cochran Road Corridor Study – WSP Scope of work:** Erik Maki and Kevin McCarthy of WSP presented a draft scope of work and it was reviewed. Charest noted that the scope does not include the intersections at either end of Cochran Road. Wells asked whether CCRCP is doing a traffic study; Gent said not for this project. Kart and Osborne noted that the SB and CCRCP currently have a traffic study in progress, and Charest stated that is to assess the effects of the temporary speed bumps placed this summer. Kart questioned whether local police have data not already in the CCRCP data bases, and Charest replied probably not, but if anyone is aware of any to let him know.

Gent noted that traffic calming strategies are desired as a separate deliverable for the entire length of Cochran Road, and that this was part of the proposal for the project. Maki will add this to the scope proposal.

There was discussion of how to do public outreach for this project, how WSP will interact with RTC, and what the schedule will be. The consultants will do an in person site visit, but otherwise will probably attend RTC meetings remotely as frequently as is useful. Public outreach can be done in a hybrid format. Kart expressed concern for public fatigue and frustration with repeated calls for public input; WSP will try to incorporate information from prior public outreach from other studies involving this road. Gent noted that the SB/D&K/CCRCP study for short term changes to Cochran Road may produce information during the course of the WSP study that could impact the duration of the study.

Charest said there should be an interim public outreach meeting to present alternatives for public comment and feedback, and Maki will add this to the scope proposal.

WSP will make edits and provide a final draft scope of work for the project.

## **5. In-Progress Projects:**

**a) THBC Intersection – Design alternative designation for Selectboard:** Based on public input at prior meetings, two options are being considered with pros and cons to be discussed.

- A four way stop, as detailed under alternative 1 on pages 9-10 of the 2021 Bridge Street Complete Streets Corridor Study  
[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Departments/Planning\\_Zoning/FINAL\\_Richmond\\_VHB\\_BridgeStreetCorridorStudy\\_TechnicalMemo\\_8-27-21-compressed\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Departments/Planning_Zoning/FINAL_Richmond_VHB_BridgeStreetCorridorStudy_TechnicalMemo_8-27-21-compressed_1_.pdf)
- The “VHB alternative”, previously called the “preferred alternative”, as detailed on page 35 of the 2021 Bridge Street Complete Streets Corridor Study, which involves a central mountable island and tighter turning radii to slow vehicle traffic, retains stop signs for Cochran and Thompson Roads, and adds a yield sign for Bridge Street.
- Both alternatives add sidewalk segments with ramps, level landings, and detectable warning surfaces to each corner of the intersection to provide appropriate pedestrian crossing locations.

### **Pros for 4 way stop:** (see also pg 13 of the VHB study)

- It would most reliably improve pedestrian safety in crosswalks and thereby allow greater pedestrian access, including to the daycare on Thompson Road, to Richmond Terrace, and to the commercial area on Huntington Road. This alternative best aligns with the 2018 Town Plan goals for a walkable/bikeable community.
- It would “normalize” the intersection to a right-of-way pattern understood by all users, not just locals. This should help reduce the crash frequency (6 crashes listed between 2015-2019).
- It would most reliably improve bike safety in the intersection.
- It is much less expensive than a signalized intersection or a roundabout, which are the only other alternatives that achieve similar levels of safety.
- In the AM peak hour, the delay/queue on Huntington Rd. would reduce the delay/queue on Bridge St, thus same total time to get through the rate limiting Bridge/US2/Jericho intersection, but divided into two segments. This could also have the benefit of less congestion at the Railroad/Jolina Ct./Bridge St. intersection.

### **Cons for 4 way stop:**

- Vehicle traffic would need to come to a full stop. This would create some delay. From page 9 of the VHB study, “Based on simulations of the all-way stop condition, the most significant queuing would be expected for the Huntington Road approach in the AM peak hour at approximately 100’ (95th percentile queue) and for the Bridge Street approach in the PM peak hour at approximately 120’ (95th percentile queue). A comparison of simulated queues for the alternatives and the no build condition are detailed in the appendices.” This is much less than the queues that occur on Bridge St. northbound in the morning and on US2 eastbound in the

evening and westbound in the morning and considered in the acceptable range by traffic engineers.

- There would be some increase in noise from vehicles starting from a full stop.
- Complaints from vehicle operators are anticipated, as they are accustomed to traversing this intersection without slowing.

**Pros for the VHB Alternative:**

- It is an improvement on the current situation in terms of safety, in that it would slow (but not stop) vehicles.
- It might change driver's perception of the intersection to a more "share the road" and less "Richmond Gran Prix" perspective.
- It is much less expensive than a signalized intersection or a roundabout.

**Cons for the VHB Alternative:**

- Compared to a four-way stop, it is less effective in improving pedestrian and bike safety and less effective in achieving the 2018 Town Plan goals.
- It does not reliably slow traffic going straight through from Huntington Rd. to Cochran Rd.
- It does not "normalize" the right-of-way pattern of the intersection. The confusion will remain.
- The mountable center island is seen as a problem by some, although a standard VTRANS infrastructure feature.

**Motion by Knowles to recommend to the SelectBoard the VHB Alternative One, "Four Way Stop" as detailed on pages 9-10 of the 2021 Bridge Street Complete Streets Corridor Study. Motion failed for lack of a second.**

Further discussion ensued of forwarding both alternatives to the SB for their consideration. Osborne will construct a table of pros and cons for review by RTC. RTC members also want further discussion of speed tables and a sidewalk segment on the south side of Huntington Rd. from Thompson Rd. to the commercial complex.

**b) Upper Bridge Bike/Ped:** Due to lack of time, the rest of the agenda was truncated. Gent reported that a Request for Proposals (RFP) is being set up by herself, Cole and Arneson, and some clarifications are needed. See "Gent info for RTC meeting" in related documents for 9-26-2023 RTC meeting. See pages 3-6 and 28-30 of the 2021 VHB study.

- **Upper Bridge St East Side:** Regarding Alternative 2, **A sidewalk and uphill bike lane on the east side of Bridge St. from the Railroad tracks to Rt. 2.** From Gent's memo: "The RTC previously discussed this, with unanimous support (5/11/21 meeting) for part of Alternative 2, namely for the sidewalk on the east side of Bridge Street, without a shared use path for bicyclists." Knowles stated he agrees with an east side sidewalk, not a shared use path. He felt there is not room to mix bicycles with the volume and pattern of pedestrian use in this area. He also stated he does not favor a climbing bike lane, as it would end without leaving bikes a place to go or a spot in the queue for the traffic light. He feels the best alternative for bikes is sharing the lane with cars. The difference amounts to painting a bike lane vs. painting sharrows and signage that "bikes use full lane".

- **A sidewalk and crosswalk on the west side of Bridge St. at the intersection with Railroad St., near the Richmond Market.** From Gent’s memo: “First, we need to learn more about the timing of negotiations between the town and Dan Noyes regarding the ROW matter RE: Railroad Street. Also during the 5/11/21 meeting, “Committee members agreed the town should work with Dan Noyes as an active partner for the project. Jason Charest will follow up with the railroad to assess the required distance from the railroad tracks for a sidewalk.” We should confirm with Jason Charest the required distance from railroad tracks for a sidewalk.” Knowles asked if the reflectorized barrels that previously separated the “sidewalk” area of blacktop from the vehicle lane could be replaced, as cars infringe on the zebra striped area in front of the market.
- **A crosswalk with bumpouts between Pleasant St. and Depot St. and a bumpout at the mid-block crossing.** There was consensus that this should be part of the RFP. Knowles asked whether the RRFB’s at the mid-block crossing could be moved onto the bumpout, as the current location on the west side is not in driver’s direct site line.

## 6. General Updates

**a) Share the Road update:** Wells reported no new info; next subcommittee meeting 9-28-2023.

**b) Route 2 Pinch Point Study:** Not yet reviewed by the SB; Osborne has requested of Arneson that it be on the 10-2-2023 SB agenda.

**c) Western Gateway Study:** Gent reported that scheduling conflicts have led to this presentation being changed to the 10-24-2023 RTC agenda.

## 7. Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

- Review of THBC alternatives pros and cons, and speed table and sidewalk segments.
- Share the Road update
- WSP scope of work for Cochran Rd: review edits.
- Jericho Rd. sidewalk: Communicating failure to get funding to residents

**8. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Knowles, seconded by Wells. Passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Minutes by Allen Knowles