

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – August 23, 2022

All participants attended the meeting remotely.

Committee members present: Chris Cole (chair), Cathleen Gent (vice-chair), Allen Knowles, Cameron Wong

Others present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner)

A quorum was reached and the chair convened the meeting at 5:33 PM

Abbreviations used in these minutes: RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; PPL = Project Pipeline Document; ARPA = American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; CCRPC = Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; D&K = Dubois and King

1. Revisions to the Agenda: Wong proposed adding a discussion of use of ARPA funds. This was added to New Business.

2. Approval of Minutes from August 9, 2022: There were no corrections or additions and the minutes. **Motion by Gent, seconded by Knowles, to approve minutes. Approved unanimously.**

3. UPWP FY22 Project Updates:

a. Sidewalk Scoping Study: Cole presented the “No Build” recommendation for the Huntington Road section to the SelectBoard at their August 15, 2022 meeting, along with the reasons for that decision and plans for going forward. Those plans are for the RTC to pursue a more comprehensive study of the safety issues of the road segment for vehicle and farm use as well as bicycle and pedestrian use. This will likely be a proposal for a UPWP study through CCRPC for FY24 and will be discussed further in November 2022. Prior to that, Cole and Knowles will do a site visit, hopefully with the Farr’s participation, to get a more complete understanding of all of the safety issues. (Further Action, Cole and Knowles)

b. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, Phase 2, South: Gent, Kart and Knowles attended the August 16, 2022 Steering Committee meeting. The next steps for this project are:

1. Distribute updated draft report for the Bike/Ped Master Plan Steering Committee to review on September 2nd
2. Meet with the Bike/Ped Master Plan Steering Committee to review the draft report on September 6th at 5:30 pm (Meeting agenda and details are forthcoming.)
3. Materials for the Selectboard to review will be sent to Venkataraman for distribution on September 15th
4. Present final plan to the SelectBoard on September 19th.

Gent commented that the Bike/Ped Master Plan contains a lot of material pertaining to trails, while the RTC focus is more on connectivity and road/sidewalk planning than on trails. Cole commented that the Master Plan is for use by all relevant town bodies, and that the Trails Committee and Recreation Committee may make use of the planning related to trails.

4. Review Progress on Project Pipeline Document and Plans for SelectBoard Presentation:

a. Project Pipeline Document (PPL): Gent provided a revised version of the PPL. Discussion of organization and formatting possibilities ensued. Wong will work with Gent on applying further formatting and organization changes with the goal of increased clarity and accessibility of information in the PPL, particularly for “naïve” readers, i.e. those not familiar with the ongoing work on these RTC projects. This further revision will be presented at the September 13, 2022 RTC meeting for discussion. (further action, Wong and Gent).

b. Slide Deck and Presentation for the SelectBoard: Venkataraman reports being behind schedule on this but hopes to have an initial version for review soon. (further action, Venkataraman).

5. Review of FY23 UPWP Gateway Scoping Study Draft Scope from Dubois and King: A draft scope and schedule for this study was provided by D&K. RTC reviewed this and extensive discussion ensued. Prior studies (2014 Scoping Study and 2021/22 Bike/Ped/Master plan) have identified at least six distinct alignments to get between the village and the Park and Ride at exit 11. Budget constraints make scoping of all of these options impractical. D&K proposed reducing the number of options to be scoped by the criteria of not addressing options with known constraints such as environmental concerns, the railroad’s resistance to permitting any trail on their right of way, and community preference for a direct corridor. This eliminates the Winooski River trail and Rail with Trail corridors for consideration as part of this study. This leaves 3 options for getting from the village past the cemeteries to a proposed shared use path along US2 leading to the Park and Ride and a fourth option that uses the I-89 right of way.

1. Jericho Road to School Street and then across Reaps’ land to the US2 alignment. D&K proposed eliminating this option, but the committee felt it should be retained, as Reaps have reportedly expressed willingness to allow it.
2. Baker Street to Tilden Avenue to the cemetery, and then across the cemetery to the US2 alignment by one of two possible routes. It is noted that in the past the cemetery has been unwilling to consider this, and determining whether the cemetery’s position has changed should be done before expending further resources.
3. Along the north side of US2 from the end of the sidewalk in the village to the US2 aligned multi-use path. This alignment was proposed to RTC by Gary Bressor at the March 8, 2022 RTC meeting. Please refer to the minutes and meeting materials for that date on the Town website. Knowles commented that VTRANS claims a 4 rod right of way for the entire length of US2 in the Town of Richmond
4. I-89 VTRANS right of way between the Park and Ride and the east side of the village, near the fire department and the US2 bridge over I-89, with additional access at Jericho Road/School Street. This would provide active transportation users a bypass of the heavily trafficked US2 segment from exit 11 through to the east side of the village, but not “on path” access to the village center. Cole commented that he thinks it unlikely that VTRANS would agree to this use of their right of way, and whether or not this is the case should be determined before expending further resources.

As regards D&K proposals for the I-89 exit 11 / Route 2 interchange and access to Riverview commons, RTC was in agreement with the proposed scope.

6. Update on Walkability Study Report: Venkataraman reports that this remains a work in progress. He hopes to have a draft within 1-2 weeks. (further action, Venkataraman).

7. Old and New Business:

a. 2022 VTRANS Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Grant Application: Venkataraman contacted from VTRANS Project Manager Peter Pochop for more specifics about why the town's application was unsuccessful. See staff report in the meeting materials for details. RTC discussed these at length to apply lessons learned to future applications.

b. Planning for the Capital Improvement Plan discussions: This item was postponed until the next meeting due to time constraints.

c. 2022 Reconnecting Communities Program: This was reviewed and the consensus was that our projects are a poor fit for the purposes and criteria of this program. We will not pursue it.

d. Traffic Study of Bridge Street/Railroad Street/Jolina Court intersection: During discussion of PPL elements a tangential discussion occurred relating to the Bridge Street Corridor and Bridge Street Sidewalk Scoping studies. The current difficulties at the Bridge/Railroad/Jolina intersection will likely become worse due to planned development at the Buttermilk parcel (utilizing Jolina Court), the new and expanded food market and new businesses in the old market building (utilizing Railroad Street), and ongoing residential development south of the Winooski River, much of which will utilize Bridge Street. RTC feels a traffic study of current conditions is warranted. CCRPC may have funds available to pursue this in FY23, and if not, RTC could consider it for a FY24 UPWP grant. **Motion by Gent, seconded by Knowles, for the Town of Richmond to pursue a comprehensive traffic study of the intersection of Bridge Street, Railroad Street, and Jolina Court. Approved Unanimously.** Venkataraman will look into this with the Town and CCRPC. (further action, Venkataraman)

e. ARPA Funds: The Town has received \$1.2 million in ARPA funds and has created a committee to provide recommendations to the SelectBoard for its expenditure. The ARPA committee is in the process of obtaining public input. Wong suggested RTC should consider providing suggestions as a committee. Discussion ensued with possibilities mentioned. Gent will list scoped projects from the PPL and email this list to RTC members to review for discussion at the next RTC meeting September 13, 2022. (further action, Gent).

8. Adjourn: Motion by Gent, seconded by Wong, to adjourn. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Minutes by Allen Knowles

Future agenda items: (these were not discussed per se as an agenda item but are pulled from the minutes by the clerk for convenience)

- Discuss scoped projects for recommendations to ARPA committee

- Follow up on proposal for Bridge/RR/Jolina traffic study
- Planning for the Capital Improvement Plan discussions
- Follow up on Walkability Study Report
- Follow up on FY23 UPWP projects
- Review of revised PPL
- Review of slide deck/plan for presentation to the SelectBoard of RTC work
- Follow up on FY22 Bike/Ped Master Plan South

Further Action Needed:

1. Site visit to Huntington Road segment from end of sidewalk to Hinesburg Road: See 3a above. This will hopefully be done with the participation of the Farr's and should be completed before the first November RTC meeting. (further action, Cole and Knowles)

2. Further work on PPL: Wong and Gent will work on further revisions of the PPL to be discussed at the 9/13 meeting. See 4a above. (further action, Wong and Gent)

3. Further work on Slide Deck and Presentation for the SelectBoard: See 4b above. (further action, Venkataraman).

4. Further work on Walkability Study Report: See 6 above. (further action, Venkataraman).

5. Town to pursue a traffic study of Bridge/RR/Jolina intersection. See 7d above. (further action, Venkataraman)

6. Committee recommendations for use of ARPA funds: Gent to email committee members a list of scoped studies for discussion at next meeting. See 7e above. (further action Gent)