



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

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Councilor Jane Stromberg, *East District*

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Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council

Tuesday, May 26, 2020 5:30 PM

Due to current physical distancing measures, this meeting will be held virtually.

To view the meeting:

1. Join via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84603122855>
2. Call in for audio-only – Phone number: 312-626-6799 and Webinar ID: 846 0312 2855

To participate in public comment:

1. You must either join the meeting via the Zoom link above (strongly encouraged) or by calling via the call-in information above.
2. If signed in via Zoom, please use the “Raise Your Hand” feature. This will alert DPW staff that you wish to speak and will automatically add you to the queue. When it's your turn to speak, your name will be called and you will be unmuted.
3. If you are calling in, please press *9 which will alert DPW staff that you wish to speak. When it's your turn to speak, your phone # will be called out and you will be unmuted.
4. If you encounter any difficulties when attempting to speak, please email DPWCommunications@burlingtonvt.gov.

–AGENDA–

1. **Agenda**
2. **Minutes of 2/4/2020**
3. **Public Forum**
4. **Railyard Enterprise Project – Supplemental Scoping**
 - Chapin Spencer, DPW
 - Eleni Churchill, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
 - 20-minute duration
 - Action requested
5. **Fare-Free Transit**
 - Nicole Losch, DPW
 - Chris Damiani, Green Mountain Transit
 - 5-minute duration
 - Informative
6. **Consolidated Collection Study**
 - Lee Perry, DPW
 - 10-minute duration
 - Informative

7. Quick Build Projects

- Elizabeth Gohringer, DPW
- 10-minute duration
- Informative

8. E-Bike Share

- Chapin Spencer, DPW
- 5-minute duration
- Informative

9. DPW Director's Update

10. Councilors' Update

11. Adjourn



May 22, 2020

TO: Transportation, Energy, & Utilities Committee

FROM: Nicole Losch, Senior Planner, DPW
Chris Damiani, Transit Planner, Green Mountain Transit

RE: Green Mountain Transit updates: Zero-Fare Transit Evaluation and COVID-19

Introduction

In January 2020 City Council passed a Resolution requesting a study of fare-free transit and a report-back by Council's second meeting in May. Staff from the Department of Public Works, Clerk Treasurer, and Green Mountain Transit (GMT) met in February and developed an initial outline for this study. Since then, follow-up has been delayed while the COVID-19 pandemic shifted our work to address immediate public health and financial impacts that our agencies and community are facing. We remain committed to completing this study but request a 6-month time extension, presenting the report to City Council no later than its second meeting in November 2020.

Zero-Fare Operations & Impacts During COVID-19

GMT began zero-fare operations on March 17, 2020 in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 between other passengers and transit operators. GMT continues to provide as much transit service as possible based on staffing levels, but some routes and some trips have been suspended. A hotline has been established to provide service updates to passengers without internet access. Passengers are encouraged to stay home if possible and allow essential travel for other essential workers and passengers who rely on transit as their only means of transportation. Passengers are asked to board and alight through the rear door, and, as of May 2, all passengers are required to wear a mask. To allow social distancing, GMT is limiting the number of people on board: 30' buses will allow 12 passengers, 35' buses will allow 14 passengers, 40' and 920 buses will allow 18 people, and Berlin cutaway buses will allow 4 people. Ridership has decreased approximately 75% as a result of the current pandemic.

GMT operations are heavily subsidized by Federal, State, and Local contributions, but fares do contribute approximately 20% of the cost to operate. The Federal government established the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Emergency Security), a \$2 trillion relief package that gives transit agencies \$25 billion in

emergency relief. The Vermont Agency of Transportation received \$13 million of that contribution, of which GMT received \$7.6 million. GMT has applied CARES funding for personal protection equipment for employees, overtime and equipment to disinfect buses, and to cover a portion of the revenue lost by reduced fares. Ridership over the next 6 to 18 months is unpredictable and GMT is awaiting updates on local municipalities' ability to provide their annual contributions, which provides approximately 20% of the cost of operations. The GMT Board did approve reducing FY21 local assessments by 4%, and CARES funding will be used to backfill this revenue reduction and the additional lost fare revenue (predicted to be up \$1.9 million in FY21).



May 22, 2020

TO: Transportation Energy Utilities Committee of City Council

FROM: Elizabeth Gohringer, Associate Planner

RE: Quick-Build Program and Old North End Greenway

Recommendations

No action is requested at this time.

What is Burlington's Quick-Build Program?

On April 21st 2017, the City Council approved PlanBTV Walk Bike, Burlington's road map to improve walking and biking in Burlington. PlanBTV's two goals are to create safer streets for everyone and to make walking and biking a viable way to get around town. During the community outreach for the PlanBTV Walk Bike, the top priorities identified by the community were implementing more protected bike lanes and creating a more connected and continuous bicycle network with safer and easier intersection crossings.

The Quick-Build Program is one method that Burlington has used to achieve these goals. The Burlington Quick-Build program is an initiative of the City of Burlington Department of Public Works to deliver a phased approach to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects that improve safety and connectivity. The Quick-Build Program is one of the first projects to be realized from the planBTV Walk Bike Master Plan, and helps the City implement street safety and community placemaking projects quickly, with low-cost and flexible materials intended to last one to five years.

The program provides opportunities for residents, businesses, and the City to experience and evaluate projects, and provide real-time feedback, before committing to long-term capital projects. The materials are fully adjustable and can change based on community input. If a Quick-Build project is successful, then it will have the opportunity to be refined and kept in place and maintained until made more permanent with long-lasting materials. If a project is not well-received or does not achieve intended safety and accessibility outcomes, then it may be removed or altered. Quick-Build projects may be implemented citywide but are most appropriate for streets designated by the planBTV Walk Bike Master Plan as a slowzone, neighborhood greenway, placemaking, bike and / or pedestrian priority corridor.

Quick-Build Projects Installed to Date

- Dewey Park Plaza – installed 2014
- The Old North End Neighborhood Greenway (discussed in more detail later in this memo) – installed 2018. Neighborhood Greenways are routes on streets with low vehicle volumes and speeds, designed to prioritize bicycling and enhance conditions for walking.
- Curb extensions for intersection safety, using paint, bollards, and planters:
 - Pearl St at Battery St, George St, Pine St, and North Champlain St - installed 2018
 - Four corners at Main St and South Champlain St - installed 2018
 - Howard St / S Winooski Ave / St Paul St – installed 2018
- North Union St Protected Bike Lane – installed 2017 (currently pending re-installation). This bike lane uses bollards as a physical barrier to define and protect the bike lane from car traffic and encourage drivers to slow down.
- Bike boxes at the intersection of Pearl St and N Union St – installed 2019. A bike box is a painted green space on the road with a white bicycle symbol inside, allowing people on bikes to cross the intersection ahead of traffic.

Maintenance Challenges

Maintenance has proven challenging with our quick-build projects, for a variety of reasons. It is difficult to find materials that are quick to install, but durable enough to stand up to Burlington snow and plows year after year. Inevitably, many bollards are broken throughout a winter and need to be replaced in the spring time, placing an added burden on our work crews. In addition, each spring, the curb extensions need to be cleaned out, as they gather dirt and grime throughout the winter. The blank surfaces of the planters have also become a target for graffiti. There are few products on the market that can successfully remove graffiti from the rough surface of the planters, so our crews have decided to just paint over the graffiti moving forward. All of these tasks can take up a considerable amount of time and staffing capacity is not always sufficient to keep up with the maintenance needs. Quick-build projects are generally intended to be in place for 1 to 5 years, while we program construction funding and adjust the design as needed.

Phasing of Quick-Build to Construction

Several of our quick-build curb extension projects are advancing to construction this year. These locations are: Howard St / S Winooski Ave / St Paul St, Pearl St / Battery St, Pearl St / George St, and Elmwood Ave / Grant St (part of the Old North End Greenway). There are several reasons why we could decide a quick-build project is ready to move to construction, such as: coordination with a nearby paving project, prior studies and engineering evaluation, and community engagement and support.

The Old North End (ONE) Neighborhood Greenway

Background

Neighborhood Greenways are streets with low vehicle volumes and speeds, designed to prioritize bicycling and enhance conditions for walking, while increasing safety for all on the road. To create this condition, Neighborhood Greenways use a variety of traffic calming and placemaking treatments, including traffic calming to encourage travel speeds under 20 miles per hour, clear

wayfinding for people walking and biking, pavement markings to reinforce the shared use of the street, protected crossings at major streets, and green elements such as planters or rain gardens.

The ONE Greenway is an important neighborhood bike route, connecting UVM's campus with Battery Park and the Waterfront, utilizing low volume, appealing residential streets along most of its length (1.15 miles). The ONE Greenway fills a need for a safe east-west bikeway that is parallel and in between North St and Pearl St. As part of PlanBTV Walk Bike, crashes involving people biking and walking were mapped city-wide. The ONE Greenway Route has relatively few crashes compared to North St and Pearl St, which is likely due to lower volumes for all modes, as well as lower vehicle speeds.

Now that the Old North End Greenway has been in place for over a year, we are shifting our focus to the phasing of permanent construction. There are many facets of this project that must be taken into consideration when determining when and how this will be converted from quick-build to permanent construction.

Budget

Given the large number of curb extensions that make up the length of this route, it is likely that the curb extensions would need to be constructed in phases, over a period of at least two construction seasons, if not longer.

Collaboration with Stormwater

Another aspect of the ONE Greenway that needs to be taken into consideration is the potential impact that the curb extensions can have for stormwater. The long-term vision of the Greenway is that the quick-build curb extensions be transformed into green spaces whenever possible, and some locations may even be able to become raingardens. This requires staff to work with the stormwater team to evaluate each curb extension location individually to understand the soil conditions, grades, and other circumstances that impact the viability of a rain garden in that location.

Feedback and Finalizing Design Components

Since the ONE Greenway was installed, the feedback received by staff has been mixed between those who enjoy the added wayfinding and enhanced awareness that the changes bring to bicyclists, and those who feel the curb extensions are unsightly or make it more dangerous to use the street, due to the narrowing effect that they cause.

Due to the conflicting feedback that we have received regarding the curb extensions since the installation, DPW staff decided to conduct intercept surveys in the fall of 2019. We primarily focused on trying to get responses from bicyclists who were riding along the Greenway route. The goal of the survey was to understand how users felt about the changes to the route since the traffic calming, pavement markings, and wayfinding was installed.

Of the respondents who primarily bike on the route, 16% felt that the curb extensions make the road too tight or were unsure about them, 18% felt that the curb extensions worked well while biking or worked to slow cars, and 66% did not have opinions specific to the effect of curb extensions.

In addition, of the respondents who primarily bike on the route, 16% felt that the changes make biking feel more comfortable/safer, 34% felt that the changes make users more aware of bikes, and 32% felt either the changes have had a positive impact or that the green bike markings specifically have helped.

Next Steps

DPW staff plans to share the results of the ONE Greenway Survey to the Burlington WalkBike Council (BWBC) this summer, hopefully at their next scheduled meeting. This group is largely made up of avid bicyclists and pedestrians and we hope that their response to the survey results, as well as their own feedback and thoughts on the curb extensions, will help us make a determination as to whether or not the design of the Greenway needs to be adjusted before we can advance to creating construction plans. If we determine that the design of the Greenway does not need to be adjusted, we hope to begin developing construction plans this fall.



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Memo

Date: May 22, 2020

To: Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the Burlington City Council

From: Chapin Spencer, Director

CC: Norman Baldwin, P.E., Assistant Director/City Engineer
Susan Molzon, P.E., Senior Public Works Engineer
Eleni Churchill, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

Subject: Railyard Enterprise Project – Supplemental Scoping

The Railyard Enterprise Project (REP) is a proposed multi-modal transportation link connecting Pine Street to Battery Street. The purpose of the Railyard Enterprise Project is to develop a network of multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements in the Pine Street and Battery Street area which incorporate the principles of complete streets, and to: support economic development in the area; improve livability of the surrounding neighborhoods; enhance multimodal travel connectivity between the Pine Street corridor and Battery Street in the Burlington Waterfront South area; and improve intermodal connections to the Burlington Railyard, a National Highway System designated intermodal facility.

BACKGROUND

In October 2012, the City Council unanimously passed a resolution “express[ing] its full support for the new Railyard Enterprise Project and author[izing] the Mayor and CEDO staff to commence work with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) on scoping for the project”. In partnership with the City, Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and CCRPC, an enhanced scoping process under the Every Day Counts/Planning and Environmental Linkages (EDC/PEL) FHWA initiative was completed.

The Steering Committee, comprised of members of City, State and local organizations, was formed to provide guidance and general project oversight recommended that the City Council support the advancement of three Phase 2 Alternatives into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Public input during the process, including public forum at City Council meetings, raised topics including concerns about impacts to existing buildings in the project area, a desire to have more local control, and interest in developing the project in a timely manner to reduce traffic impacts in the King St and Maple St neighborhoods as soon as possible. In December 2015, the City Council passed a resolution advancing three REP Phase 2 Alternatives, but the resolution also stated that the Council “strongly supports build alternatives...that connect Pine Street and Battery Street with the least impact to private property and existing business”. Of the three REP Phase 2 Alternatives,

City and VTrans staff determined that Alternative 1B would be the most viable as a local/state project because it impacts the fewest number of private properties, has the fewest lane miles of new roadways, and appeared to have the most support through the public process.

In November 2016, the City Council passed a resolution “express[ing] its support for conducting a supplemental scoping of REP Phase 2 Alternative 1B to evaluate whether a local/state approach that does not utilize federal funds is feasible”. The City Council also requested a thorough report upon completion of the supplemental scoping effort so that the Council can determine whether to proceed with advancing Alternative 1B as a local/state project without NEPA review or proceed with advancing the REP Phase 2 Alternatives 1B, 2 and 5B into a Federal Environmental Permitting Process (NEPA).

CURRENT STATUS

The supplemental scoping has now been completed and we are bringing forward the report to the TEUC for review and recommendation to the City Council. The supplemental scoping was very beneficial in conducting more detailed review of the historic, environmental and commercial considerations in the project area. The findings from the supplemental scoping will help inform upcoming project development work including any applicable Federal NEPA process.

Based on the supplemental scoping and the overall projected cost, City staff is recommending to advance the project as a Federally-funded project. We seek the TEUC’s support to accept the study and staff’s recommendation, and to forward to City Council.

PROJECT FUNDING

Additionally, we have attached two letters from VTrans offering two financial paths for advancing the project as a Federally-funded project. In summary, VTrans has committed to include funding for preliminary engineering for the REP in its capital program submittal to the Legislature for 80% of preliminary engineering costs if the City commits to the 20% local match. The alternative is VTrans has committed to providing federal and state funding for 90% of up to \$20M of actual project-eligible costs for federal participation after the construction of the Champlain Parkway project is completed and the City is willing to enter into a grant agreement with VTrans. Feel free to contact us to discuss any of this in further detail. We seek the TEUC’s feedback on how to move forward in consideration of these funding opportunities.

We look forward to discussing this in more detail at the TEUC meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

April 18, 2019 Letter from VTrans to Mayor Miro Weinberger

August 5, 2019 Letter from VTrans to Chapin Spencer



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Agency of Transportation

April 18, 2019

Mayor Miro Weinberger
City of Burlington
City Hall, 149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Mayor Weinberger:

As the initial scoping effort for a project commonly referred to as the Railyard Enterprise Project comes to an end, I would like to clarify the Agency of Transportation's (AOT) level of commitment to the project.

To date, planning funds from both the CCRPC and AOT have been used for the enhanced scoping project. This enhanced process, called Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL), provides for a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, and then uses the information developed during planning to inform the environmental review process. We understand that the outcome of this process confirms that the desired project will be of such a scale financially that it will not be feasible to complete using local and state funds only.

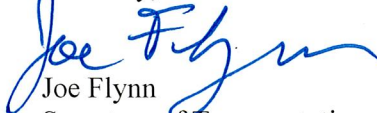
The AOT will honor the previous commitment to program a new project within the Roadway Program for the Railyard Enterprise Project. However, this action for starting the preliminary engineering phase, which includes review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will not occur until after the construction of the Champlain Parkway is completed and only if the City is willing to enter into a grant agreement and advance the project through the Municipal Assistance Bureau. The Champlain Parkway utilizes a significant portion of available funding within the AOT Roadway Program over the next several years and until that is completed funding will not be available.

Specifically, AOT will commit to providing federal and state funding to the Railyard Enterprise Project as follows:

- 90% of up to \$20,000,000 of actual project-eligible costs for federal participation,
- federal and state funding capped at \$18,000,000, and
- eligible project costs above \$20,000,000 and/or costs found not to be eligible for federal or state participation will be the responsibility of the City of Burlington.

We look forward to working with the City of Burlington to advance this project at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,


Joe Flynn
Secretary of Transportation





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Agency of Transportation

Wayne B. Symonds
Chief Engineer

Ann L. Gammell
Deputy Chief Engineer

August 5, 2019

Chapin Spencer
Public Works Director
City of Burlington
PO Box 849
Burlington, VT 05402-0849

Dear Chapin,

As you are aware, Secretary Flynn sent Mayor Weinberger a letter on April 18, 2019 regarding VTrans' commitment and timeline for advancement of preliminary engineering for the City's proposed Railyard Enterprise Project. Recently you requested, on behalf of the City, that the agency reconsider its position relative to timing.

After some internal discussion, VTrans could commit to including funding for preliminary engineering for the Railyard Enterprise Project in its capital program submittal to the Legislature for SFY21 if the City will commit to providing the full 20% required matching funds for the preliminary engineering phase. This is a deviation from VTrans providing 90% funding for all project-eligible costs for federal participation as outlined by Secretary Flynn in his April 18, 2019 letter. With other priorities already committed to by VTrans, we are not able to provide any state matching funds at this time should the City want to pursue advancing the preliminary engineering phase before construction of the Champlain Parkway is completed.

We continue to look forward to working with the City to advance this project.

Sincerely,

Wayne B. Symonds, PE
Chief Engineer

Sincerely,

Michele Boomhower
Director of Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development

cc: J. Flynn, Secretary of Transportation
S. Scribner, Director, Municipal Assistance Bureau
C. Allen, Director, Asset Management Bureau



Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

RAILYARD ENTERPRISE PROJECT (REP) SUPPLEMENTAL SCOPING

Draft Executive Summary | May 21, 2020



PREPARED FOR:
CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBMITTED BY:
RSG

IN COOPERATION WITH:
VHB
THIRD SECTOR ASSOCIATES

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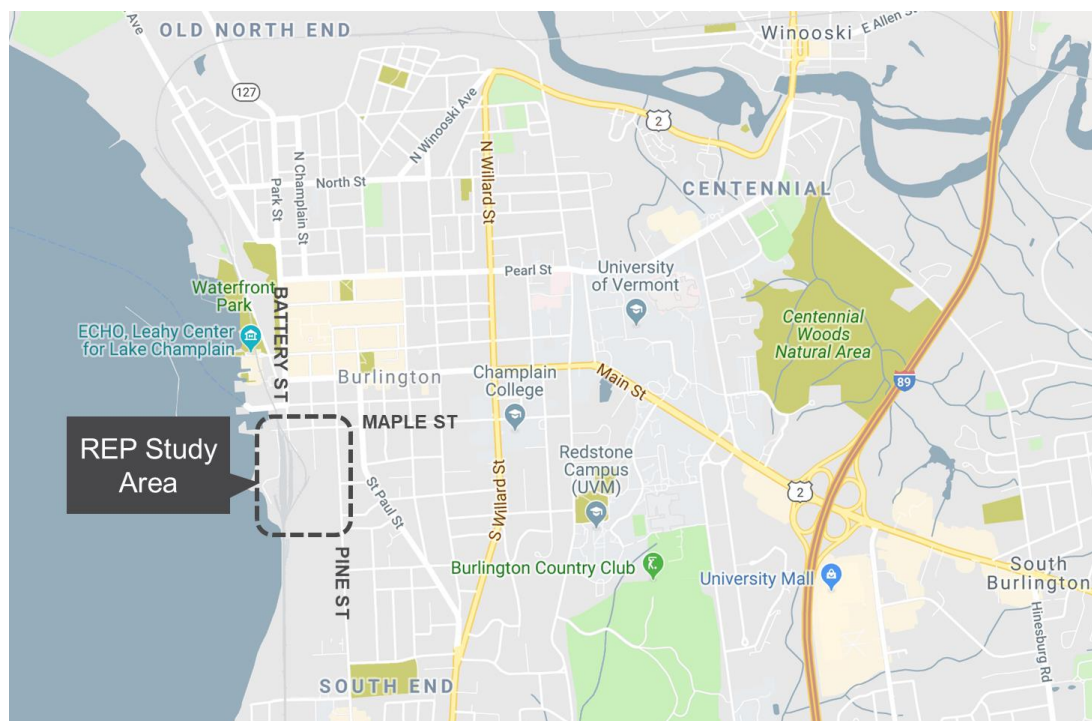


The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the State Planning and Research Program, Section 505 [or Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f)] of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2013, the City of Burlington, in partnership with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) and in close cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), initiated the **Railyard Enterprise Project (REP)**. The REP aims to address multimodal safety, mobility, and operational transportation issues and to advance economic development opportunities in the southern waterfront area of Burlington (Figure 1) by improving access and mobility through new urban streets.

FIGURE 1: REP STUDY AREA



Map source: Snazzy Maps. Markup by RSG.

The result of the **REP Scoping Study** was the selection, by the Burlington City Council, of three REP alternatives to advance into engineering and permitting under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a process required for the use of federal funds to finance transportation projects. This **REP Supplemental Scoping Study** is a follow-on to the **REP Scoping Study** and its goal is to further refine and evaluate one of those alternatives, **Alternative 1B**, and to explore the feasibility of implementing the project without federal funding, using state and local funds only, thereby avoiding a complex, lengthy and costly NEPA process.

1.1 REP PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

PURPOSE: To develop a network of multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements connecting Pine Street and Battery Street, which incorporate the principles of Complete Streets, and to: 1) Support economic development in the area; 2) Improve livability of the surrounding neighborhoods; 3) Enhance multimodal travel connectivity between the Pine Street corridor and Battery Street in the Burlington Waterfront South area; and 4) s Improve intermodal connections to the Burlington Railyard, a National Highway System (NHS)-designated intermodal facility.

NEED:

- **Develop supporting infrastructure to be consistent with the long-term vision of PlanBTV (Downtown and Waterfront part of the municipal plan) associated with the Railyard Enterprise Project area, that supports economic development in the area and enhances Railyard operations.** There is a need for a new street network connecting Pine Street to Battery Street and related infrastructure to support economic development in the area. PlanBTV has identified the Railyard Enterprise Project area as prime for infill, mixed use development to increase economic activity and to provide accessibility to underutilized lands adjacent to the Railyard.
- **Improve livability and connectivity in the Railyard Enterprise Project area.** There is a need to improve the livability of residential areas and emerging mixed-use districts in the Railyard Enterprise Project area. Livability can be enhanced by dispersing traffic and reducing vehicle queues at neighborhood intersections, including the intersections of Pine Street with King and Maple Streets. Additional transportation connections between Pine Street and Battery Street, that do not involve Maple or King Street, will help improve Livability and travel conditions for all users in the Railyard Enterprise Project area.
- **Enhance multimodal travel connections and choices in the Railyard Enterprise Project area.** There is a need for additional multimodal connections in the Railyard Enterprise Project area to support transit system performance, enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and access and facilitate travel for families from existing neighborhoods to Battery Street, the Waterfront, and Lake Champlain. There is also a need to create safe and efficient, family-friendly, dedicated pedestrian and bicycle connections from Pine Street neighborhoods between Maple Street and Lakeside Avenue to the Waterfront, the Burlington Bike Path, and Lake Champlain and improve access from the King Street neighborhood.
- **Improve connectivity and access between nearby streets, the Burlington Railyard, a NHS-designated intermodal facility, and Battery Street, while reducing the impacts of freight operations on adjacent neighborhoods.** There is a need to improve connections to the Railyard in a way that enhances its operations while also reducing the impact of freight operations on adjacent neighborhoods. PlanBTV recognizes the importance of the Burlington Railyard to the City's economy and environment.

1.2 REP SUPPLEMENTAL SCOPING

The REP Supplemental Scoping Study further investigates Alternative 1B, one of the three preferred alternatives from the REP Scoping Study. Of those three alternatives, Alternative 1B was chosen as the most viable project because it has fewer impacts and costs compared to the other REP alternatives. The Burlington City Council resolved on December 12, 2016 to evaluate Alternative 1B due to its potential to be funded entirely through state and local funds, thereby negating the need for a NEPA process, and possibly expediting the delivery of the project.

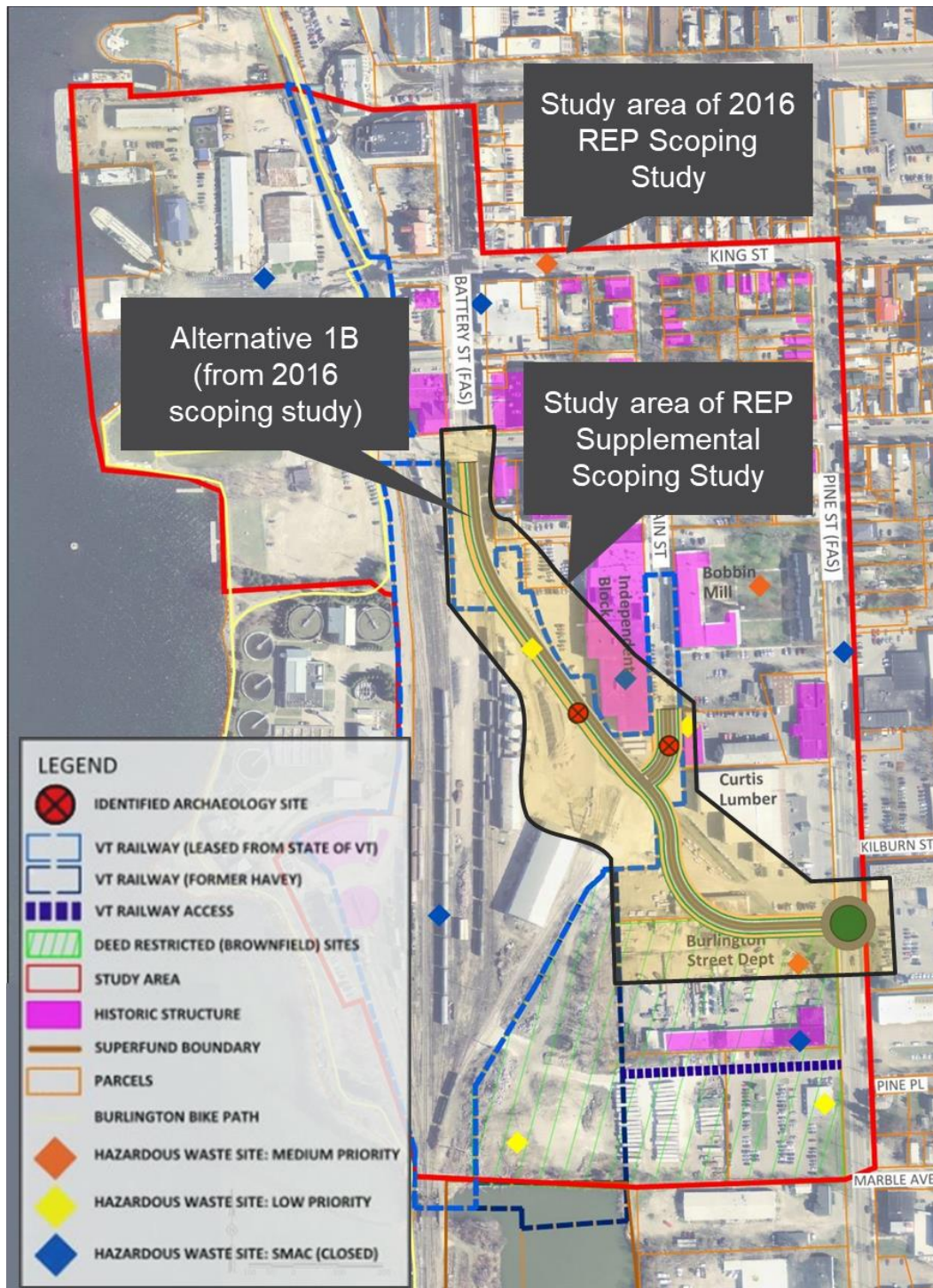
Alternative 1B consists of a single street running between the Battery Street and Maple Street intersection and Pine Street, approximately 1,500 linear feet. The exact location of its Pine Street terminus depends on the type of intersection control at Pine Street, but it would likely be between Kilburn Street and Marble Avenue. The REP Supplemental Scoping Study area is smaller than the initial REP Scoping Study area (See Figure 2). This is because Alternative 1B has a smaller footprint and the analysis is limited to an area more immediately around the alignment.

Major goals of the various alignments of Alternative 1B included: avoid or minimize, to the degree possible, impacts to railyard operations and private properties; minimize permitting requirements and environmental impacts; expedite implementation of the project; develop more accurate construction cost estimates; and evaluate risks. These goals would be accomplished by using detailed boundary and utility surveys as well as archaeological, historic and environmental evaluations to provide the City, VTrans and stakeholders information on risks and opportunities so they can decide how to best proceed with implementing the Railyard Enterprise Project.

Study Area of REP Supplemental Scoping

The study area for the supplemental scoping study is shown in Figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2: REP SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY AREA



Source: RSG (new study area overlaid on REP Scoping Study map)

Key Issues and Evaluations for the REP Supplemental Scoping

Key items that contributed to the complexities and challenges of the supplemental scoping work include:

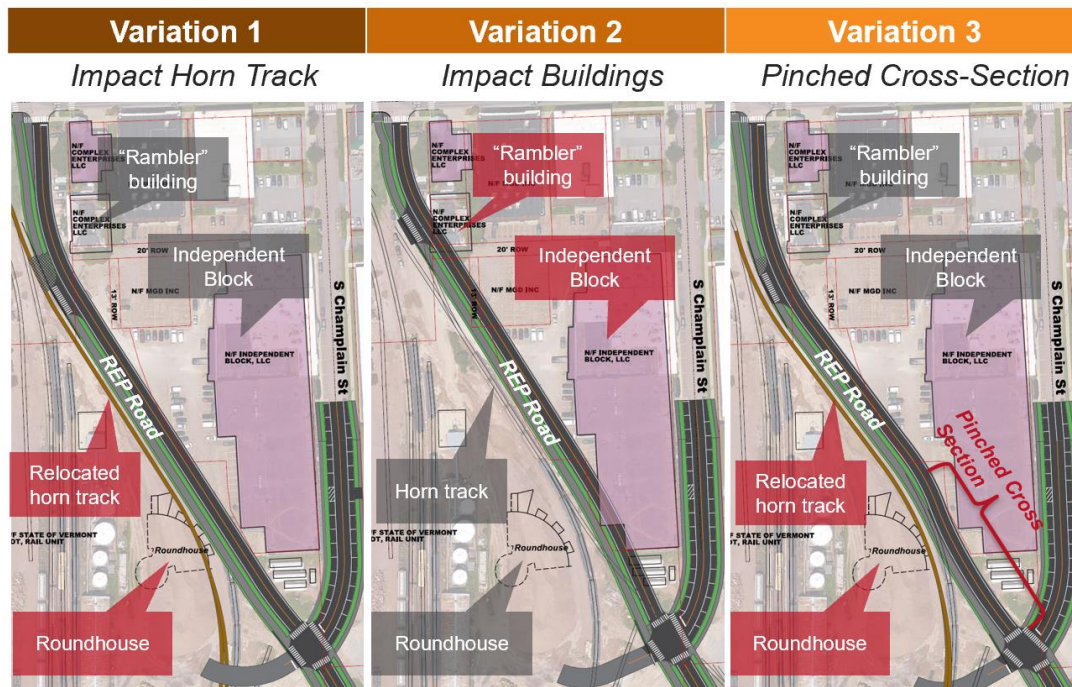
- Historical context of the planning area with several significant contributing resources and a designated nationally recognized historic district.
- Environmental conditions including legacy deficiencies to stormwater management, generalized soil contamination in the study area, and an EPA identified superfund site proximate to the project site with various pockets of localized contaminants.
- An active railyard operating in a limited geographic footprint, proximate to residential areas that serves important freight transload functions and is an economic asset to the greater Burlington region.
- Private and historic properties in close proximity to the railyard and the Alternative 1B REP alignments.

The supplemental scoping study conducted several detailed surveys and evaluations of these areas with the following findings:

- Topographic and boundary survey identified the parcels that may be affected by the various road alignments and intersection improvements.
- Environmental soil conditions were evaluated for the roadway alignment on 339 Pine Street and did not indicate any presence of hazardous criteria pollutants.
- Stormwater evaluation of the study area recommended a new stormwater outfall to Lake Champlain to manage the stormwater in the REP area.
- The location of the Roundhouse, a significant archaeological resource in the railyard, was identified and discussions were conducted with the State Historic Preservation Office and other relevant parties on how best to protect the resource.
- The Independent Block building was identified as a contributing resource in the Pine Street Historic District. Feedback from the Vermont State Historic Advisory Council suggested that the Independent Block building would be a lower priority to protect relative to the Roundhouse given that any impact to the building could be mitigated and the oldest parts of the structure preserved.

Alternative 1B Variations

Three variations of Alternative 1B for the road alignment were developed – see the schematic below. Each variation has different degrees and types of impacts to the railyard and to private and historic properties.



Variation 1: Impact Horn Track (minimize private property impacts)

Variation 1 does not impact Independent Block or the Rambler building, which requires relocating the horn track to the west. The relocated horn track would then lie above the western edge of the roundhouse. The shared-use path of the REP is also likely to partially overlap and cover the roundhouse. The depth of the horn track ballast and shared use path are expected to avoid any physical impact on the roundhouse.

Variation 2: Impact Buildings (minimize railyard impacts)

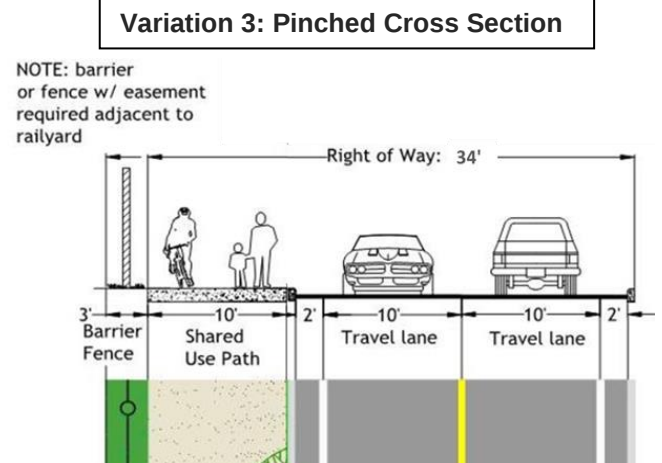
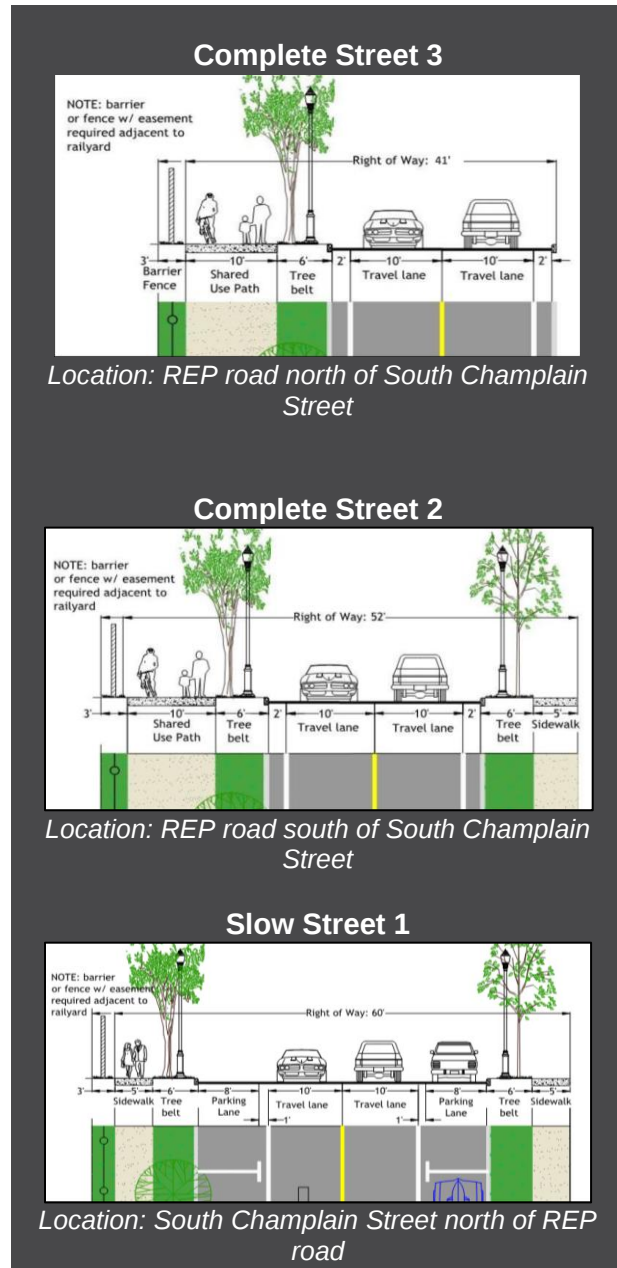
Variation 2 does not impact the horn track or roundhouse, but it would result in a full demolition of the Rambler building and a demolition and partial reconstruction of the southern end of Independent Block.

Variation 3: Pinched Cross Section (balanced impacts)

Variation 3 attempts to balance and minimize impacts to both the Railyard and private property by shifting the horn track to the west and narrowing the roadway cross section in the tightest spot. The “pinched” cross section will have no green belt between the shared-use path and the roadway (see below). The horn track would overlap with the roundhouse.

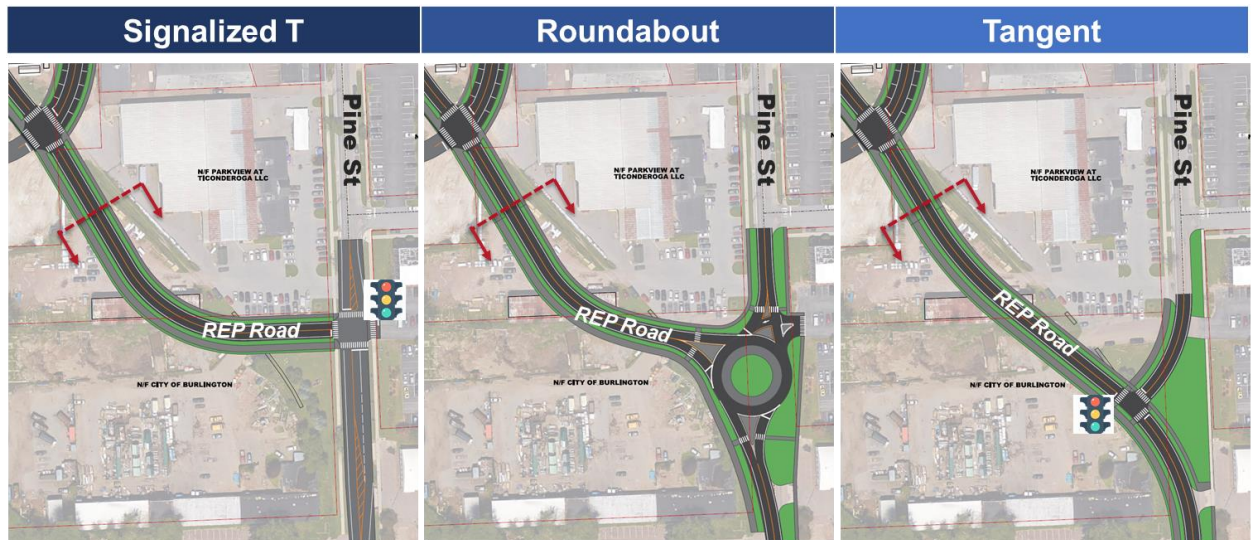
Cross Sections

In the REP Scoping Study, Alternative 1B was designed with three different cross sections: *Complete Street 3* north of South Champlain Street, *Complete Street 2* south of South Champlain Street, and *Slow Street 1* on South Champlain Street. All include one 10-foot travel lane in each direction, pedestrian accommodations, and a 6-foot tree belt between the roadway and any sidewalks or shared-use paths. When bordering the railyard, the street would also have a three-foot zone on the west side with a barrier fence. These cross sections generally remained the same in this supplemental study; the major exception is the pinched cross section of variation 3 as shown below.



New Pine Street Intersection

Three intersection options were developed for the terminus of the new road and the intersection with Pine Street. Each has pros and cons for cost, access to adjacent parcels, traffic diversion, utilities, etc.



Evaluation of Variations of Alternative 1B

The three alignment variations and the three Pine Street intersection options were analyzed against the evaluation criteria, with the ability to mix and match alignment with intersections to arrive at a full project evaluation. The no-build alternative is also considered in the evaluation process.

The categories of evaluation criteria are as follows:

- **Conceptual Cost Estimates**—for roadway construction, land and building acquisition, and relocation of railyard structures/operations.
- **Transportation Impacts**—including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, diversion of traffic from Pine Street, and impacts on transit.
- **Resource Impacts**—archaeological sites, historic buildings, flood hazard zones, hazardous waste sites, and utilities.
- **Private Property Impacts**—including parking spaces impacted and other impacts to the use of a property (land and building acquisitions are identified here but reflected in the cost estimate).
- **Railyard Impacts**—the degree of impact to its operations.
- **Local and Regional Issues**—whether it satisfies the project Purpose and Need, conforms to local/regional plans, and meets environmental justice criteria (all of which were determined in the REP Scoping Study).

Summary of Evaluation Results

Table 1 and Table 2 show the summary scores and cost, respectively, of the nine alternatives, each a combination of one alignment variation and one Pine Street intersection option.

Table 1 shows the cumulative evaluation scores when combining the alignment variation with the intersection options. For example, Variation 1 scores a (-1) and a T-signal scores a (3) adding together = (2). The results indicate that the variations with the tangent intersection scores consistently higher than the other intersection options. Variation 2 is consistently lower scoring compared to Variations 1 and 3.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY EVALUATION SCORES

	VARIATION 1	VARIATION 2	VARIATION 3
T (Signal)	2.0	0.0	2.5
Roundabout	2.5	0.5	3.0
Tangent	5.0	3.0	5.5

Source: RSG

The nine permutations fall within a narrow range between \$18 million and \$22.6 million in 2018 dollars. The cost estimates were developed with specific input from VRS on the costs to relocate various railyard operations, the City of Burlington on grand list land values and unit costs, and VTrans to review quantities and unit costs. The costs of the options are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY COST ESTIMATES

	VARIATION 1	VARIATION 2	VARIATION 3
T (Signal)	\$18,000,000	\$19,000,000	\$18,000,000
Roundabout	\$21,500,000	\$22,600,000	\$21,500,000
Tangent	\$20,100,000	\$20,100,000	\$20,000,000

Source: RSG

Summary of Findings

- Impacts to the railyard will require Vermont Rail Systems to relocate certain operations out of Burlington. Some degree of mitigation can be accomplished within the Burlington railyard through land swaps and specific roadway design elements.
- Variation 3, the 'hybrid' solution which minimizes impacts to railyard and private property and reduces the roadway cross-section for a length was identified as the highest ranked (best) variation evaluated.

- The tangent intersection concept was identified as the highest ranked intersection option.
- The project cost is expected to range from \$18 million to \$22.6 million depending on the variation and intersection option pursued.

Results of the supplemental scoping study were discussed with the REP Steering Committee and project partners.

1.3 STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Following consultation with various project stakeholders, including VTrans, and taking the Project Steering Committee's input into consideration, City and CCRPC Staff recommend that the REP process should revert back to the original scoping recommendation, approved by the Burlington City Council at their December 21, 2015 meeting, to advance three REP alternatives into engineering and permitting under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This recommendation is primarily based on the complexity and the cost magnitude of the REP that makes it infeasible to implement using local and state funds only.



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Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council

Minutes – Tuesday, May 26, 2020 5:30 PM

1. **Meeting Started at 5:33 PM**
2. **Minutes of 2/4/2020. On Motion of Councilor Paulino the minutes were approved as written.**
3. **Public Forum**
 - Tony Redington – Walk safety advocate. Proponent of traffic circles for safety and environmental benefits. Concern regarding Railyard Enterprise Project containing at a minimum a sidewalk and separate bikeway.
 - Steve Goodkind – Rail Enterprise Project is not a new project, but rather a rebranding to salvage the issues with the Southern Connector. Southern connector project needs to look into the environmental justice principles in Pine, Maple, King neighborhoods. Desire for additional hearings to find out what City wants.
 - Chris Dunkel – Interest in REP as it pertains to the Rambler Building and potential demolition. Concern for greater impact to the buildings and people in the buildings versus Vermont Rail.
 - Jason Adams – Owner of the Independent Block, the commercial building in the area of the Railyard Enterprise Project. Open-minded to the project, but the options for demoing the building are not favorable to him with effects on tenants (roadway location, loading, loss of parking, etc.)
4. **Railyard Enterprise Project – Supplemental Scoping**
 - Eleni Churchill (Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission); Chapin Spencer, Norman Baldwin, Susan Molzon (DPW)
 - Staff Recommendation: Advance engineering under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as a federally funded project. The process would continue in the direction of the original scoping recommendation approved by City Council at December 21, 2015 meeting, to advance three REP alternatives to NEPA.
 - Councilor Discussion
 - Councilor Paulino – Concerns regarding funding amount and timing and how to provide those funds. Separate project from Champlain Parkway, but interrelated. Without the Parkway, REP would be a significant improvement. Choice to keep design local restriction options - are the other options back on the table now? If approved to spend more money upfront, how much change will be allowed to make? It is important to have the sidewalk option in addition to the multimodal. The full Council should get the benefits of looking at this instead of tabling it at committee.
 - Councilor Hanson – This area of town could benefit from some reinvestment. What is the breakdown of federal, state and local money including split between federal and state? Are you maintaining the shared use-path throughout the entirety of the project? What would it cost the City in the next year took the Staff action? Preference is to hold off spending money on this project until the future. Would like to address mentioned in relationship between this project and Champlain Parkway. Are they complementary?
 - Councilor Stromberg – Why was there such a gap between 2015 and now? Concerned about the economics of the projects including the contingency costs.
 - Public Discussion
 - Jacob Albee – Owner of Rambler and where the Waterfront Diving Center is located. Involved in process from the outset, but project has not involved those who are affected nor has it provided an update in years. Vermont Rail only has monetary consequences for the plan, but there are impacts on businesses and people in the area. Building roads is a lousy way to reduce traffic. Issues like the smelly waste water plant would still remain if the project moves forward.
 - Steve Goodkind – Southern Connector is flawed project and needs REP to be successful or needs to be redesigned in a different way. The purpose and needs statement was drawn up to go around Federal rules. There are alternatives that should be discussed instead of pushing things along. If there is going to be a connector project, it needs to be changed to avoid the environmental justice effects.
 - Tony Redington – Agrees with Steve Goodkind. These two projects are connected by history and function. How one continues or changes, it will not be settled tonight. Agree with the motion by Councilors Hanson and Stromberg. Everyone agrees that there should be a walk and bike lanes between Pine and Battery, but the

conversations changes when cars are involved. Five years ago, the conversation did not involve present day pressures (e-bikes, scooters). Thinking has evolved, and the project should respond to the needs of today.

- Jonathan – Points out there are economic enterprises in this area like Waterfront Diving Center. Understand the need to divert traffic, and sees traffic jams all the time. Attended public meetings and want to express concern that the project would eliminate customer parking and the loading dock. Both are key to the success of his business. He would have to reevaluate this location if this project went forward. Overall, happy with the public outreach, despite the stall.
- Jason Adams – What sparked this project now? What is new now from what was approved in 2015 and why is the project back to where it was a few years ago? Has the railroad commented on project recently? Why are there so many consultants? Is there the option to change plans (such as sidewalks) later on to ensure parking lot access and tractor trailer access?
- Karen Yacos – Problem with the design, Variation 3, as the shared use path has railyard and roadway on either side. Could use refuge, protection, or greenery even at expense of path continuity with rest of path. This would be helpful to businesses in the area and encourage activity to visitors to the area.

On Motion by Councilor Hanson (seconded by Councilor Stromberg)

- (1) Accept the Railyard Enterprise Project Supplemental Scoping Study.**
- (2) Recommend City Council proceed with REP as a Federally-funded project.**
- (3) Wait to Proceed on the REP until the Champlain Parkway is completed (FY23 Spring).**

On Motion by Councilor Paulino (seconded by Councilor Hanson)

- **Split original motion into two separate items. Passes Unanimously.**

On Motion by Councilor Paulino (seconded by Councilor Hanson)

- (1) Accept the Railyard Enterprise Project Supplemental Scoping Study. Passes Unanimously.**
- (2) Recommend City Council proceed with REP as a Federally-funded project. Passes Unanimously.**

On Motion by Councilor Hanson (seconded by Councilor Stromberg)

- **Wait to Proceed on the REP until the Champlain Parkway is completed (FY23 Spring). Passes – Yes (Stromberg/Hanson), No (Paulino)**

5. Fare-Free Transit

- Nicole Losch (DPW); Chris Damiani (Green Mountain Transit)
- Referenced memo in packet: quick update from January 2020, Councilor Hanson recommended and passed resolution to Council to evaluate fare free transit with a report back to Council by mid-May. Initiated this process, but meetings were postponed due to COVID-19. Committed, but are asking for a six-month extension for this work in November 2020. Provided context of the zero-fare operations GMT has provided during COVID-19 as it relates to the CARES Act.
- Chris – Past two months, the world of transit has changed. Current fare free service, it is hard to use a benchmark for this study, but it has provided distance between drivers and passengers. It appears to also speed up the operations (could be confounded by less traffic), but has given us a partial view into fare-free service in the future. CARES Act provided \$7.6M of Federal funding for PPE for employees and lost revenue. Estimating \$50K in lost revenue weekly during the past two months. The GMT Board did vote to eliminate the proposed 4% assessment increase in FY21 for fixed route service to recognize budgeting challenges that member municipalities are facing.
- Councilor Discussion
 - Councilor Hanson – How long will GMT remain fare-free? Other part of my January resolution asked Burlington Commissioners on GMT to discuss how members and municipalities can join together to create a fare-free system. Are there any discussions to extend fare-free beyond COVID-19? Desire to have Burlington Commissioners on GMT Board to continue to provide regular updates to the TEUC in conjunction with executing on the resolution but extend the timeframe no later than November.

On Motion by Councilor Hanson (seconded by Councilors Paulino and Stromberg)

- **Extension of original resolution but extended deadline to November 2020. Passes Unanimously**

6. Consolidated Collection Study

- Lee Perry (DPW)
- Previously took TEUC's feedback to GBB (consultant) and received firmer version of the analysis. In January 2020, asked Board of Finance and City Council for 6-month extension to contract to complete public meetings and feedback. However, COVID-19 delayed the scheduled meetings on March and April with a presentation to City Council in June.
- Concern with how to reach the public. Remain in contact with GBB, South Burlington, and CSWD.
- Staff has heard from CSWD and South Burlington that this is a less of a priority right now given COVID-19. Staff recognizes the importance of this study for Burlington, but wants to make sure Councilors are fully supportive advancing with public outreach during this time given that there will be limitations on how the public can be engaged.
- Councilor Discussion
 - Councilor Hanson – It sounded like the City was headed forward with public discussions when COVID-19 hit Vermont. This could be the new norm and still need to find a way to advance important items. This is the new environment, and Zoom is actually easier for making it in person. Plenty of attendees tonight. Avoid putting this on hold indefinitely. Still want to move forward via Zoom like everything else. Cost savings and efficiency gains. It connects with the organics mandate this summer and the ability to proceed forward this summer. This transition may not be in place for at least a year. Delay is unfortunate, but it is important to proceed especially given length of process and the importance of money savings and environmental benefits.

- Councilor Stromberg – Agree with Councilor Hanson's sentiment. If this were pushed off, will this create a timing issue?
- Councilor Paulino – This is a big picture item such that the rollout should be done right.

Next steps: DPW will follow up with our partners. All three members of the TEUC are supportive in DPW advancing the Consolidated Collection public meetings with the goal to wrap up the study as close to June 30 as possible.

7. Quick Build Projects

- Elizabeth Gohringer, Nicole Losche (DPW)
- Quick-build program came out of the 2017 planBTV WalkBike with a desire to create a continuous and connected bike network with pedestrian safety. Quick-build allows achievement of this goal with short-term, flexible projects without large capital outlay. Examples around City: Dewey Park Plaza, Howard St/S Winooski Ave/St. Paul St, One Neighborhood Greenway, N Union St Protected Bike Lane, Main St @ S Champlain St, Bike Box at Pearl St and N Union St.
 - Maintenance has proven to be a challenge. They are designed to last five years, but they cannot withstand winter, car impacts, climate challenges. Graffiti issue has been heard and is an ongoing challenge. Current solution: Traffic team decided they would paint over. Traffic team has done its first round of graffiti cleanup. SeeClickFix is the best place to flag issues. This year there is not any seasonal staff, which could limit response.
- Phasing Quick-Build to Construction this year. Coordinated with other capital projects and other factors.
- Neighborhood Greenways are a sub-project type within Quick-Build focused on low vehicle volume and speeds, prioritizing biking, and safety for pedestrians.
 - Permanent Construction Factors – Timing, Budget. ONE Greenway includes lots of curb extensions which would be expensive, and could be phased over a couple of seasons. The vision is to have as much greenspace as possible, which requires coordination with Water Resources.
 - Feedback – It has been mixed, especially with curb extensions. Some feel safer, and some who feel like it tightens the road. Conflicting feedback resulted in additional intercept surveys on the route. Most respondents felt neutral or they felt that changes as whole were positive.
- Councilor Discussion
 - Councilor Hanson – What are updates for quick builds as it relates to Loomis Street? Are there updates on the eastern part ONE (top of Loomis Street)? Often hear complaints navigating that intersection especially with bikes and cars sharing a narrow space. What is the plan with those quick builds? I find Loomis challenging as a cyclist. It is difficult for different modes of transportation. Quick-builds are helpful for cyclists, but not so much for others (my constituents). Heard a lot during campaign about difficulties. Glad DPW attending the walk-bike council. Overall, love the quick build concept to test ideas beyond paper.

Next Steps – DPW staff will take survey results to the Burlington Walk/Bike council to obtain their responses and feedback. If design does not need to be adjusted, DPW staff would develop construction plans this fall for ONE Greenway.

8. E-Bike Share

- Chapin Spencer, Rob Goulding, Nicole Losch (DPW)
- Director Spencer – DPW has been working with Gotcha to make minor revisions to the contract. The contract is in a good place. DPW was concerned with production issues, but now has news that October 2020 delivery is possible. DPW has past performance with Gotcha's delivery timelines. DPW meets regularly with Gotcha. Optimistic to meet this deadline.
- Rob – COVID-19 has caused a lag in supply chain issues, but DPW has seen proof of receipt. The City is a priority for the Gotcha market. The City does not fund this project as users would pay for the use of the bikes. One-year program with option to renew. City included additional language to include pandemic language. Timeline agreement: Proof of purchase of bikes, encumbrances permits submittal for the ROW bike stations, then delivery of bikes to market, with it up and running by October 2020. There will still be a 10MPH limit on waterfront. There will be a sign that states the geographic limitations of the bikes and to contact local bike rental shops for longer recreational rides. Escalated pricing may encourage riding use-types.
- Nicole – Gotcha hired a local staff member to be available to local partners. This local staff member just left, but Gotcha is moving ahead with the rehiring process now.

9. DPW Director's Update

- Director Spencer noted the likely upcoming GMT Commissioner opening.

10. Councilors' Update

- Councilor Hanson – Desire to explore email updates in greater detail
- Councilor Stromberg – Lots of excitement and potential surrounding upcoming projects.
- Councilor Paulino – No complaints heard during this time period. Looking forward to passing the budget.

11. Next TEUC Meeting

- June 23, 2020 at 5:30 PM.

12. Adjourn

- On Motion by Councilor Paulino (second by Councilors Hanson and Stromberg), meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.