

Meeting notes East Montpelier Bridge 68

When: 4/26/16, 6:30-8:30pm

Location: U-32 Jr Sr High School, Montpelier

In attendance: Approximately 30 people. Project team members present were: Mark Sargent, Wayne Symonds, Tom Knight, Jill Barrett and Michael Levine.

Purpose: This was a public informational meeting to update local residents about the revised plans for the reconstruction of bridge 68 and the associated rebuilding of US 2 east and west of the bridge.

Meeting began with introductions of project team and a brief PowerPoint presentation summarizing this project—background, engineering and traffic challenges, current construction plans and timeline, and steps to minimize community impact. The plan still calls for a lateral slide design and limiting the time of the bridge closure to no more than 40 days.

The timeline is estimated to be:

Late summer of 2016: Work will begin with site prep work, but this should have little effect on traffic flow in any direction. The site has overhead wires that could interfere with construction cranes, so VTrans will install a new culvert that the utilities (phone, cable) can use to relocate the wires.

Fall 2016 - Summer 2017: The utilities will be relocating wires and poles according to a coordinated schedule. Little to no traffic delays is expected.

Fall/Winter 2017: Contractor will Mobilize and make preparation for the bridge replacement and road work in 2018. The majority of work will be done off the roadways.

Spring through fall 2018: This will be the major construction year with work on Route 2 and replacing the bridge taking place simultaneously. To minimize traffic impacts on all routes, the bulk of this work will take place from about 6pm-6am throughout the period. Daytime crews will not interfere with travel lanes during the peak times of 7-9am and 3-6pm, Monday through Friday. Most of the day work will be moving materials to make sure the night shifts can work as efficiently as possible.

During this phase, the new bridge deck will be built upstream from the current bridge. Once it is ready, this new bridge deck will serve as a temporary bridge and the current bridge will be demolished carefully and the support structure rebuilt. At that point, in the late summer or early fall of 2018, the new bridge deck will be slid into place on the new structure and opened to traffic. Once that is completed, the supports that were built for the temporary bridge will be pulled out of the river.

During the 2018 construction, the VT 14 bridge will need to be closed for up to 40 days and nights. The exact schedule is yet to be determined.

2019—It is possible that the final paving layer and landscaping may need to be completed if time runs out in 2018.

One change that VTrans announced is that the Construction Manager/General Contractor (CMGC) it was working with to develop this project is restructuring and is no longer available. VTrans is evaluating whether to hire a new CMGC or use a more traditional bid process for this work. The project is moving along and is 65% complete--hitting a significant VTrans milestone.

During the construction, VTrans will keep the community informed through weekly e-mails, roadside message boards, radio announcements, Front Porch Forum, and other outlets.

The PowerPoint and other project information is posted at the website dedicated to this project: www.vt14emontpelier.vtransprojects.vermont.gov. The presenters included Project Team members Mark Sargent, Tom Knight, Jill Barrett, and Wayne Symonds.

Audience questions and comments followed the presentation.

Q: Will all trucks be required to take the official detour?

A: Yes. The posted detour will take westbound drivers on Route 2 to the roundabout, down the Barre Montpelier Rd (Route 302), and back north on Route 14 if they need to go that far. That plan will include reprogramming signals on Route 302 to move more traffic during peak times.

We know local residents will use town roads to cut their travel distance. We'll work closely with town officials on speed and load enforcements to keep these roads safe. We will also be talking with the towns about grants VTrans has to help defray the additional maintenance costs of the extra traffic.

Q: Will the 40 days of closing be consecutive?

A: We don't know the exact timing yet, but most of that will be consecutive days. There may be a few days when work on Route 2 requires closing Route 14, but that will count towards our schedule of no more than 40 days total.

Q: When do you anticipate the 40 day period to be?

A: We want it to be as late in the construction as possible and are aiming for after Labor Day. However, we need to make sure we begin soon enough that we leave enough time to get it built before the weather closes us down.

Q: Will school buses need to be rerouted with that timeframe?

A: Part of the closing will certainly be when school is in session. However we've talked to the schools and the bus company and they don't think this will be a big

issue. We are already coordinating with them so they will have ample time to build this change into their schedule.

Q: Can you add social media like Twitter and Facebook to the ways you keep us up to date during the project?

A: Certainly if the community thinks that has value we can include it in the mix.

Q: What steps are you taking to minimize the night noise and construction lights?

A: We'll be requiring contractors to follow requirements for best practices including things like muffling the sounds of the back-up beepers, adding bumpers to tailgates, and engines that meet current noise standards. To the extent possible, lights will aim at the work zone and not in windows. The lights will be powered by diesel generators which will have noise skirts. We know that night work will be annoying, and it is not our first choice. But, given the challenge of this site for traffic flow we feel it is the option with the least impact for the most people. We will be using night work this summer and it will be a good chance to test how these measures help and whether we need to have more restrictions in place for 2018.

Q: Are solar powered batteries an option to the generators. LEDs don't need much power.

A: That's an excellent idea and we will explore it.

Q: How many nights of work do you expect?

A: Probably about five weeks (40 nights) this summer and 12 weeks (60 nights) in 2018.

Q: What will the finished bridge look like?

A: Most of its length will include two 11-foot travel lanes plus a 4-foot bike shoulder on each side for a total of 30 feet. This matches the width of our snowplows and wings and is common for our recent projects. The Route 2 end will at the intersection will be 3 lanes wide and include a turn lane. It will also flare out to accommodate semi-trucks.

Q: Will the size of the bridge serve us for the long-term?

A: This size will be sufficient according to our 40-year traffic projections.

Q: Will the demolition be done at night?

A: Not likely. It will be very noisy and it's important to be able to see the whole site, including under the bridge, to avoid dropping debris in the river.

Q: Will farm trucks and tractors be able to use the bridge in 2018?

A: Farm traffic can use it whenever it is opened to vehicles. However, during the closing period no one can use it—including pedestrians and bikers. We hope the closing takes place after spring spreading and planting and that it is opened again in time for the fall corn harvest.