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Jane Lendway, State Historic Preservation Officer
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
National Life Building, Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT 05620
Attn: Scott Dillon and Judith Ehrlich

May 25, 2005

Re: Montpelier Multi-Modal Transit & Welcome Center,
Project funded by the Federal Transit Administration and
Federal Highway Administration
Montpelier, Washington County, Vermont
Finding of NO ADVERSE EFFECT

Dear Ms. Lendway

As 36 CFR Part 61-qualified historic preservation consultants, archeologist Thomas R. Jamison and I have reviewed this undertaking of the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration according to the standards and procedures detailed in 36 CFR Part 800, the regulations of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. The review was requested by Wilbur Smith Associates on behalf of the City of Montpelier. Project review consists of identifying the project's potential impacts to historic buildings, structures, historic districts, historic landscapes and settings and to known or potential archeological resources. The following summarizes our findings supporting our effect determination for this project of **No Adverse Effect**. The accompanying report contains details of the review and analysis.

Project Description:

The project proposes to build a multi-modal transit center in Montpelier on the "Carr Lot" (North bank of Winooski River east of Taylor Street). The center will include facilities to serve passengers of local buses, inter-city buses, visiting tour buses, future train service, bicyclists, etc. An improved visitors' Welcome Center will also be included. The project includes a 4-story building structure (to be compatible in scale with other surrounding buildings) with a 5,000 SF footprint. The upper floors would have office space/residential quarters. In addition, a trail connection across the site and the North Branch River will be constructed (Winooski West project), and open space on the parcel will be landscaped into a park, "Confluence Park." This entire site is within the confines of the Downtown Montpelier Historic District. The site is unimproved and at



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WHITE RIVER JCT., VERMONT 05001

AREA CODE 802 295-5074

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C.G. ANDREASSON, GENERAL MANAGER

W.J. MCCORMICK, CONTROLLER

May 24, 2005

Valerie Capels, Director
Dept of Planning & Community Development
City of Montpelier
City Hall
39 Main Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Ms. Capels,

This letter is to reemphasize Vermont Transit's support for the development of a transit center at the proposed Taylor Street location. This proposed facility will make the use of public transit more attractive for both residents and visitors and will help Vermont Transit maintain its level of service for the community. It is also important as this project moves forward to involve our current operator of the bus station in Montpelier, Michael Coffin and David Peterson have acted as our commissioned agents in Waterbury for many years now and we were happy to have them assume that responsibility in Montpelier last year. We would like them to continue handling our sales in the new facility. For the agency to be self-supporting it will need other revenue sources than just ticket sales and the experience of our current operators in retail sales has the potential to make this new location all the more attractive for the users. Mike and Dave can be reached in Waterbury at 244-7689 (Depot Beverage). We would all appreciate continued involvement as the project moves forward.

Sincerely,

Christopher Andreasson

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this time provides 96 parking spaces for the downtown area and a bus stop for Vermont Transit Lines (VTL). The only structure is the bus depot for VTL.

As part of the overall project, the City is also intending to complete an additional portion of the Winooski West Shared Use Path that currently ends on the west side of Taylor Street across from the site. The use of the Carr Lot for the alignment of the Shared Use Path was determined to be the best alignment in the *Winooski West Phase II Conceptual Alignment Analysis* prepared by the City in 2002. The proposed extension will cross the Carr Lot and end on the east side of the North Branch River, crossing via a new, prefabricated or recycled historic pedestrian bridge located on the north side of the existing historic railroad bridge. The extension of the Winooski West Shared Use Path will increase the multi-modal aspects of the Transit Center and greatly increase the ease with which pedestrians will be able to walk between it and the Downtown area. There is presently heavy pedestrian traffic every day on the railroad bridge over the North Branch River.

Above-Ground Historic Properties:

This transportation project is located in the downtown center of the City. As the accompanying report shows, the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for this project is bounded by State Street to the north, Main Street to the east, Memorial Drive to the south, and just west of Taylor Street to the west. The APE is entirely within the boundaries of the Montpelier Historic District which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 3, 1978 and amended on April 19, 1989. The accompanying report has a list and description of properties in the APE and a history of construction in the area.

The Carr Lot has no above ground historic properties on it and the construction of the transit center would not directly affect any architectural resources. However, the construction of a large new building within the Downtown Montpelier Historic District will have a visual effect on the district and will affect the setting of surrounding historic properties. If the scale and design of the new building and landscaping meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the effect will not be adverse. There may be additional effects from changes in traffic flow and volume around historic resources.

Archeological Resources:

The APE for archeological resources is limited to the area where ground disturbance may occur. In this case, it is the Carr lot on Taylor Street including its banks along the Winooski and North Branch rivers as well as the locations of future bridge abutments at the proposed North Branch pedestrian bridge crossing.

Currently, the Carr Lot is a gravel parking lot with a small office trailer for a bus station. The Carr Lot is defined by the river, the railroad tracks, Taylor Street, and the North Branch, is fairly level and used for parking and the bus station. There is a stone retaining wall and riprap along the river bank. There is a 19th-century stone railroad bridge

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abutment at the east end of the Carr Lot. There are no historic features visible on the surface of the Carr Lot site. The extensive use and periodic filling of the property during the 19th and 20th centuries has buried historic deposits and features under the parking lot and removed all of the structures that once stood on the property with the exception of the stone bridge abutment at the eastern end of the parcel and the railroad tracks and bridge on the adjacent alignment to the north. Soil cores were not possible during the site visit due to the gravel fill used across the property. In addition, the remains of a dam are visible in the North Branch near the railroad bridge.

Potential impacts to archeological deposits may include subsurface excavation and disturbance to visible retaining walls, former dam in North Branch, and bridge abutments. Some of the historic structures that were once in the project area such as small sheds and stables were likely to lack deep cellars or foundations. Other structures on the property, however, are likely to have had more substantial foundations or other associated features that remain intact under the parking lots. Structures such as the granite shed and railroad car houses may be represented in the ground by substantial foundation or other remains. The remains of more ephemeral structures such as early 19th-century wells, privies, and storage sheds may be intact beneath late 19th-century fill. In addition, historic and precontact living surfaces, storage pits, and other features may remain intact beneath the fill in the project area.

The effects of the proposed undertaking on archeological deposits is unclear without conducting the site reconnaissance (Phase I) and site evaluation (Phase II) field investigations to determine the presence of National Register eligible (NRE) properties in the project APE. However, mitigation of effects to NRE archeological properties would entail either (1) redesign of the project to avoid the site or (2) conduct of data retrieval excavation (Phase III). According to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) guidelines, the goals of mitigation excavations are:

- Recover the maximum significant cultural, environmental, methodological and interpretive information and values from the site before the site is destroyed in whole or in part.
- Meet the objectives of the research design.
- Provide a high level of public education and outreach to ensure that the proposed destruction of the site provides maximum benefit to a wide audience (VDHP 2002).

These goals are typically met through the collaboration between the archeologist, the project sponsor, and the VDHP to determine the scope of work for the data retrieval investigations, the conduct of the proposed excavations, and reporting of the results. Given the developed nature of the project area, the methodology of investigation would include backhoe trenching to gain access through the dense fill deposits to undisturbed levels below. Once sites are located and it is determined they should be subject to data

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retrieval, other more detailed methodologies would be employed such as stripping of extensive areas of fill and hand excavation of units in trenches, among other methods.

Analysis:

Above Ground Resources

The proposed project would not involve the alteration or demolition of any historic structures and so would not have any direct effects on historic resources. There would be two types of indirect effects. The first and most important would be the visual effects of new construction within a historic district and will depend entirely on scale and design. The second would be the effects from a potential change in traffic patterns and volume around historic resources. The project should have **No Adverse Effect** as long as it meets the conditions set forth in the "Stipulations" section, below.

The Carr lot site is exposed from more open parts of the district on the south and west which form the gateway to the city despite having a lot of non-contributing properties. Design will be the key to making new construction compatible with the surrounding historic district character and thus avoiding an adverse effect. The size and location of the structure has been determined. The scale of the new building is similar to nearby buildings on State Street which include four, five and six story structures with footprints varying from smaller to much larger than the proposed building. Intervening vegetation along the North Branch and distance from the project site means that there should be no adverse effect to properties in the vicinity of the North Branch regardless of the final design. (For specific details, see accompanying report). The effect of the addition of a new pedestrian bridge north of the railroad bridge across the North Branch will similarly depend upon compatible design and appropriate scale as detailed in the "Stipulations."

As noted above, the project area – specifically the proposed building site – is open and undeveloped. However, historically it has been heavily used and developed with many types of utility structures. Many of the city's livery and transportation services were located in this area and clearly the views from Taylor Street and from across the Winooski were formerly much denser and more urban than they are now as a c. 1880 view demonstrates. The industrial and service element of the downtown areas near the rivers and railroad is no longer very present though as late as 1945, it was still very much in evidence. Introducing new buildings into these areas, if designed compatibly, can restore some of the urban density and revive the tradition of transportation related infrastructure in the heart of Montpelier.

More specifically, the historic structures in the vicinity of the Carr Lot include the two large life insurance company buildings (HD numbers 488 & 486), 120 State Street (HD number 484), the Montpelier Tavern Hotel (now Capitol Plaza, HD number 50), and the Pavilion Building (HD number 489), all of which are tall, 3, 4, or 5 story buildings. The proposed construction of the Montpelier Multi-Modal Transit & Welcome Center in the Carr Lot would be a four story multi-use structure sited in a traditional relationship with the street. The adjacent surface parking would be on the interior of the lot where it

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currently is. Depending on design, some historic buildings may be screened by the new construction but these are not the significant views of primary historic facades. If designed appropriately, this could be an asset to the historic character of the area by filling in recent open spaces with a new structure recreating some of the lost density. There have been many structures in the vicinity of the proposed new construction including railroad sheds, large freight and passenger depots and other storage or light manufacturing facilities. Typically these have been a bit smaller and shorter structures. New construction should utilize traditional materials and consider varied massing to avoid the potentially incompatible visual effect of a large monolithic rectangle.

There should not be any significant effects from traffic pattern changes because of the proposed project. The traffic studies prepared for the Draft Environmental Assessment have shown that Taylor Street handles a heavy volume of traffic at present and will continue to have heavy traffic regardless of the construction. The proposed project should not have an appreciable effect on the use of the adjacent historic properties in the district, including the Taylor Street Bridge, due to traffic flow and may improve some of the congested patterns by concentrating transportation services.

Archeological Resources

Effects to archeological properties are unknown since no subsurface field investigation has been conducted for the project. Most project effects would be direct to potential subsurface features and deposits due to ground disturbance activities related to the project. Some indirect effects may occur if eligible properties are buried beneath the proposed parking lot that would limit access to their investigation. If properties eligible for listing on the National Register are present adverse effect may be avoided. According to Section 106 regulations the first exception to the criteria of adverse effects states that adverse effect can be avoided "When the historic property is of value only for its potential contribution to archeological, historical, or architectural research, and when such value can be substantially preserved through the conduct of appropriate research, and such research is conducted in accordance with applicable professional standards and guidelines." [36 CFR § 800.9(c)] In that case the property would be eligible under criteria D, sites "that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history." [36 CFR § 60.4] If a site is encountered that qualifies for one of the National Register criteria A, B or C use of this exception of adverse effect may not be valid.

Stipulations:

The project will have **No Adverse Effect** if the following conditions are met:

- The City shall explore the feasibility of using one of the historic bridges in VAOT's inventory for the pedestrian bridge over the North Branch.
- The design of the new construction including the Multi-modal center and new or recycled historic pedestrian bridge as well as all park and trail landscaping must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and must first be reviewed and approved by the Division for Historic Preservation.

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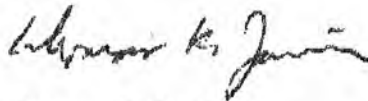
- A plan for archeological study is developed and is approved by VDHP.
- Phase I archeological reconnaissance survey is conducted and no intact deposits are encountered or; Phase I reconnaissance survey and Phase II site evaluation excavations are conducted and the sites are determined to not be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or; Phase I reconnaissance survey, Phase II site evaluation and Phase III data retrieval excavations are conducted on deposits determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

If the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation concurs with the determination of No Effect With Conditions, please sign on the line provided below.

Sincerely,



Lyssa Papazian



Thomas R. Jamison

c: Jim Donovan, Wilbur Smith Associates
 Judi Molloy, FTA
 Kenneth Sikora, FHWA
 Scott Newman, VTrans

Attachments:

The referenced report (received under separate cover) is entitled "Appendix E: Section 106 Evaluation" of the *Montpelier Multi-Modal Transit & Welcome Center Environmental Assessment*.

If the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation concurs with the determination of No Adverse Effect With Conditions as detailed above in "Stipulations", please sign on the line provided below.

Judith W. Earlich for JANE LENDWAY, SHPO
 State Historic Preservation Officer

5.26.05
 Date