

Winooski West Phase II

First Public Work Session

September 5, 2001

7:00 PM Memorial Room, Montpelier City Hall

Meeting Notes

The work session was preceded by a field walk to portions of the proposed routes for the path. The walk started at City Hall and then visited, in succession, the Barre Street/Main Street intersection, the opening between the dry cleaners and Charter One Bank, the Sarducci parking area north of the restaurant, the footpath along the south side of the railroad between Sraduchi's, the Rec Center connection to Barre Street, Barre Street, the opening between M&M Beveridge and Shaws, the area around the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Shaws parking north of M&M Beveridge.

The meeting itself started at 7:00 PM. Jim Donovan of Wilbur Smith Associates presented information on the existing conditions in the study area. He followed this with a presentation of the various alternate routes being considered for this project. For analysis purposes, Wilbur Smith Associates has divided the route into four sections: East of Main Street, Main Street Intersection, west of Main Street and the bridge crossing over the North Branch and west of the North Branch. Each section has at least three alternate alignments to consider. Jim also presented the various impacts, implications and other considerations to be considered on each alternative.

Following Jim's presentation, the group began to discuss the various options.

East of Main Street: Travel on Barre Street is not ideal; foot traffic that currently crosses main street near Charter One Bank typically travels between the Bank and Capital Dry Cleaners and then continues east adjacent to the railroad, using a foot path when there are now sidewalks; removing parking from Barre Street, even on one side, is not a popular idea, especially to create bicycle lanes that may not get used; even if there are facilities on Barre Street, most of the foot traffic will continue to travel along the railroad right-of-way; it may be possible to split the users, so that foot traffic would stay close to Stone Cutters Way and bicycle traffic would use Barre Street.

The intersection of Main Street and Barre Street: A signal may not be warranted at the intersection; a roundabout at this intersection would be placed there more for the aid of pedestrians and bicyclists than for motorists; if the use of other traffic calming measures at the intersection has not been examined, it should be before a final decision is made; a cross walk located at the west end of the Main Street Winooski River Bridge would not be acceptable; additional cross walks at the Barre Street Main Street Intersection would be desirable if a roundabout is not used; there should be a traffic analysis of the various alternatives; the new traffic counts do not reflect typical traffic patterns because of the closing of the Pioneer Street Bridge; the 1999 counts should be used for traffic analysis work.

Crossing the North Branch: The bridge at the mouth of the North Branch would need to be a longer bridge and therefore more expensive; the area behind the Shaw's building is not a desirable place to bring people; the bridge to the north of the railroad bridge would make sense, but there would need to be a path heading north on the east side - there is room behind the (former) LVCT building for such a walk; the walkway on the south side of the tracks next to Shaw's is very tight.

West of the North Branch: The path along the river would make the most direct connection with the existing path; the path on the north side of the railroad makes sense but the required removal of a building could delay the project; the path on the south side of the railroad offers few advantages over the other two and has more potential conflicts in the future with the multi-modal center; the construction of the river edge path does not conflict with the eventual inclusion of bicycle lanes along the Barre Street extension and the conversion of the river edge path to a pedestrian only path.

Preferred Alternative: Add a sidewalk along the north side of Stone Cutters Way and try to bring pedestrians between the Capital Dry Cleaners and Charter One Bank while officially routing bicyclists to a new Barre Street Bicycle Route. Add crosswalks and traffic calming measures to the intersection of Barre Street and Main Street. Extend a shared path on the south side of the M&M Beverage Building from the intersection to a bridge across the

Winooski West Phase II - First Public Work Session

September 5, 2001

Page 2

North Branch on the north side of the railroad bridge. On the west side of the North Branch, follow the route of the previously approved shared use path, crossing the tracks on the west side of the bridge and following the River's edge without disturbing existing vegetation along the River.

VTrans and the previous consultant may have copies of earlier reports and approvals for this portion of the path. Jim will contact VTrans; Valerie will contact the previous consultant, now Summit Engineering.

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