



Memo

Date: August 23, 2022

To: Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee

From: Chapin Spencer, Director
Norman Baldwin, P.E., Assistant Director/City Engineer
Corey Mims, P.E., Senior Public Works Engineer
Olivia Darisse, P.E., Public Works Engineer

Subject: Railyard Enterprise Project – Project Update

REQUEST

Tonight, we are seeking the TEUC's support of Alternative 1B as the anticipated preferred alternative for the Railyard Enterprise Project, and to support staff as they seek acceptance on the anticipated preferred alternative from the City Council on September 19th, 2022. We will be giving a presentation to the TEUC detailing the concept alternatives, the evaluation leading to the anticipated selection of Alternative 1B, and the next steps for the project.

BACKGROUND

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 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.

In partnership with the City, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), an enhanced scoping process under the Every Day Counts/Planning and Environmental Linkages (EDC/PEL) FHWA initiative was completed in 2016. A Steering Committee, comprised of members of City, State and local organizations, 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 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 to reduce traffic impacts in the King St and Maple St neighborhoods.

Between 2016 and 2020, the City, VTrans and CCRPC conducted a supplemental scoping of REP Phase 2 Alternative 1B to evaluate whether a local/state approach that does not use federal funds was feasible. The supplemental scoping was very beneficial in conducting more detailed review of the

historic and environmental considerations as well as railyard and private property impacts in the project area. The findings from the supplemental scoping will help inform upcoming project development work including the Federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Based on the supplemental scoping and the overall projected cost, in June 2020, the City Council passed motions to accept the supplemental scoping report, to seek federal and state funds to advance the project, and to request the State of Vermont expedite the availability of 90% grant funding for this project to advance into the preliminary engineering phase.

Mayor Weinberger and Director Spencer met multiple times with VTrans and FHWA leadership to inform them of the City Council's and Administration's strong support to promptly advance this project with 90% Federal and State funding. The meetings were productive and helped improve VTrans' and Federal Highway Administration's understanding of the project's local support, beneficial economic development opportunities, and improved multimodal traffic management. Based on these conversations, VTrans provided a letter to Director Spencer on November 10, 2020 that supported advancing the project to preliminary engineering in FY'22 with 90% Federal and State funding. On December 21, 2020, the City Council passed a motion to support the Administration's decision to move forward with a partnership with the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to advance the Railyard Enterprise Project to a preliminary engineering phase.

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 Scoping Reports can be found on the CCRPC's website here:

<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/railyard-enterprise-project/>

PROJECT FUNDING

In early 2021 the City was awarded a grant for the project. The grant is for 81.08% federal funding, 8.92% state funding and a 10% local match obligation. The maximum limiting amount of this grant is \$10,000,000; \$9,000,000 of which is reimbursable through the State and Federal share. The local match obligation of \$1,000,000 for this agreement is being funded through City capital. DPW staff received authorization from the Board of Finance and City Council in May 2021 to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with VTrans.

It is anticipated that the grant will cover preliminary engineering, permitting and right-of-way acquisition costs, and additional funds for these activities or construction, up to \$20M, will be committed at the same federal/state/local share funding ratios through future amendments to this Cooperative Agreement. Staff anticipates there will be non-participating costs not accounted for in the 10% Local match obligation. State policy states that any development soil liabilities would be required to be assumed by the grant recipient as non-participating costs. The development soil liabilities would be determined at a later stage of project development.

CONSULTANT SELECTION

In July 2021, the City publicly advertised a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to procure preliminary scoping and permitting services, and received two responses to the RFQ. DPW staff evaluated and scored the responses, and selected Stantec Consulting Services as the consultant for this phase of the work. DPW received authorization from the Board of Finance and City Council to enter into a contract with Stantec in November 2021.

Stantec is an international multi-disciplinary engineering firm with a location in South Burlington. Stantec and their team of subconsultants will lead DPW through conceptual plan development and the federal permitting process in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. A new contract will be negotiated before moving onto the preliminary engineering phase.

ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

Over the last several months, DPW and the consulting team have worked together with VTrans and FHWA to evaluate the feasibility of three alternatives from the 2016 PEL study with respect to right-of-way and property impacts, historic preservation, environmental impacts and cost. Based on this preliminary evaluation, the project team anticipates selecting Alternative 1B as the preferred design alternative. Alternative 1B consists of a single street running between Pine Street and Battery Street. Three intersection control options are being evaluated at the Pine Street terminus: a traditional roundabout, and two standard, signalized intersection configurations. The exact alignment of the roadway and type of intersection controls continue to be evaluated will be determined in the conceptual design phase. We will return to the TEUC during the conceptual plan phase to present these decisions and the updated design concept.

PROJECT OUTREACH

Property owners and tenants within the project impact area have been engaged in discussions regarding the evaluation of the alternatives and roadway alignments. To date, the design team has met with Vermont Rail System (VRS), Curtis Lumber, Independent Block, Chittenden Solid Waste District, Citizen Cider, Complex Enterprises LLC, MGD Inc, Jesse Jacobs, and tenants of 339 Pine Street. The project team has revised the preferred alternative concept to address many of the concerns raised by these stakeholders in an effort to mitigate the impacts to their properties. We will continue to work with these parties through the preliminary engineering phase. In general, stakeholders seem satisfied with the project team's efforts thus far and are generally supportive of the project and Alternative 1B.

The project team will be holding a public meeting on September 7th, 2022 to present the anticipated preferred alternative to the broader community. We will present the general concept and timeline for the project, as well as information regarding how to stay updated and involved in the project. On September 19th, 2022 we will seek approval of the anticipated preferred alternative from the City Council before moving forward with formal selection of the preferred alternative and the conceptual design.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the TEUC during the conceptual design phase, after further design work is completed. An overview of the updated concept will be presented, and we will take in additional feedback from the TEUC and respond to questions.

Feel free to contact us at nbaldwin@burlingtonvt.gov, cmims@burlingtonvt.gov, or odarisse@burlingtonvt.gov to discuss any of this in further detail. Thank you.

ACTION

The TEUC supports Alternative 1B as the anticipated preferred alternative for the Railyard Enterprise Project, and supports staff as they seek acceptance on the anticipated preferred alternative from the City Council on September 19th, 2022.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: September 7th Public Meeting Flyer for Railyard Enterprise Project

PUBLIC MEETING RAILYARD ENTERPRISE PROJECT

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2022 AT 6:00 PM

WHERE: ZOOM AND BURLINGTON CITY HALL

Zoom: From your computer, tablet, or smartphone:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88386970269?pwd=aitpUWVwQlkxNTRocTJyaXAzVkVpQT09>

Passcode (584278)

Or telephone: +1 929 205 6099, then enter the Webinar ID (883 8697 0269) and Password (584278) as instructed

In-Person: Burlington City Hall, Sharon Bushor Room, 149 Church St, Burlington, VT 05401

The Department of Public Works invites the community to participate in a meeting to learn about the Railyard Enterprise Project, a proposed new roadway connecting Pine Street to Battery Street. If you are unable to join us, the meeting will be recorded and available on the project website. Additional information can be found on the project website at www.railyardenterprise.com. Participants are encouraged to participate virtually. However, for community members requiring language services or other accommodations, an in-person location has been identified.

To request interpreter services for the September 7th meeting or to learn more about the Railyard Enterprise Project, please call 802.922.5001 or email CMims@burlingtonvt.gov by August 30th. Additional information is available on the project website at www.railyardenterprise.com.

စက်တင်ဘာလ ၇ ရက်နေ့ အစည်းအဝေးအတွက် စကားပြန်ဝန်ဆောင်မှုများ တောင်းခံရန် သို့မဟုတ် **Railyard Enterprise** ပရောဂျက်အကြောင်း ပိုမိုလေ့လာရန်အတွက် ကျေးဇူးပြု၍ ၈၀၂.၉၂၂.၅၀၀၁ သို့ ဖုန်းခေါ်ဆိုပါ သို့မဟုတ် CMims@burlingtonvt.gov သို့ အီးမေးလ်ပို့ပါ။
နောက်ထပ်အချက်အလက်များကို www.railyardenterprise.com ရှိ ပရောဂျက်ဝက်ဘ်ဆိုက်တွင် ရရှိနိုင်ပါသည်။

Pour demander les services d'un interprète pour la réunion du 7 septembre ou pour en savoir plus sur le Projet Railyard Enterprise, veuillez appeler au 802.922.5001 ou envoyer un courriel à CMims@burlingtonvt.gov avant le 30 août. Des informations supplémentaires sont disponibles sur le site Web du projet à l'adresse suivante : www.railyardenterprise.com.

यो सेप्टेम्बर ७ को बैठकको लागि दोभाषे सेवाहरू अनुरोध गर्न वा **Railyard Enterprise Project** बारे थप जान्नको लागि, कृपया ८०२.९२२.५००१ मा कल गर्नुहोस् वा अगस्ट ३० सम्ममा CMims@burlingtonvt.gov मा इमेल गर्नुहोस्। थप जानकारी परियोजनाको वेबसाइट www.railyardenterprise.com मा उपलब्ध छ।

Si aad u codsato adeegyada turjumaanka ee kulanka bisha Sibteembar 7deeda ama aad xog badan uga ogaato Mashruuca Railyard Enterprise, fadlan wac 802.922.5001 ama iimeelka CMims@burlingtonvt.gov ugu danbayn Agoosto 30keeda. Xog dheeraad ah ayaa laga heli karaa webseedka mashruuca oo ah www.railyardenterprise.com.

Kuomba huduma za wakalimani kwa ajili ya Mkutano wa Tarehe 7 Septemba au kupata masomo mengi zaidi kuhusu Mradi wa Railyard Enterprise, tafadhali piga simu kwa 802.922.5001 au tumia barua pepe kwenye CMims@burlingtonvt.gov kabla ya tarehe 30 Agosti. Maelezo ya zaidi yanapatikana kwenye tovuti ya mradi katika www.railyardenterprise.com.

Department of Public Works

645 Pine Street, Burlington, VT 05401 | 802.922.5001 | CMims@burlingtonvt.gov



Railyard Enterprise Project
Burlington, VT

