

Office of
the Mayor
Burlington,
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Mayor Miro
Weinberger

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July 11, 2012

Brian Searles
Secretary of Transportation
VTrans
One National Life Drive
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001

Dear Brian,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Wednesday, July 11th to discuss the status of the Champlain Parkway project. As you know, I am very interested in and eager to make progress on this important project for economic development in the South End of the City.

As we discussed, the Champlain Parkway has been modified in numerous significant ways that have a material impact on how it operates to redistribute traffic and its potential to stimulate private investment and encourage economic development. I understand that VTrans and the FHWA believe that the current project design is a reasonable multi-model compromise balancing well automobiles, pedestrians, bicyclists and rail. However, I have heard strong concerns expressed that the existing project does not sufficiently relieve traffic in the Maple/King Street neighborhood, provide satisfactory truck access to the rail yard, and would fail to fully realize an important economic development opportunity for the City of Burlington.

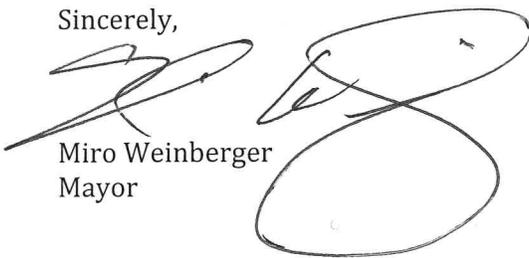
We also discussed VTrans' support of the City's interest to continue to explore an independent development effort that the MPO began to study in 2010, and we have begun to refer to as the Rail-Yard Enterprise District Project. The Rail-Yard Enterprise District Project should be crafted as an economic development project that would address access to the waterfront, access to the rail-yard, and will stimulate economic development through the creation of additional street frontage. It would also have the benefit of reducing traffic volumes in the Maple/King Street neighborhood. The streets we are exploring to create will take the form of a new grid bordered by Pine and Maple Streets, Battery Street Extension and the rail-yard. This new public street framework will provide frontage for commercial and housing development, and help to knit together the community neighborhood of the Battery Street and Pine Street areas.

We welcome VTrans' support, assistance, and cooperation to explore the options to make rapid progress in advancing the Rail-Yard Enterprise District Project. We look forward to working with VTrans to evaluate federal, state and local funding options for the design, planning, and construction of the project.

I shared with you the Burlington City Council's request that my Administration take a critical look at the current design of the Champlain Parkway. I am interested in understanding how VTrans and the FHWA would view the relationship in terms of sequencing, funding, and determinations between the Champlain Parkway and the Rail-Yard Enterprise District Project. Would you please clarify the payback requirements under FHWA rules and the Cooperative Agreement between the City and VTrans should the City of Burlington not go forward with the Champlain Parkway as planned? I would also ask you to provide me with an explanation of the consequences of revisiting the VTrans/FHWA Section 4(F) determination in the NEPA process of the railroad spur alternative of the Champlain Parkway.

Thank you in advance for your assistance as we chart our economic development and transportation course in Burlington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Miro Weinberger', written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.

Miro Weinberger
Mayor