

**Brandon Select Board
Union Street/Maple Street Bike & Pedestrian Project Hearing
July 13, 2015**

Select Board Members Present: Ethan Swift, Doug Bailey, Seth Hopkins, Devon Fuller, Ethan Swift

Others present: Dave Atherton, Kathy Rausenberger, Wayne Rausenberger, Richard Baker, Dick Kirby, Janet Coolidge, Lee Kahrs, Anthony Paduto

Call to Order:

Doug Bailey opened the Select Board's Union Street/Maple Street Bike & Pedestrian Project Hearing at 6:32PM and turned the hearing over to the Town Manager.

Public Comments:

Dave Atherton stated the hearing this evening is for public input for the sidewalk and bridge grant the Town is re-instating and re-applying for to connect the sidewalks of Maple, Union and Pearl streets to loop around the town. Mr. Atherton advised this grant is 11 years old and a majority of the engineering work is done. The Town is attempting to save the funding and get additional work done as well. There has been an application submitted for a bike-pedestrian grant. Letters of interest in support of the project have been received from the Brandon Chamber, the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and the Brandon Planning Commission. Ethan Swift questioned if there is pipe replacement or sewer replacement proposed, knowing the shim coat was done on Union Street. Mr. Atherton advised the Fire District has discussed replacing some pipe, but no work is known at this time. He spoke to Ray Counter who advised there is quite a bit of work to be done in the next construction season and it would make sense to do it all at once. Dubois and King originally did this work. VTrans would like to see this project done. Ethan Swift asked if it is just the sidewalk or whether the bridge will be addressed. Mr. Atherton stated it is hoped to address the bridge as well and he has contacted the people who had the recommissioned bridges to discuss whether one of these bridges could potentially be used. Seth Hopkins asked if the sidewalk should go on the east side rather than the west side, as the west side would need a crosswalk. Mr. Atherton advised according to the map that is where the sidewalk ends on Union Street. Mr. Swift noted there are more people that live on the east side, as opposed to the west side. Doug Bailey asked if the match money is available. Mr. Atherton stated this project was done years ago and VTrans has indicated they want the funds returned if the project is not completed. The Town initially received \$180,000.00 in 2005 and spent \$73,000.00 in engineering fees. The Town has the remaining funds available and has applied for a grant that could be up to \$850,000.00. The total project, with the bridge, would be \$832,000.00 and that would have a \$75,000.00 local match. This would be the same amount that would have to be sent back to VTrans if the project is not completed. Devon Fuller agreed that if the \$73,000.00 is required to be paid back if the project is not completed and the match for the total project is \$75,000.00, it would be worthwhile to move forward with the project.

Kathy Rausenberger expressed concern that there have been floods in the Union Street area and asked if there is consideration to do something regarding the narrow road. There have been instances since 2007 when the road has been closed due to flooding. Ethan Swift stated this area is in the flood plain and the bridge is undersized and causes restriction. The replacement of the bridge would help avoid future flooding. Dave Atherton stated there would have to be right of ways obtained from the abutting properties. Doug Bailey stated it would be a way to get people around the town and it makes sense to move forward with the project.

Richard Baker stated the waterline was replaced when the Union Street work was done. As far as the grant application, he is a strong supporter of the Select Board moving forward with the project. Mr. Baker was on the Select Board when the original grant was received. At that time, it had been determined that a bridge would be needed and Tropical Storm Irene prevented the Town from moving forward. It is a viable solution to bring this project back. Mr. Baker advised there are

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six towns in Rutland County that have applications totaling \$5 million of the available grants for the State of Vermont. Ethan Swift asked why the engineering was not completed. Mr. Baker stated the part that was not completed was the bridge portion, but the remainder of the project was engineered. Doug Bailey asked what type of bridge would be required. Ethan Swift stated it would likely need to be a 25 to 30 foot bridge. Dubois and King have indicated the pedestrian bridge would be pre-fabricated and it would likely be a mini version of what Middlebury has done.

Dick Kirby asked if the sidewalk has been engineered and it was confirmed that the engineering has been done for the project, with exception of the bridge.

Ethan Swift asked if the grant application has been submitted. Dave Atherton advised the application has been submitted and the process required a public hearing be held and the minutes from the hearing submitted. It was noted the Public Works Director will be attending a meeting in Montpelier on Wednesday regarding the project.

Adjournment:

The hearing was closed at 6:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Attachments Included:

- . 2015 VTRANS Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Evaluation Criteria
- . Map of Brandon, Vermont Proposed Maple/Union Street Sidewalk
- . Supplemental Cost Information

2015 VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Evaluation Criteria

Brandon- Union Street Pedestrian Bridge and Maple Street Sidewalk

1. Describe how the project address a pedestrian or bicyclist need identified in local or regional planning documents.

The primary purpose of the Union Street Pedestrian Bridge and Maple Street Sidewalk Project is to improve the safety and mobility of all pedestrians and bicyclists regardless of age or ability. This need is clearly identified in several sections of the Rutland Regional Plan.

The Rutland Regional Plan, adopted in June 2015, addresses this need in many elements of the Plan, most notably in the Regional Transportation Plan: *Bicycle and Pedestrians Element*, where unmet needs are identified as the lack of safe links between communities and to popular destinations, and missing links to schools.

The Regional Plan further discusses future trends of bicycle and pedestrian transportation, including the increased municipal attention to pedestrian infrastructure, the existing funding for facilities and connecting modes, and a recognition that the *easier* it is for people to switch between modes, the *more likely* it is for people to utilize different modes. RRPC actions listed include “...*promoting infrastructure for safe and comfortable pedestrian travel and working on studies and pedestrian plans*” (Pg. 184).

The Rutland Regional Plan: Health and Wellness and Recreation elements identify facilities that promote physical fitness as key elements necessary for improving the Region’s health. Infrastructure developments lacking pedestrian facilities can have the unintended consequence of limiting physical activity, which factors in to local statistics on increasing obesity trends among the population. Recreation, and access to recreational facilities by bike and foot, is also discussed in the Regional Plan. This link in the loop through downtown allows for safe pedestrian travel, safe pedestrian access to downtown Brandon and has economic and health impacts for the residents and town. This is a critical need.

Brandon Town Plan, adopted in 2014, stated as an objective- Plan for and encourage the development of transportation facilities designed for multiple modes of transportation. “Bicycle and pedestrian travel are critical elements in creating a balanced and sustainable transportation system. Health, safety and energy conservation are just a few of the benefits of these alternative means of transportation. The schools should participate in the Safe Routes to Schools.”

The Town Plan strongly supports the proposed project in citing that “The most heavily used pedestrian area is downtown Brandon. Safe pedestrian routes are needed between neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, and community centers. Existing sidewalks should be connected and upgraded and additional sidewalks should be promoted. Visibility at all crosswalks should be maintained.”

2015 VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Evaluation Criteria

Brandon- Union Street Pedestrian Bridge and Maple Street Sidewalk

2. Describe how the project contributes to a system of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities.

The proposed project would promote quality, linkage, and variety in the Region's transportation system in substantive ways. First and foremost, this link connects to two existing sidewalks on Union and Maple Streets, completing a network with the addition of a pedestrian bridge crossing the Neshobe River and a crosswalk to allow pedestrians a safe place to cross Union Street. Brandon is a walkable downtown with sidewalks lining both sides of streets, extending into nearby residential areas.

3. Describe how the proposed project provides access to likely generators of pedestrian and/or bicyclist activity.

The proposed sidewalk completes a vital loop through Brandon, where many destinations are located. Close to downtown and the pedestrian loop, located just off Union Street, north of the project site, is the Boys and Girls Club, at Church Street and Rossiter. Union Street also is the location of key commercial uses- a grocery store and pharmacy, a visual learning center and incubator space. Also accessed on the loop is the post office, at US7 and Pearl Street. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to frequent other businesses, and restaurants in the downtown.

4. Describe how the project budget was developed.

DuBois and King have served as consultants to the town on this project and with VTrans' assistance, developed the project budget as part of their scope of work.

5. Is the project located within a Designated Downtown, Village Center or Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) recognized by the VT Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development?

The project is not located within the designated downtown however it is adjacent to it and connects to it by completing the pedestrian loop which traverses it.

6. Please describe how the proposed project addresses unsafe conditions. Be as specific as possible and provide data/documentation in support.

Both Union Street and Maple Street, with 25 mph speed limit, serve as rural local roads. Union Street had an ADT of 470 vehicles in 2011 and is a north-south route connecting residential uses to downtown Brandon. Maple Street is also residential. Crash data from 2008-June 2015 records 2 crashes. These residential areas do not have a means to connect to the existing sidewalk system and pedestrians must utilize road shoulders including at the narrow Union Street bridge across the Neshobe River.

2015 VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Evaluation Criteria

Brandon- Union Street Pedestrian Bridge and Maple Street Sidewalk

7. To what degree has the project advanced to date?

This project has been in progress for quite some time and is ready to move forward toward completion. A scoping study was completed for this project in 2005, a Transportation Enhancement grant received and Categorical Exclusion in 2009. Public interest has been strong to see the pedestrian loop completed and with an active Town Manager and Department of Public Works Director involved, they have revised the initial grant and are coordinating the funds with this grant to construct the project.

8. Does the proposed project appear to have potentially significant permitting issues? (E.g. Act 250, stormwater, wetlands, 401 water quality, Section 4f) If so, how have those issues been considered?

The Environmental Services Engineer concluded that the project will have no significant effect on natural resources. The pedestrian bridge over the Neshobe River will require a Stream Alteration Permit however this will not present an issue.

9. Does the proposed project require complex right of way acquisition? Right of way includes any temporary easements that might be needed to construct the project.

Right-of-way acquisition will be required on Maple Street and Union Street- both temporary and permanent. Since the new sidewalk will connect to an existing sidewalk, it is expected to be a simpler and more logical process for residents who lack a sidewalk.

10. Does the proposed project appear to include complex design issues (e.g. extensive retaining walls, bridges, railroad involvement?) If so, how have those issues been addressed?

No complex design issues are involved – the pedestrian bridge will be prefabricated and the sidewalk railroad crossing is at the Union Street crossing.

Supplemental Cost Information

This application is to supplement funding for engineering, right-of-way and construction of a pedestrian bridge over the Neshobe River and approximately 2,550 feet of sidewalk. This sidewalk extends from an existing sidewalk on the north side of Maple Street to the east side of Union Street and ends at Church Street.

A grant from the Transportation Enhancement Program was awarded in 2005 for \$180,000 however final engineering and construction costs exceed this amount.

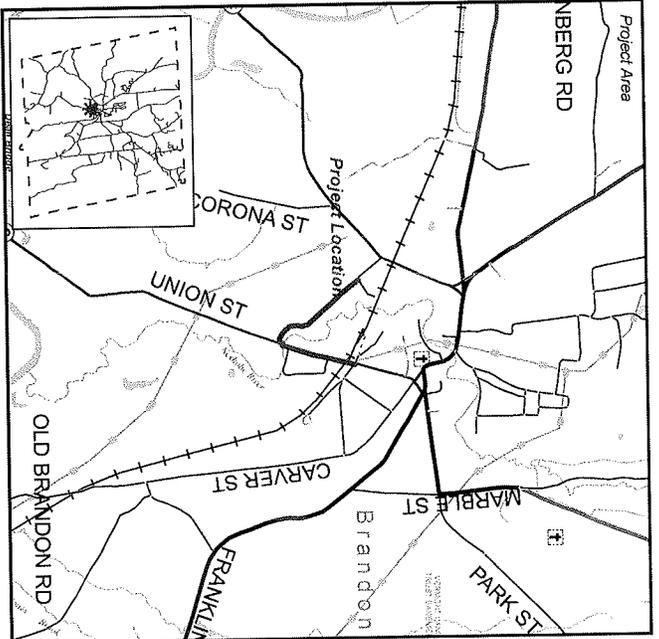
FY05 Application-	\$150,000	Federal and State funds
	\$ 30,000	Local match
	\$180,000	TOTAL
Spent to Date - June 2015	\$73,305	Engineering
Anticipated Work	\$30,000	Engineering
	\$10,000	ROW/Appraisal
	\$720,000	Construction Costs
	\$72,000	Construction Inspection/PM (10%)
	\$832,000	TOTAL

Difference in funding obtained and funding needed= \$ 725,305

Based on conversations with our VTrans Project Manager, this application is for \$ 750,000 \$ 675,000 Federal funds and \$75,000 local match. This will fund the additional engineering, ROW and construction.



Date: 7/6/2015



BRANDON VERMONT
Proposed Maple / Union Street Sidewalk

Legend

- Proposed Maple Street Crosswalk
- Proposed Union Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Proposed Maple / Union Street Sidewalk
- Existing Sidewalks