

Maintenance of Traffic & Closure Duration: As discussed, the project will require a full closure of Bridge 31 to vehicular traffic for 28 days, with traffic detoured onto an off-site regional detour. Pedestrian access will be maintained via a temporary pedestrian bridge. The Town noted that the preferred closure period is between April and June – we are targeting the window between Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. On either end of the 28-day closure, we expect approximately 14 days of alternating one-lane traffic through the project area. There will also be traffic disruptions during utility relocations, which are controlled by the utility companies themselves. A community member requested that a police officer be present during alternating one-way traffic to ensure drivers follow the posted signs and traffic controls. There was also a question about local traffic patterns during the closure and whether a north-south detour would be required. A short-duration VT 100/VT 9 intersection closure will be needed to provide the contractor room to work, which will require a north-south detour.

Accelerated Construction: To minimize impacts, the project will use accelerated construction methods, including completing some foundation work prior to the closure and using precast superstructure elements. We are confident the 28-day closure is achievable and may be reduced further as design progresses and the construction schedule is refined.

Waterline Relocation & Town Costs: There were questions about the difference between the Town's utility relocation costs for the temporary pedestrian bridge option versus the permanent pedestrian bridge option. With a permanent pedestrian bridge, the Town waterline would be moved once from Bridge 31 to the permanent structure and remain there after construction. With a temporary pedestrian bridge, the waterline would need to be moved twice – once onto the temporary bridge and then back onto Bridge 31 after construction – resulting in approximately double the cost.

Utility Coordination: Utility coordination will be required, and traffic delays are expected during utility relocation work. While the utility companies manage their own traffic control, the project team will coordinate closely with them as design advances. One early idea for aerial utility relocation is placing them on an alternate route, such as behind the Crafts Inn; however, a community member noted that this area floods frequently, which will need further review.

Pre-Fabricated Home Transport: The intersection is frequently used by companies transporting pre-fabricated homes. The project team will conduct outreach to these companies prior to the closure to ensure they are aware of timing and detour routing.

Local Bypass Routes and Mitigation Grant: Several local bypass routes are available for passenger vehicles during the closure. We did not discuss this last week, but the Agency can apply for a grant to compensate the Town of Wilmington for additional wear and tear on one bypass route for the project. Local Bypass Mitigation Grants are available for obvious town roads that will be affected by the bridge closure. These grants are provided by the state and are intended to compensate the Town for possible impacts due to increased traffic on local bypass routes. The compensation amount is

calculated based on a number of factors including the closure duration, traffic volumes and the bypass length and is intended to assist with:

- Providing police presence to deter speeding
- Providing enforcement to enforce weight limits
- Dust control
- Roadway maintenance (grading/addition of gravel/general maintenance)

The Town can choose the bypass to be mitigated. Note that the Agency typically does not endorse local bypasses. The Town is responsible for determining what signs and controls, if any, are necessary for the bypasses. Jonathan can initiate this grant contract once a contractor is on board.

Lighting on the Bridge: A question was raised about adding lighting to the bridge. Because Bridge 31 is a historic resource and the original structure had lighting, federal funds may be used to construct new lighting on the replacement bridge. Jonathan will work with the Town during the design phase to determine what the bridge lighting will look like.

Local Traffic Operations & Turning Movements: A community member noted that if the Town pursues a permanent pedestrian bridge, the sidewalk could potentially be removed from Bridge 31, providing additional width for vehicles and improving large-truck turning movements. They also asked about adding a left-turn lane. A left-turn lane was evaluated during scoping; although it improves the Level of Service from D to C, this was not considered a significant operational benefit.

Hydraulics: The project team discussed whether the replacement bridge can meet hydraulic standards. Bridge 31 is located within a floodway, and while raising the low beam and lengthening the structure will improve hydraulics, it will not meet the minimum standard. The current concept anticipates increasing the span length from 59 feet to over 70 feet.

Business Access During Construction: The community asked what could be done to support local businesses during the closure. Advance notification of closure timing and clear signage such as “Downtown Open” can be placed along detour routes. Past projects have also included efforts such as “village merchant nights,” and we encourage the Wilmington business community to continue developing strategies that best support downtown during construction.

River Bank Park Impacts (Section 4(f) & 6(f)): Some questions focused on the potential permanent pedestrian bridge alternative and the ability to permit it given its relationship to River Bank Park. When this option was first developed, the project team was not aware of the Town’s determination that the park is significant. Permanent impacts could trigger lengthy review under Section 4(f) and Section 6(f), potentially adding two years to permitting. Temporary uses – such as for construction staging or temporary pedestrian access – may be permissible with fewer impacts, but avoidance of permanent impacts is strongly preferred.

Alternative 3B & Covered Bridge Idea: There was discussion about Alternative 3B, which includes a permanent pedestrian bridge. A community member asked whether a permanent pedestrian bridge could be constructed as a covered bridge. Federal requirements do not allow property takes from 4(f)-protected resources when feasible and prudent alternatives exist to avoid those impacts. Because federal funding is tied to these requirements, a covered bridge concept would not be feasible if it requires such takes.

Emergency Services Coordination: A question was raised about emergency response during the closure. As discussed, we will coordinate directly with emergency services so that response plans can be made. Emergency vehicles may be staged strategically, and mutual aid can be used to minimize response times.

Once conceptual plans are complete, Jon will reach out to schedule another public meeting. Additionally, there will be a pre-construction conference that the Town will be invited to participate in prior to the start of construction activities. Currently this project is expected to be constructed in the summer of 2029 with utility relocations starting in 2028.

The presentation has been uploaded to our VTrans projects page:
<https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/vtrans/external/Projects/Structures/22B394>