

## Meeting Notes US 5 Guilford Bridge 5

**When:** 5/3/16, 6:30-8:00pm

**Location:** Guilford Community Church, Guilford, VT

**In attendance:** Approximately 30 people. Project team members included Rob Young (Vermont Agency of Transportation - VTrans), David Hull (McFarland Johnson), Jennifer Zorn (McFarland Johnson), Jill Barrett (Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.), and Shawna Kitzman (Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.).

**Purpose:** This public informational meeting was held to update local residents about the final plans for the reconstruction of Guilford bridge 5 and the associated rebuilding of US 5 north and south of the bridge.

**Meeting began** with introductions of project team and a brief PowerPoint presentation summarizing this project. Presentation included project background, final bridge design, engineering and traffic challenges, current construction plans and timeline, response to community concerns, steps to minimize community impacts, and the bid process. The plan calls for accelerated bridge construction. Bridge closure is anticipated no more than 28 days.

The timeline is estimated to be:

**October 2016**—Project will go out to bid to pre-qualified contractors.

**April/May 2017**—Begin pre-closure activities.

**Summer 2017**—Bridge closure anticipated for up to 28 days

**Late Summer 2017**—Project completion

The PowerPoint and other project information is posted at the website dedicated to this project: [www.vt14emontpelier.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](http://www.vt14emontpelier.vtransprojects.vermont.gov). The presenters included Project Team members Rob Young, Dave Kull, and Jill Barrett. The meeting was taped for BCTV public access television: <http://www.brattleborotv.org/route-5-bridge-project-public-meeting-5316>.

Audience questions and comments followed the presentation.

***Q: You mentioned contractors will be incentivized to complete construction early. Will they be dis-incentivized if construction extends past 28 days?***

***A:*** Yes. They will be fined for days over the established schedule. There is no limit to the number of days they can be fined. VTrans has completed about 30 of these bridge-closure projects and have not yet fined a contractor for exceeding

the agreed upon time. The project team does their best to establish a reasonable the construction timeframe.

***Q: Where will the mailboxes on Grist Mill Road be relocated to? Are they for all people south of the bridge? Is that the closest temporary box?***

**A:** Currently, there are about 16 mailboxes on Grist Mill Road. Residents who live south of the bridge will have temporary mailboxes along the I-91 emergency access road. This location was selected by the post office because it has safe roadside access.

***Q: Will we be able to use Broad Brook Road while construction is going on? It is not in the best shape, and virtually one-way, at points.***

**A:** Broad Brook is a local road, and therefore under the town's management. The town will continue to manage the road throughout the project.

***Q: Broad Brook Road is both tarred and gravel. Will there be reparations for increased wear and tear of this local road?***

**A:** There is a state-funded grant available to the town to offset maintenance and enforcement to sign designated routes or detours due to this project.

***Q: Broad Brook has a posted weight limit. How will this be enforced for contractors, trucks, etc? Illegal use of this road can cause delays and safety issues.***

**A:** Dan Zumbruski, Guilford's Road Commissioner responded: We can post 'No tractor trailers' signs. But it's challenging to force motorists to obey signs.

***Q: The limited view corridor presents a safety issue at the intersections adjacent to the bridge, especially Broad Brook. How will the team coordinate with the town to improve safety? Could engineers redesign Route 5 approaching the bridge at an elevation and/or alignment that improves safety? I am concerned that the proposed design changes will enable cars to speed.***

**A:** The project team will look into roadway design options.

***Q: Will there be traffic control?***

**A:** Yes, there will be alternating one-lane traffic a few weeks before and after bridge closure, and strategically-placed signage before and during construction.

***Q: There is a short light sequence with historic queueing issues at the Route 5 and State Route 142 intersection ('Malfunction Junction') in Brattleboro. Could the project team coordinate with Brattleboro to improve the signal temporarily?***

**A:** Great suggestion. The team will look into this.

***Q: How far north from the bridge will the sidewalk extend? It seems like the new sidewalk will not extend to the existing sidewalk north of the bridge. It's ideal to meet the existing sidewalk, and be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).***

***A:*** Yes, we recognize there will be a gap. We believe the town has a sidewalk plan. The town would be responsible for the sidewalk network.

***Q: There is a non-profit community group that evaluated an open space adjacent to the project area. It's envisioned as a picnic area or small open space. Is there a way for the team to include this in the plan at low cost?***

***A:*** The stones illustrated in the PowerPoint diagram indicate an existing steep slope. The stones will stabilize this bank. Property owners have been approached and agreed upon this design, and the easements have been obtained. We don't see this as a viable area for open space because it is narrow with a very steep drop off to Broad Brook, but it will be green as grass will cover the stones.

***Q: Emergency personnel must be able to travel over Broad Brook to respond to emergencies. Could a temporary foot bridge be built? Could our people be given permission to cross the contractor's work bridge? This must be addressed before the Call for Bids is developed. We're very rural, and fire hydrants are critical. An alternate emergency services route is not sufficient. Seventeen of 36 emergency responders live on other side of the bridge. First responders will have a fire truck on southern side of the bridge, but this is a very pressing concern if there is an emergency on the north side.***

***A:*** Remember it's a 28-day closure. Everyone, including first responders, would use the detour route. The selected contractor must have an emergency plan in place. The existing bridge doesn't have a sidewalk, so we would not create temporary pedestrian bridge. It would likely need additional Right of Way. The time to propose that design has passed. We can look into bolstering emergency services, and leveraging mutual aid.

***Q: As someone who works on the bidding side, VTrans should include a line item in the Call for Bids about a pedestrian bridge. It must be well worded so all bidders are aware of the community concerns. Be up front about this requirement. We understand a pedestrian bridge would draw out the schedule, but we'd feel more comfortable, even if use is prohibited to the public. In 2013, we were very adamant about this request.***

***A:*** VTrans will look further into this request.

***Q: Will there be a public meeting once the contractor is selected?***

***A.*** Yes, we will have another meeting, hopefully here, so they can meet you and you can meet them. The project team will meet with the contractor periodically.

***Q: We want to know the contractor will work with us to figure out the plan that best suits our community.***

***A. Yes, absolutely.***

***Q: Who funds this project?***

***A. Approximately 80% of funding comes from the federal government. VTrans will fund 20%.***

***Q. What is the estimated emergency response time with the improved access from I-91?***

***A. We are not sure of the exact time, but it's a 3.5-mile detour***

***Q. If there was an emergency, could first responders from Brattleboro use the emergency turnaround from I-91 north to I-91 south?***

***A. Yes, we think so.***

***Q. When I hear that the contract will go to the lowest bidder that makes me nervous. I want to hear that VTrans will hire the most competent, responsible bidder.***

***A. We have an extensive pre-qualification process. VTrans selects the best pre-qualified contractor who bids competitively and regularly builds bridges.***