

Memorandum

TO: Richard McGuire, Town Manager

From: Ken Belliveau, AICP, Director of Planning

Date: June 22, 2011

RE: 2011 Town Plan – Issues Raised by the Selectboard

The purpose of this memo is twofold:

1. Provide a summary of the issues and comments raised by the Selectboard during their review of the proposed *2011-2016 Comprehensive Plan*
2. Brief the Selectboard on the recently proposed changes affecting the Circumferential Highway and how this may affect the town, and in particular the town plan

Town Plan

Listed below is a summary of the comments and issues raised by the Selectboard in their review of the town plan over the past few months. The comments are listed sequentially by chapter.

Chapter 1 – 40 Years of Change	
Chapter 2 – 40 Years of Planning	
Table 2.B – double check percentages	Page 10
Insert the word “and” between “incentivizing __ encouraging”	Page 12
Chapter 3 – Land Use	
3.1 - Change “employees” to “employs”	Page 13
Table 3.C – change \$224,9 to read \$224.9	Page 14
3.1.3 – Gateway rework awkward first sentence construction	Page 15
3.2.1 – insert the word “in” between “protected __ all”	Page 16
3.6.1 – examine the need for an expanded village zoning district	Page 25
Chapter 4 – Community Design	
4.5.3 – confirm with DPW town role in neighborhood parks	Page 19
Chapter 5 – Growth Management	
Change “housing units in built Williston” to “housing units built in Williston”	Page 27
Rework “ The town is building public safety buildings”	Page 28
Update income data	Page 28
5.1.3 – delete the “,” neat the end of the last sentence	Page 29

Chapter 6 – Transportation	
6.2.1 – update data to reflect recent path construction	Page 34
6.3.1 – Access to the CSWD Facilities Should the town’s position regarding direct access from the Circ to CSWD be stronger? Consider.	Page 39
6.3.3 – Rt. 2 and Ind. Ave. delete “It is scheduled for 2006.”	Page 40
6.4.3 – Signal at James Brown Drive. Update the status of this project in capital budget	Page 41
Consider placing a section discussing access to CSWD from the Circ in High Priority Improvements	Page 41
6.6.3 – Update with recent data	Page 43
Chapter 7 – Public Facilities and Services	
7.2.1 – insert “and” between “Cemetery Commission __ town”	Page 47
7.3.1 – Update staffing levels	Page 48
7.7.1 – Rework last sentence so that it’s not a finding of fact	Page 53
Chapter 8 – Parks and Recreation	
Chapter 9 – Education and Child Care	
Extend enrollment projections graph to include future years in Table 9.A	Page 64
Chapter 10 – Energy	
10.1.3 – Consider not using a set price threshold	Page 71
10.3.5 – Revise “should be made a priority” to “should continue to be a priority”	Page 72
Chapter 11 – Watershed Health	

Circumferential Highway

On May 20, 2011, Governor Shumlin announced that the State of Vermont will be altering its strategy for building the Circumferential Highway (Circ). Many of the details of what this new approach will entail still remain unclear. However, after speaking with Transportation Secretary Brian Searles and Circ Project Manager Ken Robie of VT AOT, and Michelle Boomhower from the MPO I believe the current status of the Circ can be summarized as follows:

- The Federal Highway Administration has published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), and has authorized VT AOT to proceed with the development of what is called “Build Alternative 17” as of May 19, 2011.
- Alternative 17 is also known as the Williston A/B Alternative and is comprised of two sections: Section A linking I-89 to Mountain View Road, and Section B running from Mountain View Road to the existing section of the Circ terminating at Rt. 117 in Essex (see attachment).

- For a variety of reasons including lack of available funding, the state is not seeking to build the whole portion of the Circ planned to go through Williston (the Williston A/B Alternative) at one time, and the state will pursue a “phased construction” approach to completing the Circ.
- Construction of Section A of the Williston A/B Alternative connecting I-89 to Mountain View Road will be pursued first, but no specific time line has been proposed.
- Construction of Section B would be pursued at a later date.
- Section A may also be built with a single travel lane in each direction rather than two as proposed in the FEIS as a means of further reducing construction costs and possibly lessening any environmental impacts.
- No time line for the proposed completion of Section B of the Williston A/B Alternative has been proposed. Given that the lack of funding has been cited as one of the main determinants of splitting Sections A and B into separate phases, any number of years could elapse before completion of Section B is pursued.
- The state has asked the Chittenden County MPO to work with local governments in the area to identify other potential transportation improvement projects to help relieve traffic congestion. A meeting with Williston representatives has been scheduled for July 7, 2011.

Implications

The change in strategy for the completion of the Circ raises a number of questions for the town.

- What effect will completing Section A without Section B affect traffic in Williston?

In the event that Section A of the Circ be built without Section B, all of the vehicles accessing or exiting I-89 via the Circ will do so in Williston. The Williston A/B Alternative includes a bridge across the Winooski River and would provide a direct link from the existing Circ in Essex to I-89. At-grade crossings were part of the A/B Alternative, but the bridge crossing the Winooski River was an integral part of the highway’s design, and the bridge and link to the existing Circ in Essex was considered to be a major component to alleviating traffic congestion problems in Essex Junction, along Rt. 2A in Williston among others.

Some of the streets and areas of Williston that may be affected by the proposed phased construction approach include the following, many of which were identified as problem areas to be addressed by the construction of the Circ:

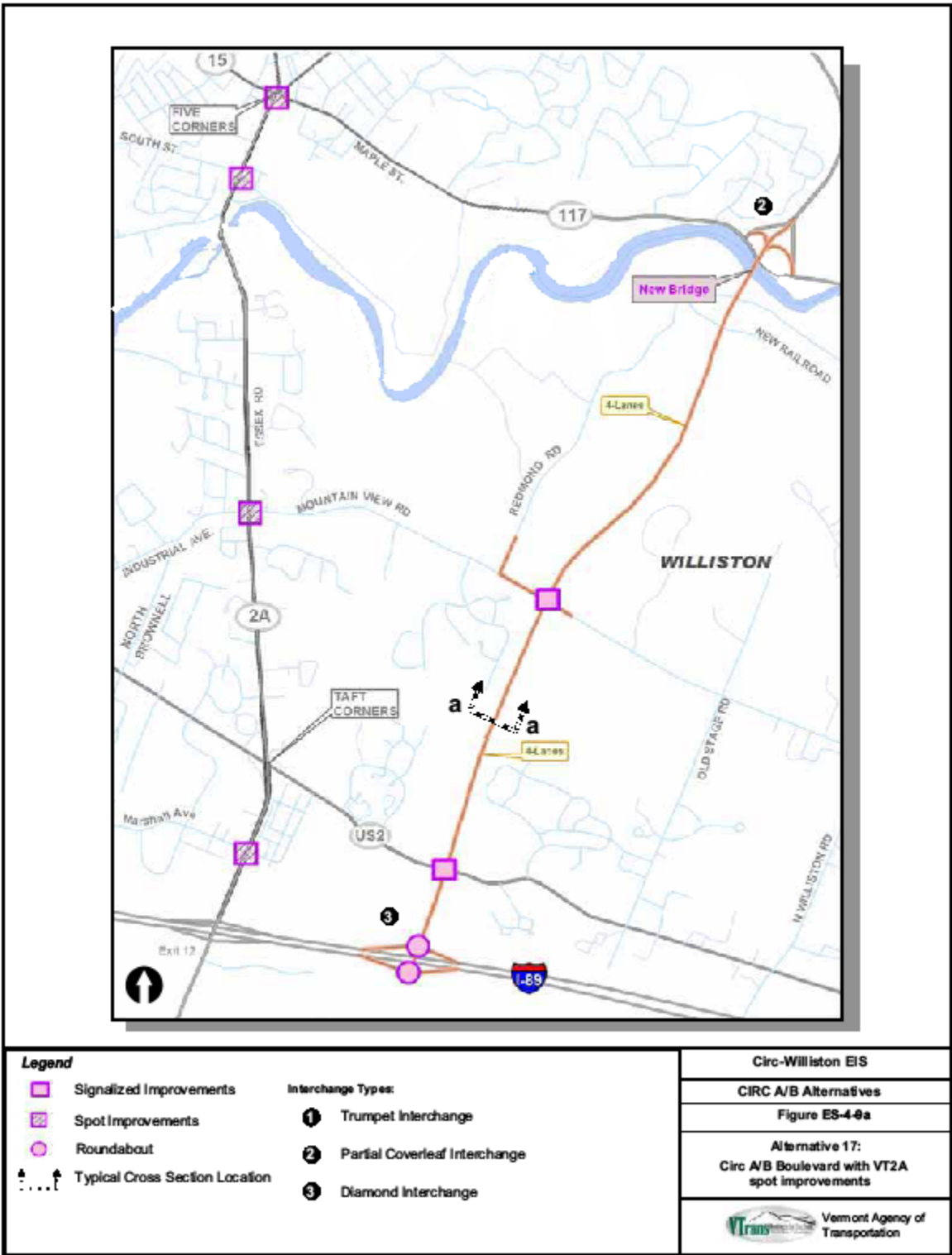
- North Williston Road and the intersection of N. Williston Rd. and Mt. View Rd.
- Mt. View Road along its entire course
- Intersection of Mt. View Rd./Industrial Ave. and Rt. 2A
- Rt. 2A, especially near Essex Junction
- Williston Road including the Village and the section from the Circ to Taft Corners

The MPO will be working with Williston and other local communities to identify other possible traffic improvement projects that might be pursued due to more funds being available due to a down-sized Circ. What those projects might be and what effects they might have on alleviating traffic congestion is unclear at this time.

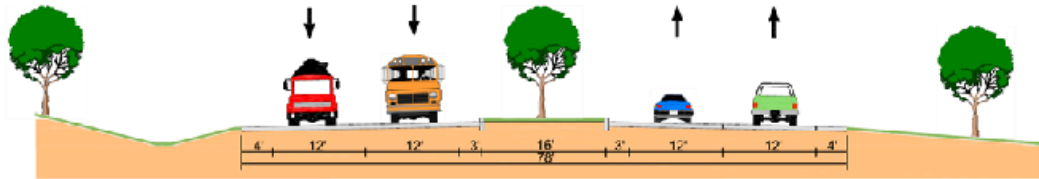
- Access to and from the Circ to CSWD?

Some questions about the town's position concerning there being direct access to and from the Circ from CSWD property on Redmond Road and the possible siting of a regional landfill at CSWD had previously been raised in the review of the town plan. If Section A of the Circ is to be constructed without Section B, the Planning Commission and the Selectboard would likely have to think through what the town's position concerning the possible siting of a proposed regional landfill and having direct access to the Circ or some other transportation considerations.


My understanding is that if Section A is built by itself, any vehicles travelling to CSWD would travel along Mt. View Road to Redmond Road.



a-a



Four-lane Circ A/B boulevard, including shoulders and a landscaped median.

Circ-Williston EIS
CIRC A/B Alternatives
Figure ES-4-9b
Alternative 17: Typical Cross Sections
 Vermont Agency of Transportation