**Local Project Management Team**

Main Street & Merchants Row Bridge Replacement Project

Middlebury Town Offices – Friday, April 15, 2016

Highlights

**Attending the Meeting**: Selectboard Members Nick Artim and Donna Donahue. Community Representatives Dean George and Ken Perine. Community Liaison Jim Gish. Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay. Public: Robin Scheu (Addison County Economic Development Corporation), Nancy Malcolm (Planning Commission), Ed McGuire (St. Stephen’s), Susan McGarry (St. Stephen’s), Sue Hoxie (Addison County Chamber of Commerce), Caroline Carpenter (National Bank of Middlebury), Hayley Rice (Town Hall Theater), Matt LaFiandra, John Fitzpatrick.

**Call to Order**. Dean George called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

**Election of Chair**. Nick Artim moved that the Team appoint Dean George as Chair of the Local Project Management Team. Donna Donahue seconded the motion, which was approved by the Team.

**Approval of the Agenda**. Jim Gish requested that the Team add discussion of the letter from Peter Langrock and the proposed Multi-Modal Station to the agenda and that the discussion of the ACTR Relocation be tabled for the meeting. Nick Artim moved that the Team approve the agenda as amended. Ken Perine seconded the motion, which was approved by the Team.

**Approval of the Minutes of February 11, 2016**. Donna Donahue moved that the Team approve the meeting minutes of February 11 as presented. Nick Artim seconded the motion, which was approved by the Team.

**USDA Rural Business Development Grant**. Jim Gish reported that the Selectboard, at its April 13, 2016 meeting, approved a resolution in support of an application for a USDA Rural Business Development Grant of $30,000. To increase the competitiveness of the grant, the Town had previously agreed to commit $17,660 in Downtown Development District funds. If awarded, the grant would allow up to 12 downtown Middlebury businesses to invest about $3500 each in marketing efforts designed to drive sales during the construction period. Jim pointed to three positive developments in the grant-writing process: 1) the strong collaboration between the Town, the Addison County Economic Development Corporation, and the Better Middlebury Partnership; 2) the opportunity for the downtown business community to begin thinking about how they will manage their businesses during the construction period, and 3) the development of initial ideas for a Middlebury-wide ad campaign. The grant application is accompanied by Letters of Commitment from 12 downtown business owners. Jim read a Letter of Commitment from Stone Leaf Teahouse as an example. A decision from the USDA is expected in June.

**Project Schedule**. Jim Gish reported that VHB released a draft project schedule for the Early Release Package (Fall 2016 activity) that is designed primarily for review by VTrans and third-party contractors in order to firm up the proposed dates. (The draft schedule had been shared with the LPMT and Town Manager in March.) The draft schedule shows an Early Release Package start date of November 17, 2016 and a Full Construction start date of March 17, 2017. Other key dates: August 18, 2016 for 85% completion of plans and January 24, 2017 for 100% completion of plans. The Team noted the importance of amending both the Letter of Agreement between the Town and VHB and the Grant Agreement between the Town and VTrans as schedules and budgets are finalized. The Team also noted its concerns about how the grade crossing at the south end of Water Street would be handled.

**Rail Corridor Drainage/Stormwater Runoff/Water Quality Concerns**. Jim Gish reported that VTrans Legal Counsel is reviewing the site balancing plan previously approved by the Department of Environmental Conservation in light of subsequent design changes. The VTrans Project Manager has recommended that the Town hold off on its concerns about runoff from the rail corridor passing untreated into Otter Creek until that review is complete. Jim recommended that the Town initiate discussion with VTrans now regarding the specifics of the shared responsibility for stormwater drainage outlined in the Grant Agreement between the Town and VTrans. Jim noted that Legal Counsel has drafted a letter to VTrans that initiates this dialogue and that he would review the letter and discuss next steps with Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay.

**Soil and Groundwater Evaluation**. Jim Gish reported that VHB has released a 60-page draft work plan designed to detail the procedures required to investigate the condition of soil and groundwater that will be encountered during construction. VTrans is being asked to review and comment on the plan, following which the plan will be submitted to the DEC for final review and approval. Jim asked what level of involvement the Team would like to have in reviewing such detailed technical documents. Donna Donahue asked to see the full document. Ken Perine asked Jim to provide an Executive Summary of the document for review by the LPMT. The Team also suggested that, given the scope and complexity of the project, it might be wise to maintain a Project Workbook that compiles and centralizes all documents related to each aspect of the project. Jim also noted that the current plan is to temporarily store contaminated soil at the Town’s Stump Dump.

**Protection of Downtown Buildings**. Jim Gish reported that a draft work plan addressing the surveying, monitoring, and protection of Middlebury’s downtown buildings has been shared with property owners and facilities managers at St. Stephen’s, the Battell Block, the National Bank of Middlebury, the U.S. Post Office, Bourdon Insurance, Marble Works, and Town Hall Theater. Jim has scheduled a meeting in Middlebury at 12:30 p.m. on April 27 with the VTrans Historic Preservation Officer, the VTrans Project Manager, and the VHB Preservation Planner to field questions from representatives of these buildings on the proposed work plan and to tour select buildings. The LPMT has been invited to attend as well. Ed McGuire commented on the importance of turning this draft work plan into a contractual amendment to the Section 106 permit signed by all parties. Susan McGarry noted the importance to owners of historic buildings of being specifically identified in the amendment to the Section 106 permit so that there is legal accountability. Dean George noted the overall importance of all parties signing off on legal documents that spell out contract deadlines and construction penalties. Donna Donahue stressed the importance of contracts providing accountability and measurability.

**ROW Plans**. Jim Gish reported that VHB had provided in-progress revised easement deeds and right-of-way plans for the Early Release Package to VTrans so that right-of-way planning could begin. (The VTrans ROW team will prepare the final easement deeds, to be reviewed by Town’s Legal Counsel.) Jim also reported on VTrans’ frustration with VHB’s delay in providing the revised easement deeds and right-of-way plans and the risk to the project of delay: 1) the VTrans ROW is not available when plans are finalized and 2) the VTrans ROW team arrives in town with little to no advance notice to begin negotiation. The Team expressed its concern over this delay and discussion followed on how best to monitor VHB’s progress. Jim also noted that the Bourdon Insurance property appears to be the most at-risk building in the construction zone and that he was scheduling a meeting with VHB, VTrans, and the property owner in an attempt to get resolution on the status of this building during construction.

**ACTR Relocation**. Jim Gish reported that Department of Public Works Director of Operations Dan Werner had reviewed the proposed temporary relocation of the ACTR Merchants Row bus stop to the north end of South Pleasant Street (which would be converted to one-way southbound during construction) and had concerns about the use of Jersey barriers and suggestions for reconfiguring the plan in a way that would minimize disruption to the neighborhood. Ken Perine, ACTR Executive Director Jim Moulton, ACTR Regional Director Bill Cunningham, and Jim will meet with Dan on Friday, April 22, to discuss further. A public meeting would follow the LPMT’s review of the plan.

**Temporary Parking Deck**. Jim Gish reported that VHB has provided analysis that shows that a temporary parking deck from the current vendor of choice will not fit well in the lower Ilsley lot (it would cut off Bakery Lane). VHB is encouraging the Town to consider the Frog Hollow parking lot off Mill Street. Given these developments, the high cost of a temporary parking deck ($350K+), and the lack of responsiveness from the vendor, Jim recommended that the LPMT consider other solutions to providing parking during the construction period (such as, for example, making Franklin Street one-way eastbound and providing parking in the westbound lane). The Team agreed that options other than a temporary parking deck should be explored and also noted the value of a continuously running shuttle during the construction period. More discussion to follow, including availability of the $350K+ committed by the State for parking options other than a temporary parking deck.

**Letter from Peter Langrock**. The Team noted receipt by the Selectboard of a letter from Attorney Peter Langrock expressing concerns about public safety and environmental issues related to the Downtown Bridges Replacement Project on behalf of clients (unnamed in the letter). The LPMT will meet on this issue on Friday, April 22, with the goal of recommending a response to the Selectboard at its April 26 meeting. VTrans will attend this meeting of the LPMT meeting as well.

**Multi-Modal Station**. Jim Gish reported on a conversation with VTrans Deputy Secretary Rich Tetreault in which Rich offered to arrange a meeting with Vermont Railways owner Dave Wulfson to discuss the Town’s interest in building a multi-modal station on State-owned land in the railyard behind Beverage Discount. Rich suggested, however, that the meeting would be most productive if the Town came to the meeting with 1) a vision for the development and 2) a developer and funds in hand. The LPMT noted the work that had been done to date to design a multi-modal station and asked Jim to work with Director of Planning and Zoning Jen Murray to gather material for a presentation to VTrans/Vermont Railways.

**Next LPMT Meeting**. Friday, April 22, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. at the Town Offices.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Gish, Community Liaison