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*Agency of Transportation*

August 9, 2019

AUG 15 2019

Mr. Adam Lougee  
Executive Director  
Addison County Regional Planning Commission  
14 Seminary Street  
Middlebury, VT 05753

RE: Resolutions supporting new economic corridor for the City of Vergennes

Dear Mr. Lougee:

Thank you for your July 30, 2019 letter and the attached resolutions from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Committee regarding the preferred short- and long-term solutions to addressing the truck issue on VT Route 22A through Vergennes.

The Agency of Transportation recognizes the significant impact of the high number of trucks on the economic vitality and quality of life in Downtown Vergennes. It is this recognition that resulted in our collaboration with the Addison County Regional Planning Commission on the VT 22A Alternate Truck Route Study. Additionally, the Agency will include traffic calming and other measures into the 2020 Vergennes Main Street Class 1 paving project that will partially implement the short-term recommendations in the study to help mitigate some of the truck impacts on traffic safety and operations, and pedestrian and bicycle access in Downtown.

The ACRPC resolutions ask the Agency and state legislative delegation to provide all feasible support in moving the preferred long-term solution, the Economic Corridor, forward. As noted in the study, the substantial funding required for the Economic Corridor is not available inside of the Agency's five-year budget planning window because of existing commitments to complete many large, long-term transportation projects in addition to typical asset management, maintenance and operational needs. That said, there is a significant amount of work that needs to be completed in the meantime to refine the roadway design and alignment and planning for the land use changes around the Economic Corridor. This work can set the stage for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required as a condition for receiving federal funding and could also provide information necessary for Act 250 and other permits.

The evolution of the preferred solution from a new road focused on removing trucks from Downtown to the Economic Corridor creates opportunities while also raising questions that will need to be addressed before an EIS can be started. For example, what type of economic development is envisioned along the Corridor and how might that affect the roadway design, what modifications are required to the City's municipal plan and land use regulations to implement the desired development, what are the other infrastructure needs that are required to support that development, and how can the Economic Corridor complement and support Downtown? Different alignments of the new road also need to be explored that may pass through small portions of the towns adjacent to Vergennes.



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The Agency recommends that a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PELS) be conducted to address these questions. PELS, created by the Federal Highway Administration, provide a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision making that considers benefits and impacts of proposed transportation system improvements to the environment, community, and economy during the transportation planning process. The decisions and analyses in a PELS will inform and facilitate the EIS process. The PELS will help maintain the momentum generated during the VT 22A Alternate Truck Route Study and will help make the project competitive for future funding.

We estimate the PELS will cost \$1,000,000 and take three years to complete. The cost and timeframe are due to the level of detail, breadth of issues to consider and the amount of outreach involved. The Agency of Transportation is prepared to propose state and federal funding for the Economic Corridor PELS within the 2020 Capital Program for consideration by the General Assembly in the next session. The Agency's proposal is contingent on receiving letters of support from all of the elected bodies of the municipalities that could be directly impacted by the footprint or may be subjected to other impacts of the new road including Vergennes, Panton, Ferrisburgh, Addison, Weybridge, Waltham and New Haven.

The Agency appreciates the leadership offered by the ACRPC on this issue and is looking forward to working with the City and its neighbors towards a long-term solution. Please contact Joe Segale, Policy, Planning and Research Bureau Director with questions about next steps.

Sincerely,



Joe Flynn  
Secretary of Transportation

cc: Wayne Symonds, VTrans, Highway Division Director  
Michele Boomhower, VTrans, Director of Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development  
Joe Segale, VTrans, Bureau Director, Policy, Planning and Research  
Jeff Fritz, Mayor, City of Vergennes  
Matt Chabot, Town Manager, City of Vergennes  
Rick Ebel, Chair, Ferrisburgh Selectboard  
Steve Dupoise, Chair, New Haven Selectboard  
Andrew Martin, Waltham Selectboard  
Tim Ryan, Waltham Selectboard  
Michael Grace, Waltham Selectboard  
Jeff Kauffman, Chair, Addison Selectboard  
Howard Hall, Chair, Panton Selectboard  
Senator Christopher Bray  
Senator Ruth Hardy  
Representative Diane Lanpher  
Representative Mathew Birong  
Representative Harvey Smith