

Public 502 Hearing

Benson

Project No. STP 017-1(17)

Widening of VT Route 22A to include roadway geometry improvements, intersection improvements, bridge and drainage feature replacements.

Date: Wednesday June 15, 2022
Open Forum 6:00 PM
Formal Public 502 Hearing 6:30 PM

Location: Benson Community Hall
Located at 2724 Old Stage Rd, Benson, Vermont



WHAT IS A PUBLIC 502 HEARING?

WHAT IS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT?

A continuous process of two-way communication between the citizens and public agencies, during which a conceptual plan is discussed and the field of choice narrowed until a final solution and plan is developed.

WHY A PUBLIC 502 HEARING?

A Public 502 Hearing provides an opportunity for the Agency of Transportation and the community to exchange information about proposed highway and bridge projects. The Hearing is a requirement in Title 19 of Vermont statute. *See* 19 V.S.A. § 502. It is an opportunity for us to listen to the objection or recommendations of local residents, and also present and obtain information on the proposed project. Input from local sources is very important for determining various design elements to be included in a project.

WHAT IS AN OPEN FORUM?

An Open Forum is an informal process of answering design or right-of-way related questions. During the Open Forum, members of the public may look at project displays and ask questions of representatives of the Agency of Transportation.

WHAT IS A FORMAL PUBLIC HEARING?

During the Formal Public Hearing, representatives from the Agency of Transportation will explain the proposed project and then take questions and comments, all of which will be recorded by a court reporter. For individuals who prefer to make their comments in writing, a comment form is included in this packet. Additional forms will be available at the Hearing.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located on VT Route 22A in the Town of Benson. The project begins just over one mile south of the intersection of Lake Road and extends North approximately 4.95 miles to the Benson and Orwell Town Line. More information can be found on the VT Route 22A Corridor Website: vtrans.vermont.gov/vt22a

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to improve safety, enhance mobility, provide better access to motorists as well as promoting economic vitality to the region by bringing the roadway geometry up to current standards.

PROJECT NEED

This project, and other portions of VT Route 22A, consists of 10-foot travel lanes and 2-foot shoulders, which are substandard for a rural minor arterial functional roadway classification and the volume of traffic that uses this route, specifically with the high volume of truck traffic using this route as a North/South travel route from New York to Chittenden County. In addition, there are many horizontal and vertical curves along the corridor that are substandard for the speed in the area, creating sight distance issues.

SCOPE OF WORK

The proposed project will widen the roadway to include 11-foot travel lanes and 6-foot shoulders as well as revising the horizontal and vertical curvature to improve safety and sight distance visibility. Turn lanes will be installed at some intersections to improve safety and mobility.

Drainage improvements will include replacement of culverts, installation of four (4) large concrete box culverts, improved ditching, as well as the inclusion of stormwater treatment practices to satisfy stormwater permitting requirements.

Due to the widening nature of this project, overhead and underground utilities will have to be relocated.

RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW) REQUIREMENTS

Preliminary research indicates that, within the limits of the proposed project, the existing State roadway right-of-way in Benson is approximately 3 rods (49.5') with some locations increasing to 4 rods (66'). Partial property acquisitions, permanent drainage easements, permanent utility easements, and temporary construction easements will be necessary at various locations throughout the project. The actual extent of land acquisition is not fully known at this time because the limits of construction indicated on the plans are only conceptual.

TIME SCHEDULE

The current project schedule shows construction of this project beginning during the summer of the year 2026.

COST

The construction cost estimate for this project is approximately \$20,000,000. This estimate does not include preliminary engineering, right of way, or construction engineering. The responsibility for the cost is as follows: Federal funds 81%, and State funds 19%. No local funds will be required for this project.

RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION PROCEDURES

[FOR INFORMATIONAL USE ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PUBLIC HEARING]
INTRODUCTION: The State of Vermont’s program for acquiring rights of way for Federal-aid transportation related projects (such as the project described in this handout) is conducted in accordance with a Federal law entitled “*The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Land Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended*” (referred to as the “*Uniform Act*”), and Vermont statutory law relating to the governmental right of eminent domain. A brief description of the various phases of Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition is outlined below.

I. Initially, property owners will be contacted by an agent who will inquire about the physical characteristics of the property, such as the locations of property lines, water lines, septic systems, etc. At this time, the agent will explain preliminary details about the design of the project and the anticipated effects on the property.

II. Following the initial property owner meeting, a title search of the property will be conducted in the Town/City Land Records. This information will be used by the Agency of Transportation’s ROW Section as a basis for the formation of project specific ROW Plans.

III. Utilizing the ROW Plans, the acquisition effects on property will be valued by a licensed appraiser (or by an agent/negotiator if the acquisition is considered an uncomplicated appraisal assignment). Depending on which valuation method is applicable, an Appraisal (Value Finding) Report is prepared by an appraiser, or a Waiver Valuation Estimate is prepared by an agent/negotiator. A value amount will be determined prior to the initiation of negotiations; this is generally accomplished by inspecting the property and comparing prices at which similar properties have sold recently or utilizing the municipality’s equalized assessment for the subject property.

The Appraisal Report or Waiver Valuation will be reviewed by a Review Appraiser, Right-of-Way Acquisition Chief, or qualified designees who have the responsibility for final approval of the values estimated for just compensation.

IV. Subsequently, a ROW agent/negotiator will contact each owner to review the project and its effect on the property, and to present in writing the State’s fair market value offer of monetary compensation for the land and/or rights needed to construct the project. ROW brochures are available that explain in greater detail the acquisition process where an “Agreement” has been reached with the property owner, or when “Condemnation” is utilized (in the absence of an agreement and the State elects to exercise its right to condemn by use of formal hearing/court procedures).

V. Please note that when property is acquired for Federal-aid projects and as a result owners/occupant need to be displaced from their homes or businesses, in compliance with the “Uniform Act” relocation assistance and payments are available. More detailed information about this program can be obtained directly from the ROW Section upon request.

If you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact that Agency as follows:

Should you have any specific questions or comments concerning this handout or the project design, please feel free to contact Bruce Martin by email at bruce.b.martin@vermont.gov or by phone at 802-595-9653 or by letter at the following address:

Bruce Martin, P.E.
Roadway Design Project Manager
Vermont Agency of Transportation
219 North Main Street
Barre, Vermont 05641

If you have specific questions pertaining to Right-of-Way acquisition, you can also contact the Trey Polk with the Agency Right-of-Way Section by email at trey.polk@vermont.gov or by phone at (802) 279-7506 or by letter at the following address:

Trey Polk, ROW Acquisitions and Utilities Manager
Vermont Agency of Transportation
Right-of-Way Section
219 North Main Street
Barre, VT 05641

1) Fold along dashed lines 2) Tape or staple 3) Place stamp and mail

Place
Stamp
Here

Bruce Martin
Roadway Design Project Manager
Vermont Agency of Transportation
219 North Main Street
Barre, Vermont 05641

Subject: Benson STP 017-1(17)
