

Middlebury Bridge & Rail Project Survey Report

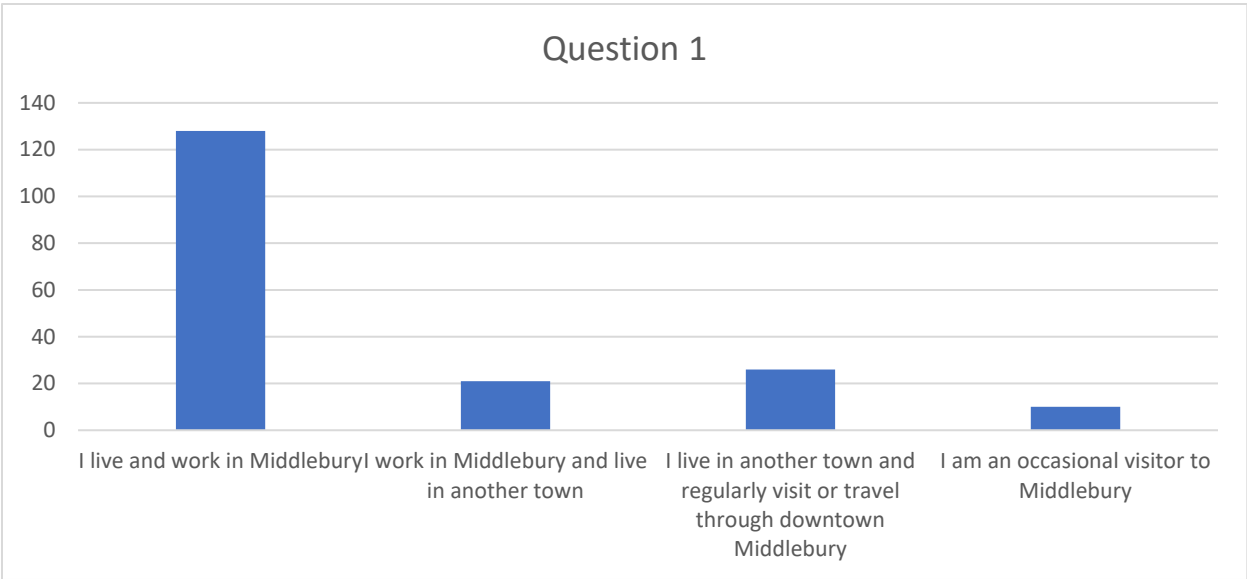
Stats

- Visited – 325
- Respondents – 185
- Average time to complete – 7 minutes and 3 seconds

Question 1

Much of the construction work involved in the Middlebury Bridge & Rail Project took place in downtown Middlebury. Which of the following answers best describes your relationship to downtown Middlebury? (Please choose one answer.)

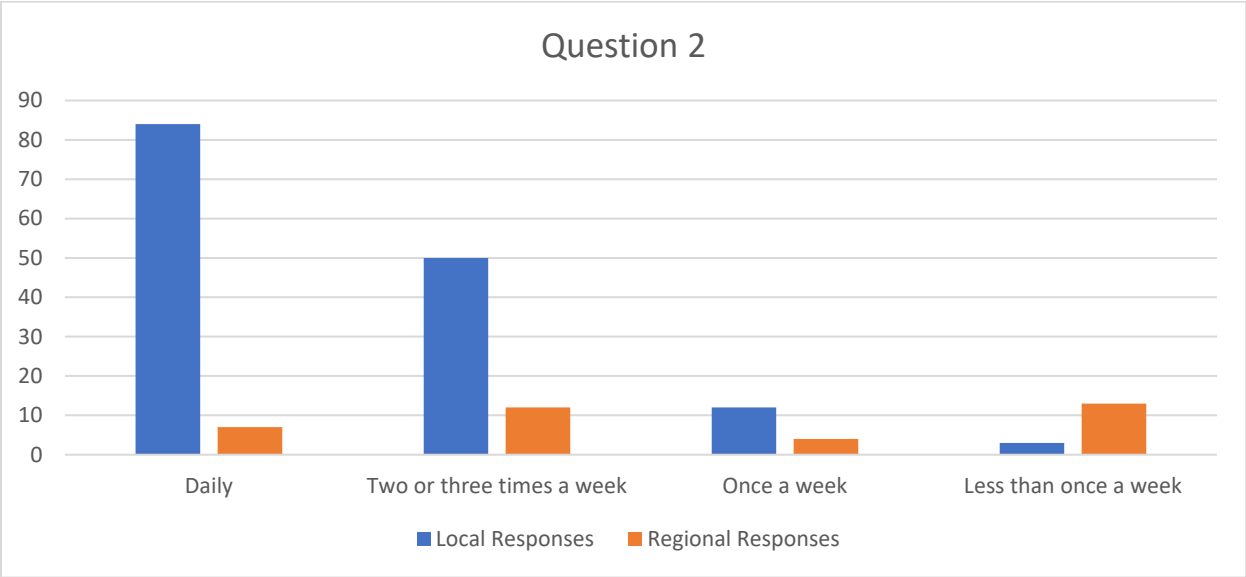
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage %
I live and work in Middlebury	128	69%
I work in Middlebury and live in another town	21	11%
I live in another town and regularly visit or travel through downtown Middlebury	26	14%
I am an occasional visitor to Middlebury	10	5%
Total	185	



Question 2

Construction of the Middlebury Bridge & Rail Project began in Summer 2017 and is wrapping up in Fall 2021. During this period, in general, approximately how often did you drive through and/or walk around downtown Middlebury?

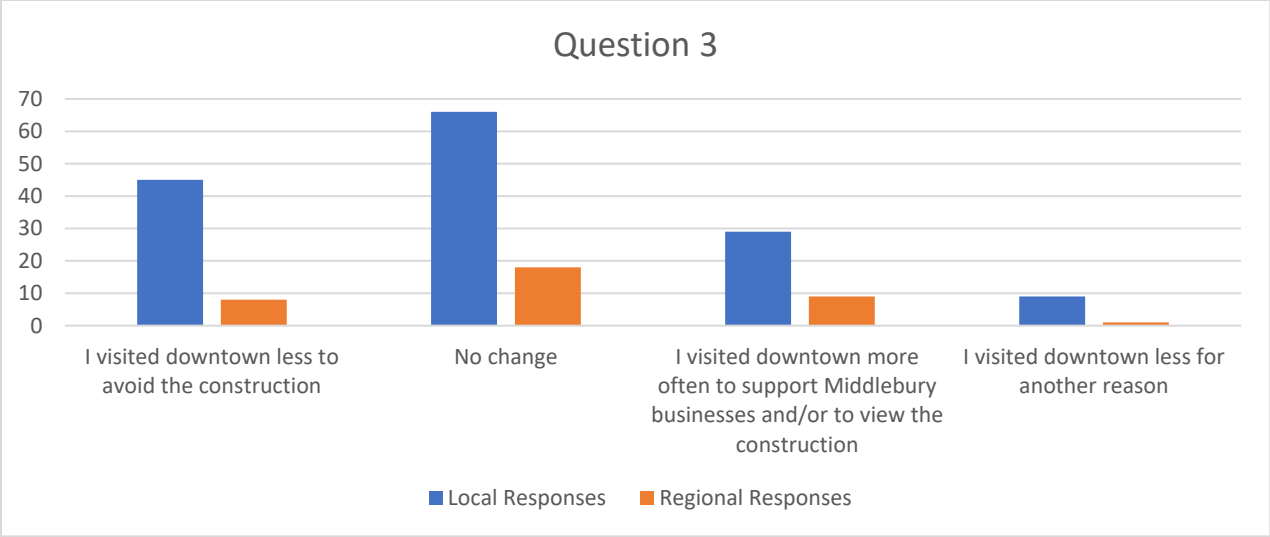
Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Daily	84	56%	7	19%
Two or three times a week	50	34%	12	33%
Once a week	12	8%	4	11%
Less than once a week	3	2%	13	36%
Total	149		36	



Question 3

Did you change the frequency of your visits to downtown Middlebury during construction?

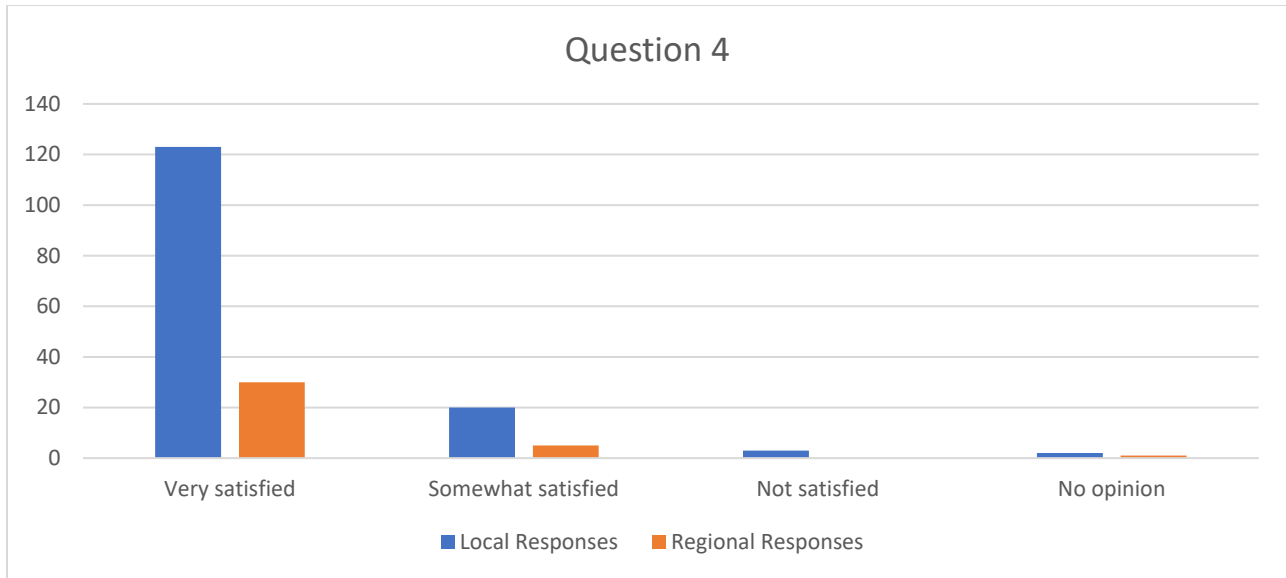
Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
I visited downtown less to avoid the construction	45	30%	8	22%
No change	66	44%	18	50%
I visited downtown more often to support Middlebury businesses and/or to view the construction	29	19%	9	25%
I visited downtown less for another reason	9	6%	1	3%
Total	149		36	



Question 4

Now that the major construction efforts have been completed, what is your overall level of satisfaction with the end result of the Middlebury Bridge & Rail Project?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Very satisfied	123	83%	30	83%
Somewhat satisfied	20	14%	5	14%
Not satisfied	3	2%	0	0%
No opinion	2	1%	1	3%
Total	148		36	



Comment: Please indicate which aspects of the project you are most satisfied or dissatisfied with and how in your opinion the project team might have improved its work.

Local Respondents	Percentage
45	30%

After 5 years and \$72M the people of Middlebury didn't gain anything.

Amazing focused workforce and kept public safety always a priority

appearance, efficiency

Beautiful, well done, thanks to all contractors and the State of VT. Also, a huge thank you to Jim Gish for keeping us all well informed.

Capital Job in all respects. Proud to be a resident!

Cleaner and more easier to get around

Comment: Please indicate which aspects of the project you are most satisfied or dissatisfied with and how in your opinion the project team might have improved its work.

Communication between contractor and community. Setting clear expectations in a timely fashion for the community/traveling public with such a complex project being performed.

Great planning efforts!

communication, 24/7 when needed

Everything went as well as could be expected.

Excited to see the train come to Middlebury; I like the new Triangle park; downtown looks much better over all

Given the complexity of the project - and an unexpected major world/country/state/county/locale crisis (pandemic) I think all parties did very well. It was helped by multiple ways of communicating what was going on - if ordinary citizens took the time to pursue the information.

Good communication with the general public however, for those of us that were living in the "middle" of the construction zone (my home is approx. 150 yards from the rail), more "personal" communication/checking in would have been appreciated.

Having the liaison (Jim Gish) was a major benefit to the town and myself - keeping us apprised on the works

I am absolutely thrilled with the outcome of the park with the fountain.

I am disappointed with the new triangle park. It is cold and uninviting and a lost opportunity for the town. I am impressed with how well everything went, on schedule and high quality. I can't wait to take the train to New York.

I appreciate the excellent communication and photos to the town residents during the project and the beauty of the plantings, stonework and open spaces.

I like the downtown gathering and resting places - chairs and benches are often used - and the space has lots of community building potential.

I like the new public spaces - Lazarus Park, Triangle Park. I'm disappointed that when you visit these spaces you are still overwhelmed with vehicle noise. The downtown would be a more vibrant and enticing place to visit if we removed some vehicles.

I love that we have much more park space and that people are taking advantage of the Adirondack chairs to enjoy the town

I love the new triangle park. Well thought out and a pleasure to be in. I also like the traffic patterns downtown and around the park. Once again, well thought out.

I thought direct \$\$ support should have been given to businesses; there must have been a way to source & calculate a fair distribution to be a lifeline for them.

I thought overall the project went well. The end result is a vast improvement for the downtown area. Covid-19 made everything more difficult and created even more hardship for local businesses. It was tiresome, and as other projects now get under way or continue it is hard not to feel drained of patience, but I feel all the contractors and the Town did the best they could for a project that needed to be done.

I was hoping for more pedestrian/bike-friendly options, e.g. bike parking, sidewalks in Marble Works [too slow in coming, IMO]. Too, I see many folks -- not all of them tourists -- crossing the street at the Frog Hollow Bike shop to the eastern side of Ilesley. Why not paint a designated crosswalk there? I do love/use the new sidewalk from County Tire to NBOM. That was always dodgy to traverse. Likewise, I'd like to see a crosswalk at least once along that long stretch of roadway. It's too complicated to navigate the pedestrian traffic patterns around the Greg's Market/County Tire area. What plans do you have for snow/ice removal esp. along that section under the overpass? It's treacherous; thankfully there's a handrail. The town needs to ramp up its commitment to pedestrian/bike traffic; I wager that it'd help the parking problems if more folks could walk and/or bike downtown.

I was impressed with how well things unfolded considering the scope of the project, including the friendliness of workers and sensitivity to timing blasting, etc. at times least disruptive to the town.

I was very happy with the timely and clear communication provided by Jim Gish; the attractive and well-designed final result; the effective efforts of Neighbors, Together maintaining our sense of community throughout construction.

I'm mostly go downtown on foot and I feel safe as a pedestrian. But this project did nothing to improve bike safety. I'm too terrified to bike through downtown and we missed the opportunity to make it more bikeable.

It has taken longer than it should have, especially the last year and paving this summer. The quality of the paving is also disappointing, with globs of asphalt and improperly adjusted structures left as hazards for cyclists. Honestly, the delays in completion were not all just due to weather. The State should have contributed funds to compensate for the increased wear and construction damage to Seymour St. and South Pleasant St. ; the full cost of fixing and repaving these will apparently be left to the Town to pay for.

It's beautiful, the trains are active, and the community is enjoying the park

Love Triangle Park (now a plaza). Disappointed in the grass and the care of the trees there. Mostly relieved that trains can travel safely through downtown without being in conflict with pedestrians and road traffic.....a little pricey though heh?

New public parks looks good.

Overall design worked well; communication was excellent; progress seemed slow and interminable. Too much hardscape in Triangle Park. Seemed like an inordinate amount of attention paid to access to Battell Block that affected only a small group.

Overall, I couldn't be happier. The bridge, tunnel, and park represent a great improvement and when a train goes through, you can't even tell. It used to be the whole downtown would shake as a train went through. From that perspective I'm very satisfied. On the unsatisfied side, the paving job seems to be subpar and looks, in places, to be unfinished, especially along the edges of the roadway. And in/near the roundabout there are random clumps of pavement left in the roadway. Utility hole covers aren't level with the pavement creating permanent "potholes" in the road, and the line painting job was sloppy. It's unfortunate that these two visible portions of the job (paving and painting) aren't up to the same quality standard as the rest of the project.

Overblown extravagant waste of money

Planning included community impacts as well as the usual construction logistics. Very good progress communication.

The amount of hardscaping is too great. Hoping time will bring the green back into balance, and that it will feel less apocalyptic eventually. Pissed I couldn't get one stinken rock from the old underpass when someone on the Monkton Rd went nuts with it, negating all the bullshit I was told on site.

The Kubricky team was very conscientious about their work and the impact on the citizens. Jim Gish was INSTRUMENTAL in communicating with the citizens. The end result is beautiful and makes our downtown more inviting.

The most impactful part of the project has NOT happened yet and that is the ability to take the train to NYC and Burlington.

The overall project has added a touch of freshness to the downtown area, and Gish has done a great job of keeping us informed. Two minor observations: I liked the fountain more when it was painted gaily in colors (whether or not historically accurate). Also, this does not seem to be a wise time to eliminate one of the four parking spots in front of the library when

everyone harps upon the lack of parking. Better to have added one or two more -- there is certainly room there.

The project went extremely well considering the extent of the work and especially well considering we had the first Pandemic in over 100 years. Businesses suffered, but not as much as the early 1990s and the 2008-2011 period. Restaurants and retail Businesses have a high turnover rate during good times, was higher the past few years, was it construction or pandemic? Likely some of both. I'm glad to see the project completed. Outcome was better than I could of imagined and the noise from the trains passing through is quieter. Thank you for a job well done. Jim Gish did a great service. Always enjoyable to read his updates. The rail tunnel looks handsome. The granite curbing is also. The new park going into Marble Works is a lovely upgrade!

Town looks just great. What a difference. Better than ever. Very excited about Amtrak!

Waiting to see how some aspects weather through the seasons. Holding opinion on pedestrian friendliness.

Concerned with water drainage of streets and sidewalks.

We moved to Middlebury from out of state in July of 2018, so we missed the beginning of the project (and don't have any "before" experience for comparison.) I was most satisfied with the skill, efficiency, safety-consciousness, and friendliness of the workers on the project. Also Jim Gish's wonderful updates! It was a big help to always know what was going on in general, and specifically to know when the exciting parts would happen so we could go downtown to watch. The Better Middlebury Partnership did an outstanding job. Best of all, this incredibly important and extremely complex project was well done, on time and budget - hooray!

Regional Respondents	Percentage
6	17%

I think most of it looks lovely, though there is too much concrete.

The final construction/landscaping is good but the project contributed to the loss of multiple downtown businesses and adversely affected the lives of those who had to close due to lack of business. This cannot be remediated.

The results are beautiful, of course, and meticulous. The folks who worked on it were incredibly thoughtful (for instance, when Jim Gish learned we were to have a funeral at St. Stephen's, he checked with us about the time so that there would be no blasting during the service.)

The sidewalks and new parks are great. Glad Merchants Row remained one way

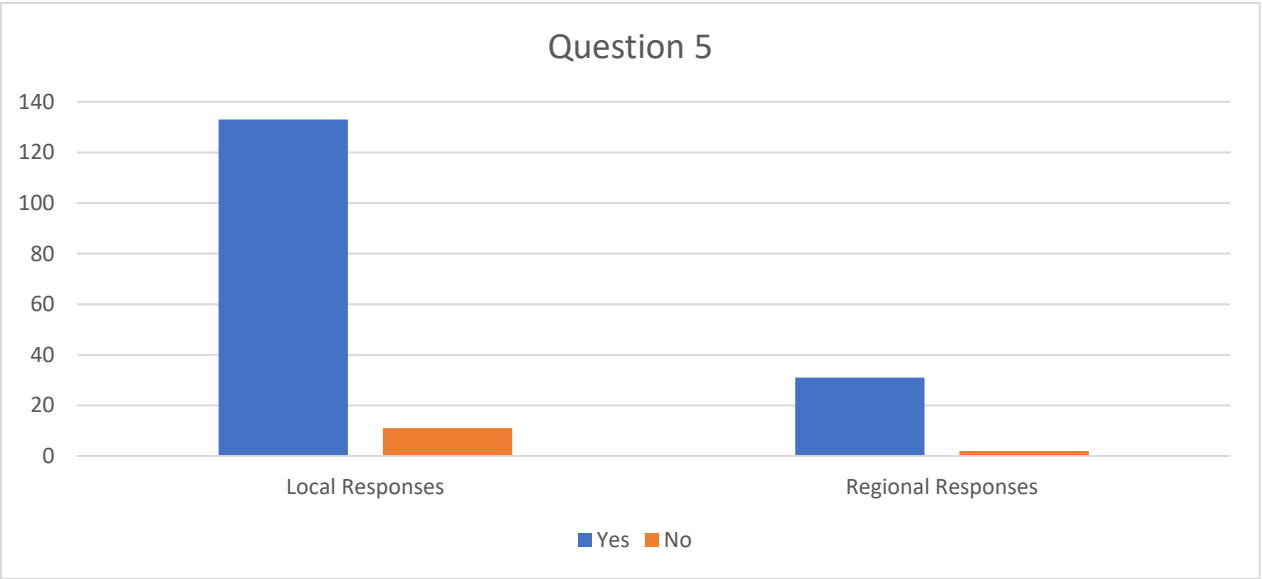
too damn much cement by the fountain!

triangle park and lazarus park

Question 5

Do you feel that the concerns of Middlebury residents, business owners, and other downtown stakeholders were taken into account during the project?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Yes	133	92%	31	94%
No	11	8%	2	6%
Total	144		33	



Comment: Why or why not?

Local Respondents	Percentage
32	22%

- How could there have been more information shared? It was so extensive.
- Because you didn't listen
- But...see my comment to previous question #4.
- Early planning & info from VTrans overly optimistic
- Good opportunities for feedback. Huge change in planned scheduling due to town input.
- Thank you.
- I actually think we gave too much weight to business who want parking, parking and more parking. Not enough weight to residents who want bike and pedestrian safety.
- I feel the project team worked hard to incorporate public comments.
- I know only what I observed or learned from the media; I have no direct knowledge of how business owners felt.
- I think you listened to business owners & efforts to bring pop-up programming such as Bundle attracted a good amount of people to downtown & therefore other businesses benefited even when Covid came and they moved to outdoor program/events. I think the

cleanliness of downtown as forecasted was horrible and that promised efforts of window cleaning & upkeep should be better considered on future projects.

I would say yes, but not as fully as they could have been. The Town and downtown businesses have been so cooperative, even as they have suffered the extended construction and paving completion.

I'm not sure. Not a business owner. Not sure what the preplanning with businesses was but seems they went out of their way to try accommodate.

I'm answering no because I think you should have given a choice of somewhat. I think financial subsidies to the rail business were much higher proportionally than financial support provided to businesses.

If not for the financial support many received during the pandemic, I wonder if they all would have survived. There are still a lot of vacancies and the anticipation of the 10 week shut down couldn't have helped attract businesses.

Impossible to address every individual concern or to alleviate all financial impact to businesses, but I thought every effort was made on every level to help and support those most impacted. Having Jim Gish as a communication liaison was incredible helpful in keeping everyone informed and creating a community feeling of going through this together.

It was critical to ensure we are using our new park

Many ideas to make the project less invasive were ignored.

Many of us felt it was a useless endeavor to "weigh in" since the deck was always in favor of the Powers That Be.

Neighbors Together represented the community well.

Overall I believe so. However, I'm not a business person, rather a retired resident. I don't know how local business people feel about the long-term experience and effects of the project on their finances.

People were asked, but not heard. What occurred was an effort to placate and not a true partnership.

Public meetings, community liaison position

See the previous question's comment

Thank you Neighbors, Together!

The community was provided a much larger opportunity to express their concerns than most typical construction projects. The contractor and community liaison also did a great job accommodating all that they could.

The concerns of pedestrians and cyclists were not really considered. For example, construction signs were placed on sidewalks so as not to inconvenience drivers, which then forced vulnerable individuals (kids, older folks, etc.) into the road.

The people living downtown experienced MANY sleepless nights for five years. The noise pollution was terrible. The freight trains kept going but the residents suffered.

The pre-project opportunities to give input made me feel included in the process.

The work needed to be done, but in the end the state did not do enough to mitigate the loss of revenue and the difficulty of navigating town for an extremely lengthy period of time.

Throughout the project, there were multiple opportunities to express opinions, either formally at meetings or with surveys, or more informally by contacting Jim Gish.

VTrans worked very hard to minimize the impact of the project.

Yes but if we have a heart (of town) replacement we must expect pain and we hope for a quick recovery.

Yes, to an extent.

Regional Respondents	Percentage
6	18%

I don't think the downtown business owners could tell ahead of time how damaging this project would be for many of them.

I've never seen a construction project of this scale with as much information sharing--the weekly newsletter was phenomenal for letting me know what was happening and getting me excited about the plan!

It seemed as if the disruption was unavoidable. People tried to make the best of the hardship.
no opinion

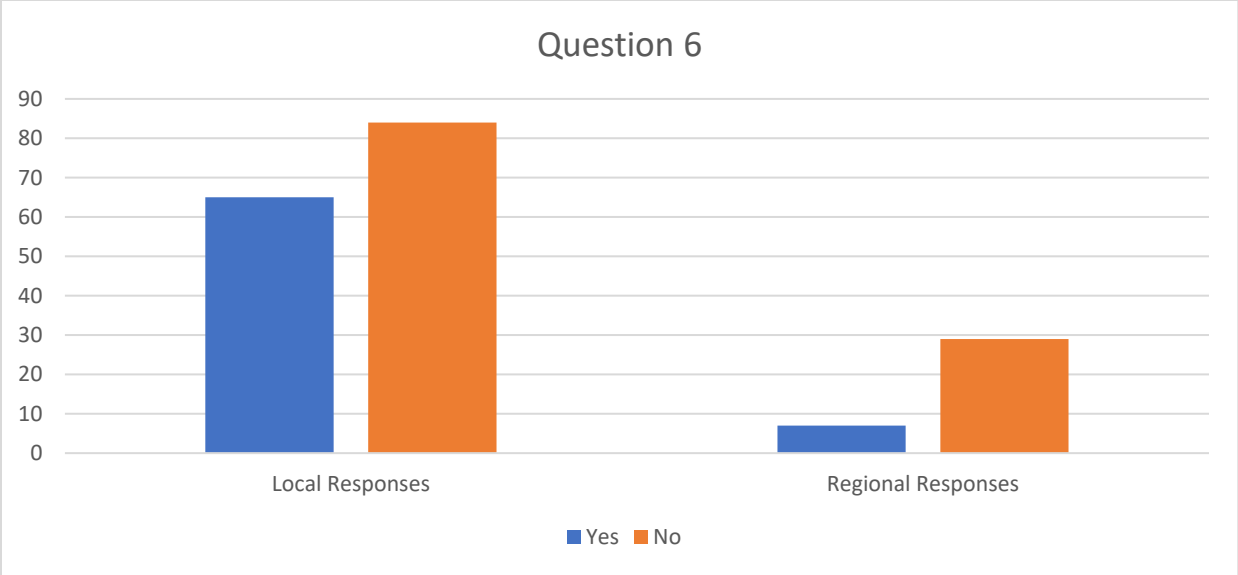
Overall yes, and the Middlebury liaison team was very good. Appreciate that changes were made to the schedule to try to mitigate economic damage.

Thanks to outstanding communications from jim gish

Question 6

Several public meetings took place during the course of the Middlebury Bridge & Rail Project to inform the public about construction activity and impacts and to gather public input on the new public spaces in downtown Middlebury. Did you attend any of these meetings?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Yes	65	44%	7	19%
No	84	56%	29	81%
Total	149		36	



Comment: If you answered Yes, did you find these meetings helpful?

Local Respondents	Percentage
30	20%

- Didn't find much opportunity for input but did feel communication about plans was good once things got underway.
- Extremely helpful!
- For the most part
- Foregone conclusions, IMO in that we were presented with plans and didn't have real input.
- Great meetings
- I attended some early meetings and did find them helpful
- I found them frustrating because they were not lead by people (engineers) who now how to lead public meetings.
- I only went to one meeting in the early stages, gave input and did not see the input of townspeople incorporated in the plan.
- I think I just attended the presentations at town meetings but I might have attended another one too.
- If you are going to give people a voice, you need to listen to their responses and not trot out a preconceived plan. I did not feel like the consultants listened to the triangle park dialog.
- Mostly. As with any public meeting we had to listen to a lot of nutters and naysayers.
- Only one but it was very informative.
- Somewhat helpful.
- very. and felt listened to.
- yes
- yes

yes

Yes

yes

Yes

yes mostly

Yes, helpful.

Yes, helpful...but not as helpful and engaging and embracing of input as they could have been.

Yes, these meetings were helpful and it was great to see a number of citizen comments reflected in the final project as built. A number of concerns brought up weren't addressed (pedestrian access to the rail platform via Maple Street for one), but on the whole most feedback seemed to get worked in even if not completely as requested.

Yes, they were helpful but not necessarily allaying concerns

Yes, very helpful.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes. Good charts and timelines. Good introduction to the key people.

Yes. They were informative but seemed to have a much lower attendance level than expected.

Regional Respondents	Percentage
3	8%

I found them helpful, but wasn't sure our input made much of a difference in the town plan that resulted.

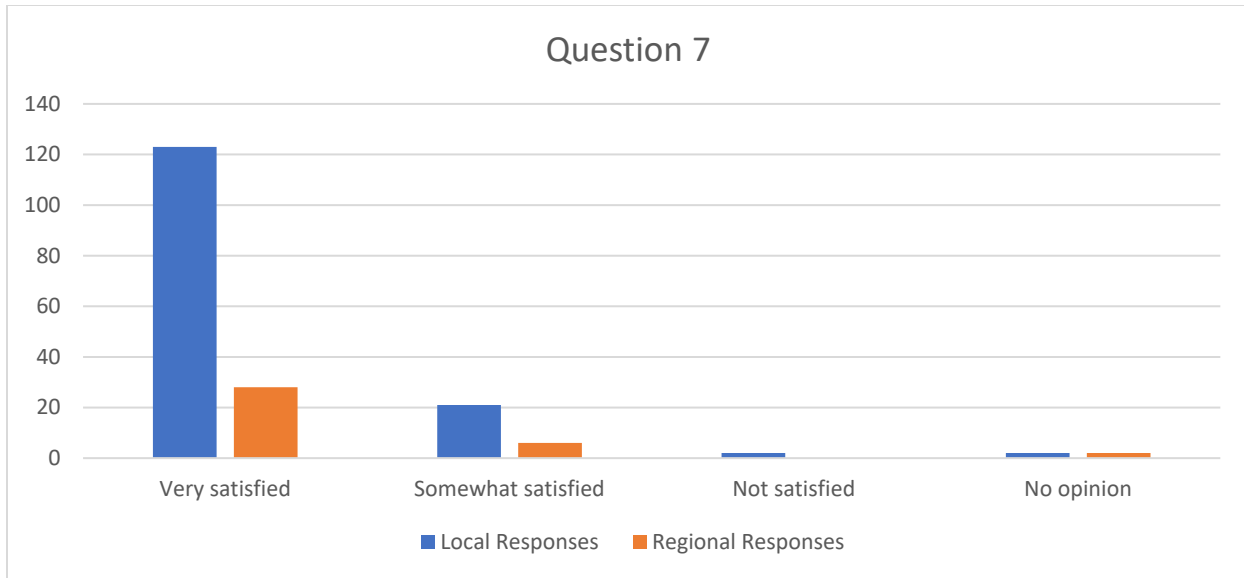
yes

Yes.

Question 7

How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with the public engagement process?
Were you kept well informed throughout the project?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Very satisfied	123	83%	28	78%
Somewhat satisfied	21	14%	6	17%
Not satisfied	2	1%	0	0%
No opinion	2	1%	2	6%
Total	148		36	



Comment: How might the project team have improved its engagement with the public? Are there examples of where the project team incorporated your input?

Local Respondents	Percentage
32	22%

Awesome newsletters from Jim and Tom

Community Liaison Jim Gish did an outstanding job! With all other construction projects I've found that as a nearby resident that any questions/comments are always getting redirected/shuffled between overworked Town staff, VTRANS, and contractors and then lost. Having Jim as a single point of contact who had eyes and ears on all parts of the project was fabulous for information flows both directions. No more hearing "oh that's a Town issue" or "you need to contact 'someone' at VTRANS for that".

detailed and frequent emails gave us so much information. We didn't feel that things were being hidden. Frequent communication lowered the temperature in town and brought us together. This disruption was something we were all facing. We got to know the companies involved. People were doing their best and that's all that we could have required.

Good job, Jim! Enjoyed the weekly emails and updates.

Hiring a communications liaison was a stroke of genius. Jim Gish did a remarkable job keeping us informed with text and photos - and cheerfully available to hear people out. I believe his role was key to creating a stable foundation interconnectedness between various stakeholders, especially the people of Middlebury.

I can think of more examples of where input was not incorporated...Jim Gish knows about these.

I did comment on a concern and it was addressed. I appreciate that.

I did take advantage of subscriptions to the town-sponsored newsletters from both Chief Hanley and Jim Gish. They were great! I also liked the picture displays [near the PO]. Once we

got past the initial rancor [justified] of affected businesses, the town did a good job of keeping us informed of the process. It could've been a better one, more inclusive, in the end it's okay.

I enjoyed having a resource that I could ask about construction methods and with whom I could clarify expected impacts.

I felt very well informed, but that sort of engagement flows only one way.

I mostly kept up to date with the email updates from Jim Gish. They were phenomenal and exceeded my expectations. I love the photos and details he provided!

I think Mdbby Liaison was great idea and was very informative and successful

Info inadequate until Jim Gish joined the team; then excellent!

Jim Gish did a fantastic job. He was the communication and essential!

Jim Gish did a phenomenal job throughout the process. His emails were thorough and very well informative.

Jim Gish was a terrific liaison. The Kubrick team was outstanding. We spoke frequently with the on-site team and they were always very informative and gracious. We will miss them!

Jim Gish's newsletter was fantastic. Well written, covered all issues, and fun. He did a great job.

Jim Gish's weekly reports were very valuable

Jim Gish's emails were and still are outstanding. He is responsive to community concerns.

Kudos to Jim Gish

Kudos to the messenger. Well done

Once things finally got going, the regular communications from the town's bridge/rail project liaison were invaluable. The tone, images, and overall sense of "everything is going to be OK and we are going to get through this" while not sugarcoating the inconveniences was awesome.

See previous answer.

Thank you, Jim, for the regular updates. It would have been so much more difficult to live through the construction without knowing what was happening and when. I can only imagine how much "feedback" you received along the way and know that your efforts were tremendously appreciated.

The block party events that were held were a great opportunity to engage the public. The opportunity for the local day care to come and witness the work was also a great opportunity for the kids.

the frequent e- updates were super informative!

The liaison between the project manager and the public was exceptional!

The town hired its own public engagement person (Jim Gish) who did a much better job informing residents of project progress, and included additional helpful local information that VTrans just was not aware of. VTrans should work in conjunction with such people on future projects instead of duplicating efforts.

The Weekly emails & Chief Hanley's report were great and lots of good updates in the Addison Independent which I think kept everyone well informed. The downtown business shared first hand photos on their social media occasionally which was interesting. Other than

that I didn't see anything on the Town of Middlebury or Experience Middlebury websites - which seemed strange knowing we had a ton of new folks moving here over Covid.

The weekly updates from Jim Gish were essential to my sense of engagement. They shaped my knowledge and my perception of the project. The fantastic photos, crystal-clear communication, and touches of humor engaged me in ways nothing else could have.

This is addressed in my response to an earlier question.

This was made so very much more palatable by the writing, compassion, and humor of Jim Gish. All projects like this should have a Jim.

Regional Respondents	Percentage
6	17%

I very much appreciated the frequent reports by Jim Gish

Jim Gish did a great job. Early on would have appreciated more online opportunities to discuss the project.

Jim Gish's regular updates were terrific.

The email updates have been great!

The weekly updates were helpful in knowing what was happening and for planning trips to downtown. It helped knowing how the project was progressing when that might not have been visible to a driver/pedestrian.

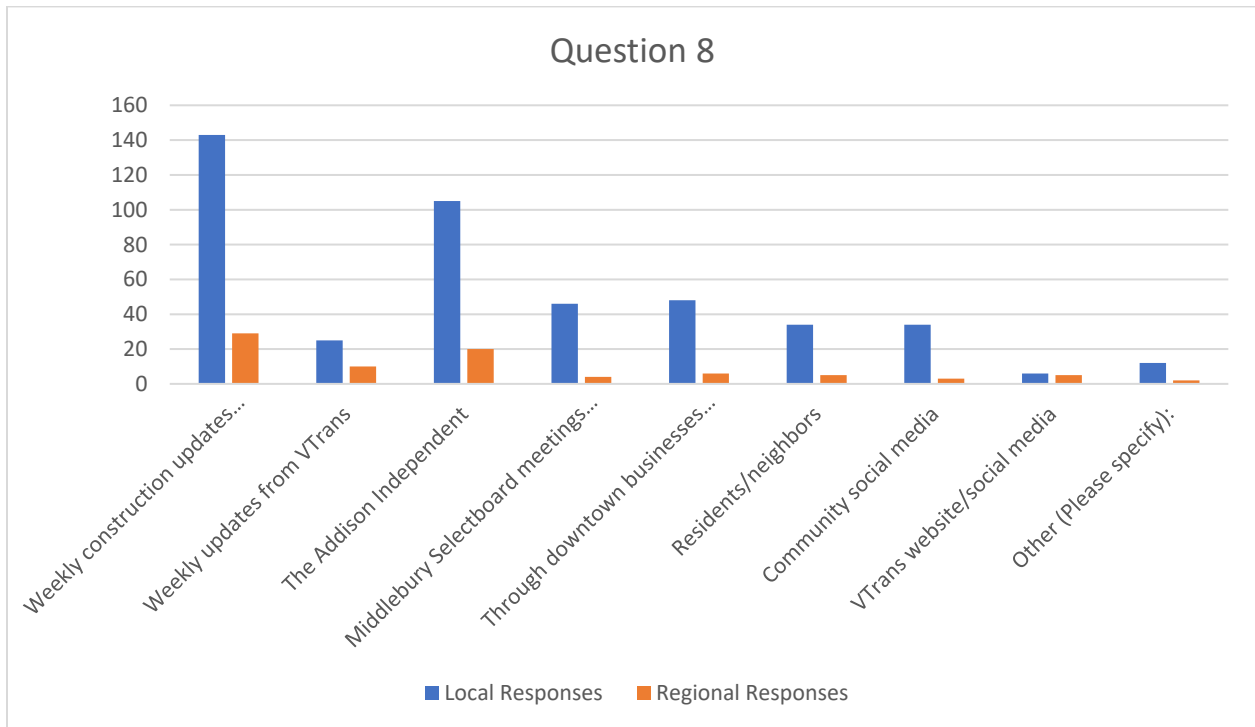
Use Jim Gish for all public involvement

Question 8

How did you stay up to date with information about the project? (Please click ALL that apply.)

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Weekly construction updates from Middlebury's Community Liaison	143	96%	29	80%
Weekly updates from VTrans	25	17%	10	28%
The Addison Independent	105	70%	20	55%
Middlebury Selectboard meetings and/or public information meetings	46	31%	4	11%
Through downtown businesses and organizations like Neighbors Together and the Better Middlebury Partnership	48	32%	6	17%
Residents/neighbors	34	23%	5	14%
Community social media	34	23%	3	8%
VTrans website/social media	6	4%	5	14%

Other (Please specify):	12	3%	2	2%
Total Responses	453		84	



Other (Please specify):

Local Respondents	Percentage
12	8%

Addison County Regional Planning Transportation Advisory Committee

Being retired, I became a sidewalk superintendent (and student of Jim Gish and a VT State highway engineer named Gordon). Gordon was smart and had a huge responsibility on a day to day basis but he had time to answer questions from me and many others. Jim was critical because he kept up with the engineers and town leaders and presented it to us in pictures and good writing skills. Both of these men were the right person for this job. The workers were excellent too. They were courteous to a fault.

Construction signage!

Family members, visiting area

Frequently walking downtown and personal observation of the construction.

Jim Gish was fabulous

Personal observation

Personal Visits

Posterboards at Town Offices and USPO

Signage- informational displays.

The signboards were well-designed and informative.
visual observation

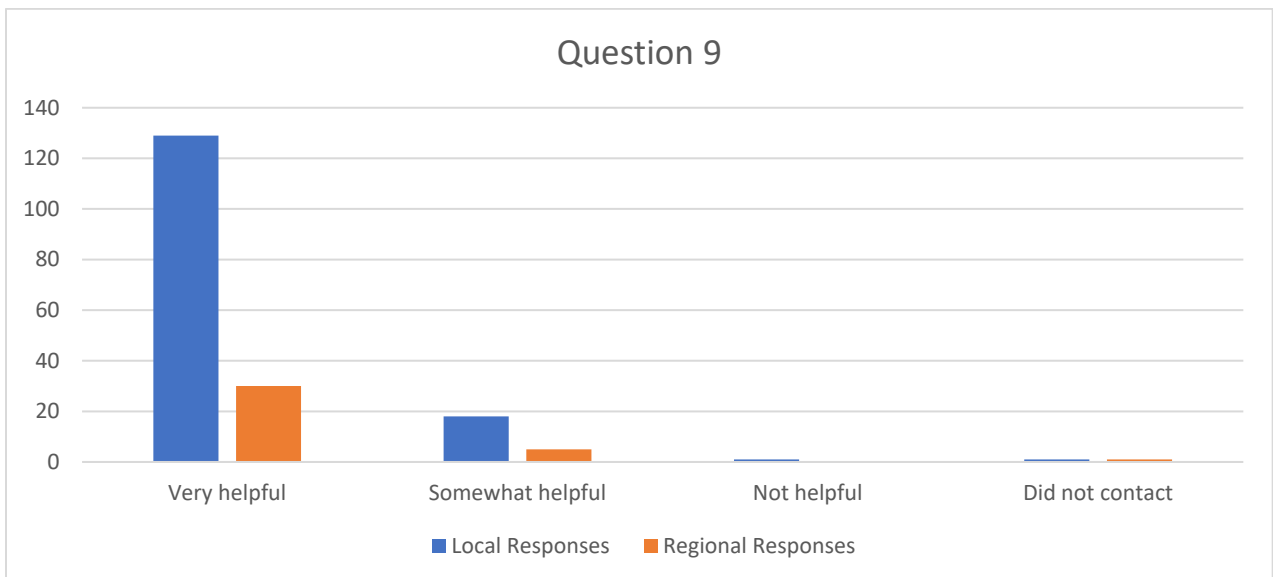
Regional Respondents	Percentage
2	5%

frequent walks downtown and around the area
sometimes announcements on FPF

Question 9

How would you rate the quality of the information you received in terms of accuracy and timeliness?

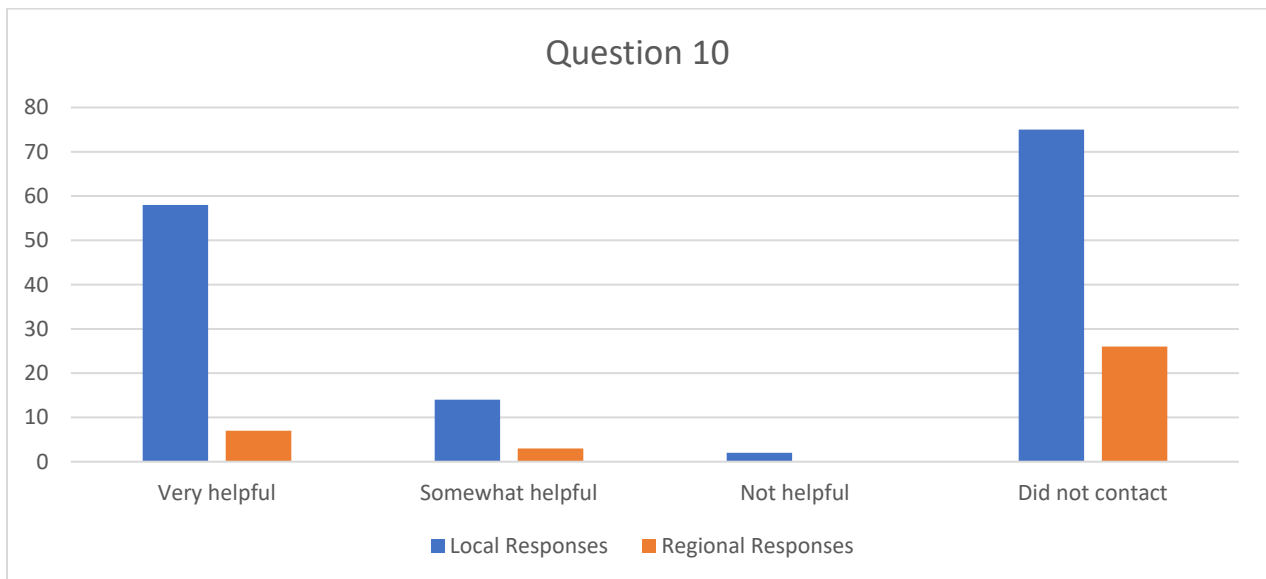
Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Very helpful	129	87%	30	83%
Somewhat helpful	18	12%	5	14%
Not helpful	1	1%	0	0%
Did not contact	1	1%	1	3%
Total	149		36	



Question 10

Did you contact VTrans, Middlebury's Community Liaison, or the Public Information Consultant (FHI Studio) during construction? If so, how helpful was their response?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Very helpful	58	39%	7	19%
Somewhat helpful	14	9%	3	8%
Not helpful	2	1%	0	0%
Did not contact	75	50%	26	72%
Total	149		36	



Comment: Please leave a comment about your experience.

Local Respondents	Percentage
18	12%

Always contacted Jim Gish, he was invaluable through the entire project!

Always ready to explain what is going on and what will happen next. Kubricky's high regard for safety for onlookers and construction workers was exemplary.

Contacted Jim Gish several times. Always received an upbeat response.

I contacted Jim 3 times. He was responsive and left a referral number for me to call with one of my concerns. ECI was less responsive.

I contacted Jim a number of times to ask about particular elements of the construction process and he was always helpful in the moment and included the response for everyone to read about in the next weekly update.

I contacted Middlebury's Community Liaison several times. Replies always helpful.

I did contact Jim and I did get a response. So, thank you.

I email Jim a few times and he always responded and acted upon the subject in a timely manner

I received prompt and thoughtful responses to every comment and question, and I interacted weekly.

I spoke with Jim numerous times, and even emailed him a few times. He always provided me with timely info or went out of his way to learn and respond.

Jim Gish was absolutely terrific.

Jim was very responsive--quick to help

Middlebury's Community Liaison established an open, friendly tone in his weekly updates, and invited comments and questions. He made it easy to get in touch, and responded immediately to my question.

On four aspects of the project that I provided written input on, publicly to Town officials, I never received a public response...only in one instance was there a follow up private conversation with Jim Gish. More often the response to what I submitted was negative, resistant...

See above

The response from the liaison was very open to concerns and he was proactive on requesting results from the state/contractor.

They were always there and, for me, could be contacted just by saying "HEY JIM!" Or, "Hi Gordie". That's how accessible they were.

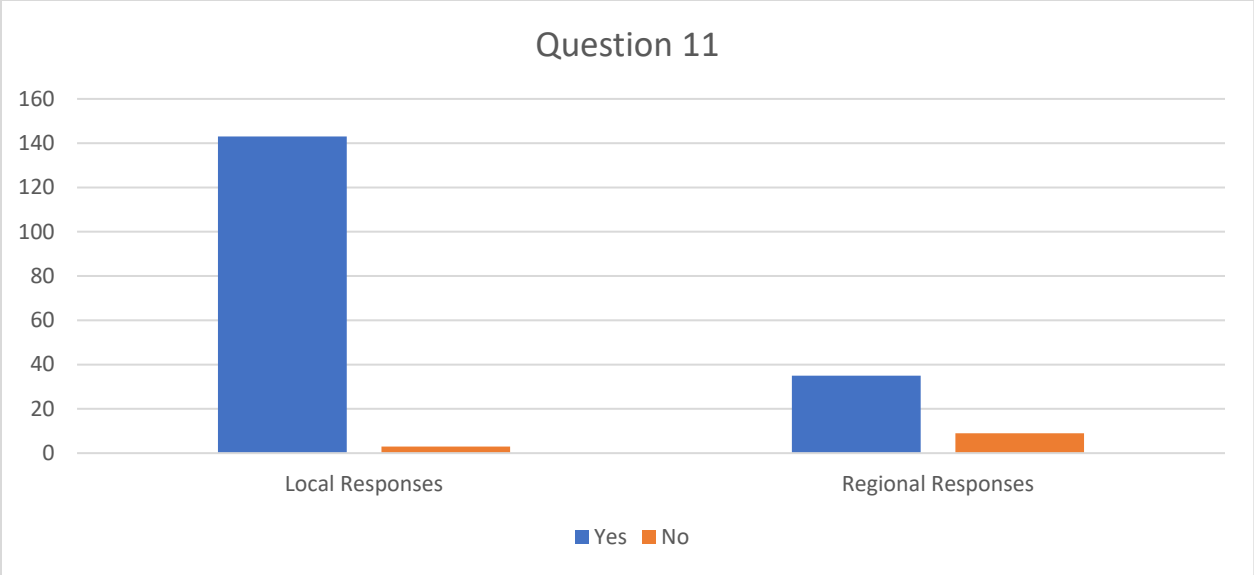
VTrans = no; FHI = no--don't know them; Mdbly Liaison YES!!!

Regional Respondents	Percentage
0	0%

Question 11

Middlebury was represented through all phases of this project by a community liaison. Do you feel that this position had a positive impact on the project and how the community managed through the project?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Percentage %	Regional Responses	Percentage %
Yes	143	98%	35	80%
No	3	2%	9	20%
Total	146		44	



Comment: What advice would you offer for future projects considering use of a community liaison?

Local Respondents	Percentage
47	32%

A great deal of the success of this work was finding the right person for the job. Our community liaison had the facility to communicate clearly with ALL members of the community from the construction workers on site to the Selectboard and Town Manager and the President of the College. I think it would be a challenge to find someone with these gifts and pay them appropriately, but boy was it worth it. The TONE of the communication was accurate, empathetic, and created a sense of unity in the community that really helped us get through this incredibly complex and lengthy project.

Absolute necessity. Jim Gish excelled in this position. It is important to have the right person. Just filling the position does not mean the job will be done well.

Absolutely essential partner. I didn't have to attempt to ask questions of the contractors or VTRANS because of Jim.

Absolutely use a community liaison!!!! Without the liaison it is often unclear who to talk to or get information from and no one else in the project ends up having the time or mental space to really keep the community up to date. So much anxiety over schedules and next steps was avoided by Jim's up-front communication and ever-present availability. As well, when problems arose (like challenging pedestrian access), Jim was able to get that feedback quickly and work with the contractors to tweak routing. Without the liaison role those issues could have been passed back and forth between the Town staff, VTRANS, and the several contractors and become a much bigger issue that drew more frustration from the community.

Absolutely. A job well done!

Absolutely. He was the sole reason I felt informed.

Accurate and timely information is critical. Engaging and friendly presentation of the information is extremely important - need the right personality for the job.

All major VTRANS projects should have a position funded for a community representative like Jim Gish. It should have been established earlier in the project, before completion of the EIS Environmental Impact process, so that things that later "couldn't" be incorporated from public input because of allegedly being inconsistent with the EIS, could have been included at the proper time in project planning and engineering.

Community liaison's updates were far and away better than the updates from VTrans. VTrans should feed liaison info in future and let them communicate instead of duplicating efforts.

Continue community outreach, be sure financial support to area businesses is equitable to big businesses also impacted.

Do not hesitate to hire one.

Don't change a thing!

Essential

From my perspective, Jim Gish was a perfect fit for this role. If future community liaisons can have his skill set they will be successful.

Having a community liaison was critical to keeping the citizens informed. I often saw Jim when I was downtown.

He was great. His information was valuable.

HIRE JIM!

I cannot imagine anyone could have done a better job than did our Jim Gish.

I felt connected to this project in a way that I would not have otherwise.

I hate to imagine how this would have gone without a community liaison, especially one who did such an excellent job. I think this role was critical to the success of the project and the sense of satisfaction among townsfolk.

I think having one point person is key to a successful project of this scale.

I think it was really helpful to have this position filled by someone who lives in Middlebury and has ties to the community and who focused on this project alone. People know Jim and feel ok about emailing him about little things and ask questions.

I think it work very well. Kept everybody informed on what to expect excellent job

I thought he was very effective

I thought Jim was key to the success of the project.

If other communities are considering use of a liaison they should hire Jim Gish to train that person! Jim did a fantastic job.

Jim did a great job. Learned as he went along. Was very timely in his reporting

Jim Gish was an extraordinary plus in this project. We could not have done it without him.

Jim was fantastic. With the information I gleaned from his emails, I was able to speak with authority about the project with people who weren't very familiar with project. It helped a lot with reducing misunderstandings and confusion about the project. Communication is the key!!!!

Jim's personality came through his emails. His enthusiasm and eagerness was contagious.

Jim's updates were essential to understanding the impact, schedule, and progress of the project throughout.

Keep it up.

Keep Jim on retainer! What a great communicator.....

See responses above.

The liaison was extremely helpful; I would recommend using one on any future large projects that impact residents and businesses.

The more folks are informed, the more buy-in is possible.

The position seems like an absolute necessity for a project of this scale. It would have been so much more difficult to live through this project without the regular, consistent, optimistic, concise updates that Jim provided. Of course, the trick in this position is finding someone like Jim Gish, who did an amazing job. Not every project will be that lucky even if you have the position.

The thoroughness of the communications, the photos, and the general tone of the emails was fantastic!

There was a time early on when I wondered who he was advocating for. Was this position a neutral one? Or representing the town? Or defending the project? There were a lot of emotions in the beginning of this. So clarifying the role is important.

This created a much larger opportunity to have the community's concerns heard and addressed. Without him, many of the concerns would not have been handled the way that they were. This also helped to create a positive attitude towards the project for most people as it helped show the community that they were being heard and we were there to work together.

This position and the person who was hired, Jim Gish, was essential

This was a terrific investment. The liaison kept us informed & documented the project. I enjoyed receiving the emails each week or so.

town liaison person always sided with VTrans and Kubricky in any dispute

Use Jim Gish's emails as a model!

Yes, see above, Jim was instrumental in making this project understandable and keeping the community well informed.

Yes, very helpful and upbeat updates.

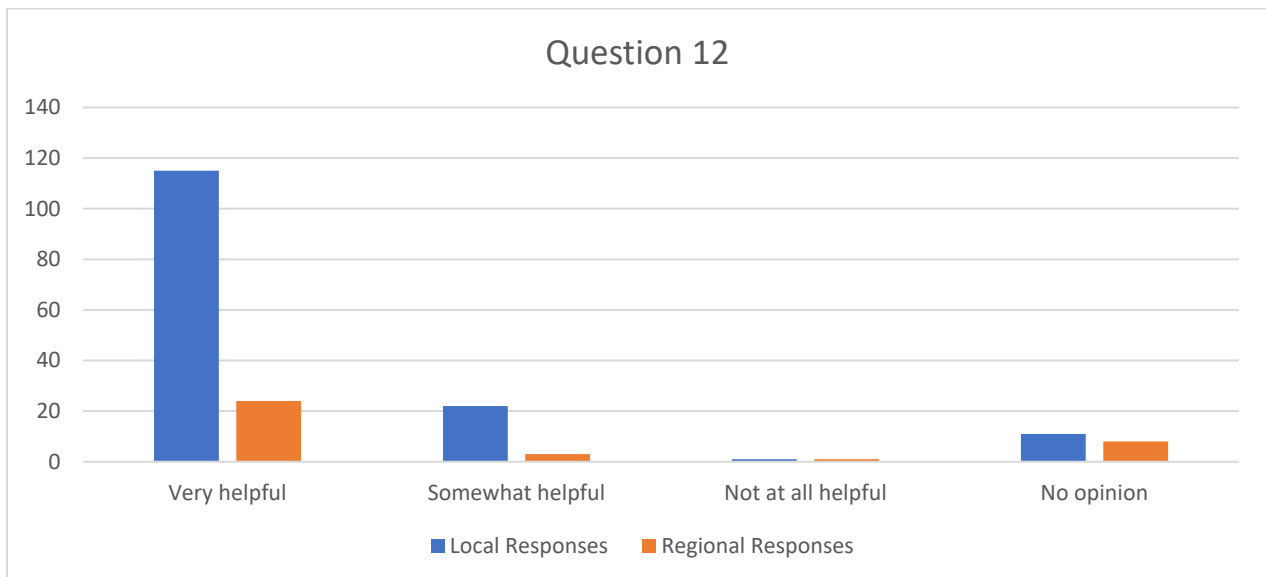
You couldn't have found a better person for this than Jim Gish. He clearly communicated well with everyone involved and knew what he was talking about. He was able to explain a complex project in a way that was easy to understand for those of us not in the construction industry! His emails were fascinating. I hope all of his emails are well documented for future generations!

Regional Respondents	Percentage
0	0%

Question 12

In general, how did you find the construction workers and flaggers that you encountered during construction?

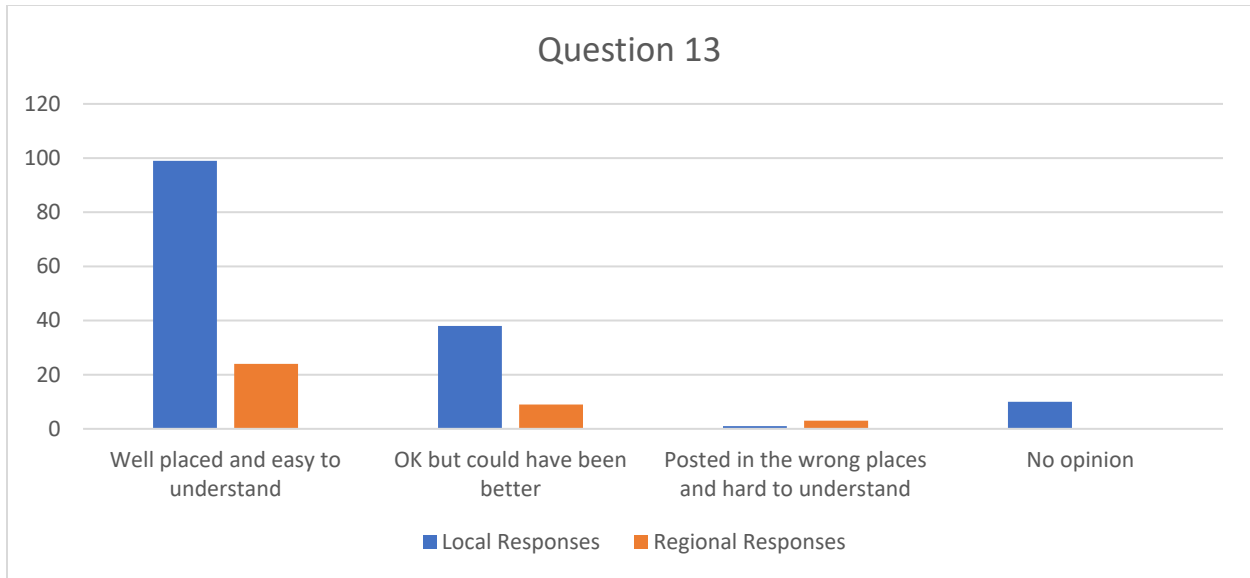
Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Very helpful	115	77%	24	67%
Somewhat helpful	22	15%	3	8%
Not at all helpful	1	1%	1	3%
No opinion	11	7%	8	22%
Total	149		36	



Question 13

How would you rate the detour signs during construction?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Well placed and easy to understand	99	67%	24	67%
OK but could have been better	38	26%	9	25%
Posted in the wrong places and hard to understand	1	1%	3	8%
No opinion	10	7%	0	0%
Total	148		36	



Comment: How might detour signage be improved for future projects?

Local Respondents	Percentage
9	6%

As noted before, sign placement needs to consider pedestrians and cyclists, not just vehicle traffic.

More warnings before the detours

Plenty of good signs starting from a long distance from downtown.

Sign for closure of Printers Alley to foot traffic from Marble Works was very poor. It did not direct peds to the appropriate detour at the footbridge.

Sometimes it wasn't until I came upon the signage that I knew of it. As a cyclist, it'd have been better had I known well before I happened upon the closure -- say at Marble Works road & Main St. -- at the entrance to MWS since it involves long backtracking to get around. Again, if more town officials were pedestrians/cyclists these hiccups would've been interwoven in the planning stages.

sometimes not placed in the right spot. sometimes too soon, sometimes too late.

The blasting signs were very confusing. There was hardly any blasting. Flaggers more useful than signs.

The ones around the Chaz Mraz park made no sense.

Where possible, indicate the extent and duration of the road closure so people know whether to take the detour or go away and come back later.

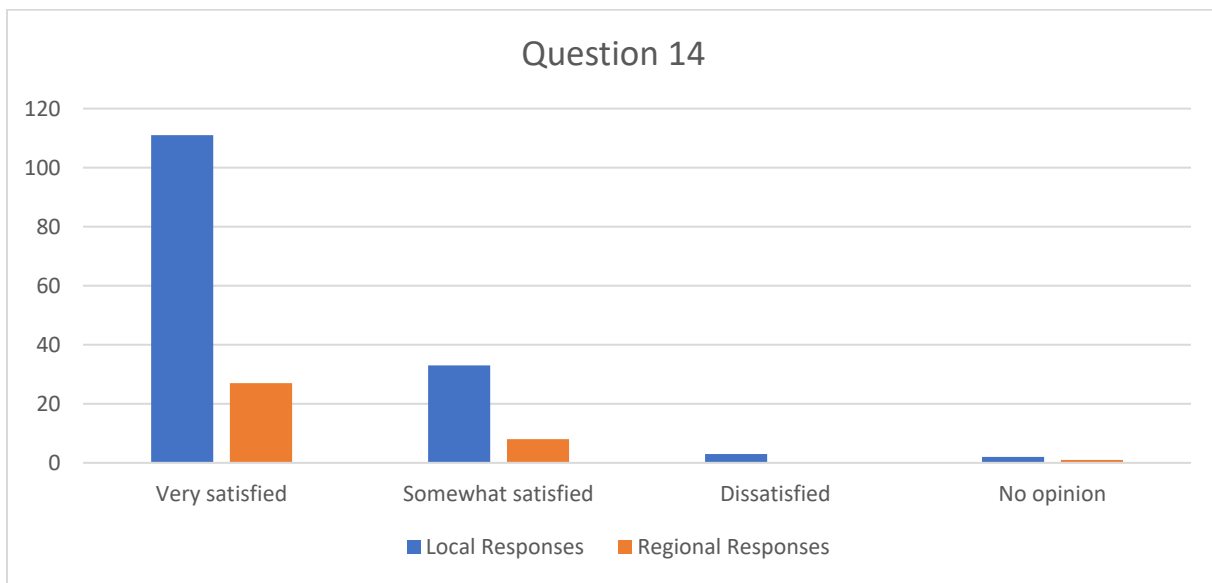
Regional Respondents	Percentage
1	3%

There could have been more information placed obviously about how to access The Marble Works

Question 14

As you look back at the course of this project, how satisfied are you with how VTrans and the project team conducted and managed this project?

Answer Choices	Local Responses	Local %	Regional Responses	Regional %
Very satisfied	111	74%	27	75%
Somewhat satisfied	33	22%	8	22%
Dissatisfied	3	2%	0	0%
No opinion	2	1%	1	3%
Total	149		36	



Comment: Why do you feel this way?

Local Respondents	Percentage
28	19%

Any construction project is disruptive and has negative impact during the process. Covid-19 did not help. Weather did not always help. Adjusting to accommodate holidays and festivals, etc. did not help. Sometimes I feel more like let's suck it up and get this done as quickly as possible. The planners tried to appease and work around every request to accommodate for an event. I also feel that the businesses did themselves a huge disservice to slow down

construction and to continually advertise that Middlebury was open for business. Frequently, especially with covid-19, Middlebury was not open for business. It is too bad that some better way of compensating businesses during construction cannot be worked into the budgets. I believe it could be less expensive in the long run and would be better if shoppers knew certain businesses were completely closed during specific periods of construction.

Communication with all parties and public participation made this seem like a team effort.

Connection from sidewalk over south entrance to the tunnel to Battell Driveway more dangerous than that at Main Street and Printer's alley where this report said a fence would be installed, Fence needed or are you going to wait until someone falls, is injured and sues?

Everyone did a great job.

Excellent team friendly to the public and very efficient.

Good result.

I feel that nobody should be upset about anything during this project if they read the emails and papers. Jim Gish's reports with photos and updates and schedule changes were excellent.

I felt well-informed and was able to adjust my travel through town based on information provided.

It took so damn long, killing businesses.

It was a great summer and fall activity to watch the sunset and dusk fall over the city...watch the daily and nightly progress...interact with very industrious construction workers who were very gracious in answering questions and generally very entertaining.

Look at the results!

Nothing is perfect and I think local businesses bore the brunt of the impact.

See all my previous comments.

See previous comments.

The contractors and their team was the most professional I have ever encountered. I was blown away by their planning and execution of this project. (As I guess you can see)

The emails were great and Neighbors Together really helped turn the attitude from dread and despair to a positive vibe of resilience and community spirit - it sure as hell worked that way on me.

The end result is staggeringly beautiful and underneath where we can no longer see, is an amazing array of infrastructure that will service Middlebury and VTrans for decades.

The entire team were fun, friendly, helpful and courteous. They were very proud of what they were doing acted like they were part of the community!!!

The glacial pace and over-engineering of this project created 5 years of hardship and resulted in a huge waste of taxpayer money. All of that, and very little to show for it.

The pandemic layered on an unexpected layer of uncertainty which was managed with proper concern and positive attitude.

The project took too long to accomplish. Businesses and humans moved out of downtown.

The results speak volumes.

The way they handled some of the local property owners along the construction limits could have been better to limit discrepancies and legal arguments.

They failed to honor agreements with downtown property owners

Took way too long between planning and execution. All cannot be blamed on Covid.

VTrans could have handled early planning much better.

VTrans was one of the weaker links in the public meetings. They were not great listeners and not always upfront about funding and options.

When I had an issue that VTrans need to answer, Jim would forward it to them and they would respond within 24hrs.

Local Respondents	Percentage
3	8%

100% every time I asked a question on the street about the construction, there was a positive, clear answer. Thanks to them all...

It was disconcerting that even when there was a mask mandate virtually none of the construction workers wore them even when huddled close together. I was not worried about my health but they are out and about in the community w potential to infect others. The managers overseeing the project should have recognized that the optics were very bad. I recognize that the work was outside and when spaced apart, agree, no need for masks but they should have made a show when huddled around plans or inside the diner (temporary construction office).

The crews always seemed to respect drivers and pedestrians. They were always hard at work and diligent and kept the work sites as clean/clear as seemed possible.

Question 15

Do you have any other feedback that you would like to share? Please provide your contact information if you would like to speak with someone from the project team.

Local Response

No response

Much thanks to everyone on the team; well done!

THANK YOU to everyone involved! The town of Middlebury has been forever changed for the better. It is clear everyone took pride in doing an excellent job and kept everyone safe along the way.

The timeline and parameters of this project shifted a lot from the original conception that involved closing the downtown for a year. Good listening and communication were essential to the successful completion.

Jim Gish did a phenomenal job. His weekly email reports were highly informative and maintained an honest, upbeat, and community- focused tone in communicating all aspects of the project.

I enjoyed the updates via email. I could look them over whenever I had a moment

Why include this picture of a vibrant Main Street full of people, when this is NOT (NOT at all) what the project created? It's a disingenuous use of the photo. The project created two nice, but small, public spaces, but the rest of the project was mostly about making it so vehicles

can easily flow through downtown. The reality is that while the rail tunnel was necessary and a welcome improvement, the work above the tunnel was car-centric and not forward thinking.

One of the concerns I have as a resident of the Town, not really applicable to this project, per se, is that downtown has become a boutique shopping area for tourists and MiddColl families. It's not really a place for locals of limited means to shop. Gone is the five-and-dime, e.g. In its place is a high-priced specialty treat shop. I witnessed a very unfortunate scene when a local grandma went in to treat her granddaughter. The setup is such that you help yourself and then are charged based on weight. They got to the register and found they didn't have enough to pay for the \$5+ cup. I realize this isn't the town's responsibility, but I point it out to show there aren't options for regular folks to spend their hard-earned money. In that same vein: why, oh why, do we need ANOTHER high-end coffee shop in/near downtown? I get the inference that the town prefers big-spending tourists and college users to poor/middle-income folks downtown. Ah, "gentrification" is the word I'm looking for.

Thanks for completing this ambitious project, which had to be done. I'm sorry if you had to field many complaints. Vermonters can be averse to change, even when without it, the town would crumble.

You/they all deserve medals

Downtown looks fantastic!

Job well done!

A hand rail is needed along the Duclos building to steady pedestrians when the sidewalk is icy.

It looks fabulous! The visitors coming to evaluate the College will carry home their impressions of the Town, and both entities will benefit.

Thanks so much to everyone!

Since the new bridge, I have felt we have made Middlebury confusing to get around in. Can't imagine being a visitor here. We need some shops where we can buy things we need... I prefer to support smaller, locally owned businesses but have to shop elsewhere for things.

No additional comment. Thanks to everyone.

Would have loved a streaming webcam over the construction area to follow the changes when access was blocked.

guard fencing is too low that overlook the railroad tracks by post office

I hope future projects that VTrans undertakes will include the same level of community engagement they have used for our project. I think it really helps make things go smoother.

Very thankful you found a way to continue through the pandemic. Thank you.

NOTE: Your photo = community gathering for SPECIAL events on Main Street and downtown plaza should become a WEEKLY event, to give residents and visitors a no-traffic access to shops and the Farmers' Market (that needs to return to the town center). With appreciation to living in Middlebury!

The first construction project I've seen where everyone worked 24/7. Remarkable!

I am most excited with the transformation of Triangle Park. While Lazarus Park serves its purpose, because of the slope, it is limited as a meeting and event location. But Triangle Park already is proving to be a well-used meeting place. I can envision various community events

taking place on this corner. So glad the design won't restrict this with lots of plantings and objects in the way.

Nancy and Karen worked hard to keep our spirits up. I appreciate the new start-ups who have tried to fill our vacancies.

Very good job overall. Thank you!

This seems like it could have been an opportunity to improve some of the bizarre traffic patterns in our downtown permanently. I know that is outside the scope of the rail project, but the disruption could have allowed for additional improvements.

I'm glad Middlebury survived this. Kudos to Jim Gish and to Neighbors Together

Please assess long-term downtown economic impact.

Concerned about the number of parking spaces.

All the construction and management personnel deserve a big thank you for a job well done with as little disruption as possible Thank you all

Jim Gish did an excellent job of keeping everyone informed and calm.

The Liaison emails were timely, up-to-date and interesting.

I am glad it is going to be over and done with.

I live on the east side of downtown and work on the west side (college) and found it quite easy to get to and from work. The Cross St. bridge probably saved a lot of grief for Route 30 travelers. The signs that were placed to show detours were done very well. The numerous construction companies working together in harmony was a plus on this very difficult and tedious project. WELL DONE!

The whole thing was like watching a miracle unfold.

It's beautiful and will help the town a lot.

I think this last question represents why I feel so positively about the project: there was an openness to feedback that established the sense that yes, this was a community project and the project team listened to voices from the community.

Jim Gish was extremely helpful, informative and upbeat and an asset to the town/project

Best run project from a schedule, communication, and professionalism standpoint that I've seen in my several years around the industry.

I think you should always have a community liaison. Jim Gish did a wonderful job! He has set the standard! You should get him to help with Vergennes truck by-pass.

Thank you and the entire team!

I hope VTrans realizes the value of the partnerships involved in this project - and can transfer that kind of experience to future projects.

I moved to Middlebury in June 2020. There were periods where the construction noise was a bit difficult, in particular when trucks and tractors were continually passing my house on S. Pleasant and Cross streets. The exhaust was also difficult at times, as I live and work here. All of that said, the project is incredibly impressive and the downtown looks really inviting. I patronized businesses to support them and walked downtown to check out the construction regularly. A wonderful project overall. The communication from the community liaison was top-notch. Informative and upbeat. Well worth the investment and a good model for

communicating with a community about a project that easily could have been misunderstood or felt much more disruptive than it did. Well done.

A job well done

The Town of Middlebury and the State of Vermont formed an ideal partnership.

New line.

I was pleased to be a part of this amazing project!

Regional Response

As a member of N,T I appreciate the Town and VTrans support during the project.

The email updates on the work were great!

Thank you for the communication and professionalism exhibited during this project and for the truly great outcome.

Too complex project. Too expensive. If middle bury wanted to deny that it was a mill town with a rail road I should not have contributed through taxes.

I hope VTrans will restore the Fifield Farm land on Route 30 that has been used as a project staging area before winter sets in. It is now an eyesore heading into Middlebury from the south on Route 30.

I don't really understand why it took so long. I've seen far bigger projects take a year or two.

Can we get some water pressure to the fountain? Thanks for painting it black!

The only big mistake I see is in the design of the shelter. I've lived in England, where the simplest city bus shelters have shelter on three sides and heaters under the benches on cold days. This is wide open in a much colder climate, with no heat I can see. Amtrak trains tend to be late. It could be a very cold wait. The roof is really ugly, too.

These are minor quibbles. On the whole, downtown looks beautiful! Bravo!

A big thank you for keeping us engaged in this way!

The former Rutland Railroad has never looked so good! Can't wait for Amtrak. And downtown Middlebury has never looked better, too.
