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### **Agency of Transportation to Install Temporary Bridges in Downtown Middlebury**

MONTPELIER, Vt.—March 27, 2017--Transportation Secretary, Joe Flynn has issued an emergency order authorizing the Agency of Transportation (VTrans) to install two temporary bridges in downtown Middlebury in advance of a long-planned tunnel project. While recent inspections have shown the bridges on VT 30 and Merchants Row to be safe for travel, evidence of accelerated deterioration has prompted the agency to seek approval to rapidly install temporary bridges this summer as a precautionary measure.

"We have been monitoring these bridges closely," said Transportation Secretary Joe Flynn. "In view of the current project timeline and the rapidly evolving state of the structures, we feel it is prudent to install temporary bridges this summer, before we are forced into a situation requiring an emergency closure. This declaration allows VTrans to prioritize our resources and accelerate the design to rapidly install these bridges."

"It is clear from the continuing deterioration of both bridges that decisive action is needed to protect the safety of our community and to avoid an unplanned closure like the one we experienced when Lake Champlain Bridge closed overnight in October 2009," said Brian Carpenter, Chair of the Middlebury Selectboard. "During the past several months the Agency of Transportation has proved themselves to be a good partner, and I am confident that they will work hard to ensure that our priorities are met. We are committed to clearly communicating plans for the temporary bridges with the community and to involving all key stakeholders in the joint effort to keep our downtown fully accessible to all who live, work, shop, and conduct business here."

Preparatory work will begin as early as today on repairs to ensure the bridges can operate safely until the temporary structures can be installed. Workers will be active under the bridges and sidewalks. Current plans are to demolish the existing bridges and replace them starting in mid-June with Mabey steel bridges that will remain in place until they can be replaced by permanent structures.

VTrans will be presenting preliminary plans and discussing impacts to parking and mobility that will result from the site conditions that come with the installation of temporary bridges at the Middlebury Selectboard Meeting on Tuesday, March 28 at 6pm.