

## **CHESTER HIGHWAY BRIDGE PROJECT FEDERAL AID PROJECT NUMBER BO 1442 (39)**

On September 13, 2023, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), cooperating with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Town of Chester (Town), will release for public review a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed Town of Chester Highway Bridge Project (Project). The Public comment period will be open from September 13, 2023, until October 13, 2023.

The purpose of the Project is to address the structural and functional deficiencies of two Town-owned bridges spanning the Williams River in Chester (the Thompson Road Bridge and the Jewett Road Bridge, respectively); and to address safety concerns at the intersections of these two roads with Vermont Route 103 (VT 103).

The Project proposes the construction of one new bridge situated between the current Thompson Road Bridge (TH 18, Bridge 62) and Jewett Road Bridge (TH 78, Bridge 72), both of which are undersized and do not comply with current design codes. The new bridge will be a two-lane structure measuring approximately 75 feet long and 30 feet wide.

The Project is being funded by the FHWA through its Federal-aid highway Program. As a Federally-funded Project, the EA is being made available pursuant to FHWA regulations implementing NEPA, which can be found at 23 CFR 771.

The EA contains information on the purpose and need for the proposed project; the range of alternatives considered; and an evaluation of the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action, including its direct effects, indirect effects, and cumulative impacts. The EA and its associated exhibits may be viewed at the Vermont Agency of Transportation webpage:

<https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/vtrans/external/Projects/Structures/12j616>

A hard copy is available for review at the Chester Town Clerk's Office at 556 Elm St, Chester, VT.

A public hearing on the EA is scheduled for September 28, 2023, at the Town Hall Second Floor Meeting Room, 556 Elm Street, Chester, VT. A link to participate in this hearing via Zoom videoconference is available on the Town of Chester website home page at <https://www.chestervt.gov/>. An informational session will be held before the start of the formal hearing from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM, with the hearing called to order at 6:30 PM. The hearing will conclude at 8:00 PM. At the informational session, Project plans and information will be available for viewing and the project team will be available to answer questions. Written and verbal comments will be accepted at the public hearing.

Your feedback and support are vital as we move forward with this project. The FHWA encourages all interested parties to provide comments concerning the scope and content of the EA. Comments should be as specific as possible and address the analysis of potential environmental impacts, the adequacy of the Proposed Action or merits of alternatives, and the mitigation being considered. Reviewers should organize their participation so that it is meaningful and makes the Agency aware of the reviewer's interests and concerns using quotations and other specific references to the text of the EA and related documents. Comments may be presented verbally at the public hearing, or may be submitted in writing until October 13, 2023, to:

Elizabeth Shipley  
Environmental and ROW Program Manager  
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Federal Building, Suite 216  
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Montpelier, VT 05602  
[Elizabeth.Shipley@DOT.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Shipley@DOT.gov)

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) of South Burlington, VT is the engineering and environmental services firm working with VTrans and the Town of Chester on the environmental permitting and design development for the Project. An overview of the Project will be provided at the hearing and representatives from VTrans will be present to receive public comments.