

## Vermont-Quebec Transportation areas of interest

VTrans continues to be directly involved in several port of entry facilities projects in either planning or construction phases along the Vermont-Quebec border. Specifically, the completion of A-35 and improvements on I-89 and at the US Land Port of Entry (LPOE) at Highgate Springs, the construction of the new LPOE at Derby Line/I-91 crossing south of A-55/Stanstead, Quebec, and the rehabilitation of the historic, international bridge between East Richford VT & Sutton Quebec. In addition, we expect to begin construction shortly on a VTrans project for the replacement of the decking for the Caswell Street overpass which crosses directly over the LPOE at Derby Line. We continue an active collaboration between VTrans and the Ministry of Transport staff, and the federal agencies at all the LPOEs affected by these initiatives and expect we will be closely involved in, and monitoring, these efforts over the next few years to assure safe, efficient, timely, and secure flow of trade and travel between Vermont & Quebec.

**Completion of A-35 to VT/US border:** The most recent update from the Ministry of Transport on the status of the A-35 project schedule to complete the final two segments of the new highway to the border was received in July 2017 and they have just confirmed that it remains the same now:

- Various studies needed to be completed before Transports Québec could establish a specific project timetable.
- Phases III and IV are included in the 2017-2027 Québec Infrastructure Plan, under the "project under study" category.
- These 2 phases are subject to the government guidelines regarding infrastructure project governance, more specifically the Directive sur la gestion des projets majeurs d'infrastructure publique (*Directive on the Management of Major Public-Infrastructure Projects*).
- Phase III and IV timelines will be specified based on future approvals required by the Directive. It is envisaged that the first construction work could begin within 2 years.

During 2017, VTrans has continued outreach to US Customs & Border Protection (CBP) and the General Services Administration (GSA), the two main federal agencies at the Highgate Springs LPOE, who have completed their preliminary study on improvements anticipated for the LPOE to accommodate the growth in traffic, commercial and passenger, resulting from the completion of A-35. They are now moving into a more detailed study, as their preliminary indication is that another commercial lane and some additional improvements to existing facilities will be needed. Their plans will need to address commitments made to VTrans several years ago in the agreement for reversion of ownership of the I-89 Northbound plaza land and highway ROW.

VTrans is presently working with consultants to develop a scoping study that will build on information from our earlier Phase I & II Traffic Impact studies, as well as the work of the

federal agencies and the Province of Quebec, to incorporate various infrastructure work planned near/at the Highgate Springs/I-89 and St. Armand/A-35 LPOEs, so that we can have a clear understanding of the various projects, and overlapping timelines, that will impact travel as these improvements are constructed. This will include identifying who the responsible parties are as well as where there will need to be careful coordination to ensure the traveling public and freight commerce are not unduly delayed.

We expect that the VTrans scoping study will be underway by late February/early March 2018, and a multi-agency dialogue and approach to improvements for the POEs and highway facilities will begin later in 2018.

**Construction of new US Port of Entry facilities at Derby Line/I-91:** The two-year project for construction of new facilities for all travelers crossing into the Vermont from Quebec on A-55 to the US highway, Interstate 91 is in the second year of construction and due for completion in 2018. The attached project sheet provides details of the construction process and phases for the new facilities and anticipated completion timeline.

**East Richford, VT – Sutton Quebec International Bridge:**

This bridge project was advertised for construction in November and the bids were opened on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The project was advertised in both the US and Quebec. There were three bidders and the low bidder is CPM Constructors from Maine. The project construction will begin sometime in March; the bridge will be closed to through traffic in late April. The project completion date is October 26, 2018. While the bridge is under construction, the two ports of entry (CBP & CBSA) will be closed for the duration as there is no way to provide a temporary structure to accommodate travel. Both the US & Canadian federal security agencies plan to make upgrades to their facilities during this time period. A detailed project fact sheet is attached.

**Derby Line - Caswell Street Overpass:**

This bridge overpass project is located between the US Customs Border Crossing and the Canadian Border Crossing on I91. The project was advertised in late October and the contract has been awarded to J.P. Sicard, Inc. from Barton. They are currently preparing to begin construction by the end of January. The project is the superstructure replacement of the existing bridge, including the elimination of the western most pier to improve sight distance for the US Customs personnel. The construction of this bridge is to be completed by mid-October of this year.

Though the construction of the bridge is not on the interstate; traffic on I91 will be affected during certain construction activities such as the demolition of the existing bridge and the erection of the new steel. We have been working closely with Quebec Transportation Ministry, US Customs and Canadian Border personnel to insure that there will be minimal traffic

disruptions during these activities. The contractor is fully aware of the importance of communication with all stakeholders during the construction of this project.