

To: VTrans

From: Wallingford Selectboard

Subject: WALLINGFORD BF0133(18) 23B009 VT Route 155, Bridge 15 over Mill River Scoping Report.

Dear VTrans;

Following the 1/20/26 hearing at Wallingford Town Hall and after living with the Bridge 15 detour for two years, we wish to share our findings about this project. This bridge is an important part of our town's transportation system. The need for this structure is as valid now as it was in 1940 when it was built to replace a steel bridge. Three alternatives have been presented to address the bridge closing due to its being in an unsafe condition.

1. Disinvestment. Permanent closure of the bridge.
2. Build a pedestrian bridge which would need to be maintained by the town of Wallingford.
3. Replacement of the bridge.

Alternative 1. Permanent closure poses problems that are currently not adequately mitigated. The intersection at Routes 103 and 140 has critical safety concerns, even after recent updates. These concerns come from people who have both driven trucks through the intersection as well as observed the traffic patterns there.

- Semi-trailer trucks and even large straight trucks have trouble entering Route 140 from the north/west. If vehicles are stopped at the intersection to turn left on Route 103, trucks can't make a turn to get through the intersection unless those vehicles back up. Snow and ice make this situation especially treacherous. There is no room for a turning lane.
- Visibility of Route 103 from the intersection is limited in both directions. The speed limit of 50 mph is often ignored, adding to an already dangerous condition.

We certainly appreciate the letter from Laura J Stone, Scoping Engineer at VTRANS, which showed that she clearly understood our safety concerns, and stated their plan to conduct "a comprehensive traffic and safety evaluation of the VT Route 103/VT Route 140 intersection." While we are hopeful that may result in meaningful improvements to the intersection, we are worried that, given the topography of the area and the roads, this section will still remain a hazard.

Alternative 2, a pedestrian bridge, is an option that was easy to reject. The town is not equipped to maintain a pedestrian bridge. The benefit would be limited to a small number of people from our community and does not justify the expense of upkeep.


Alternative 3. Replacement of the bridge would mitigate the hazardous conditions mentioned above, allowing vehicles traveling southbound on route 103 to avoid the current intersection.

The bridge also provides an important alternative access to East Wallingford in the event of flooding on Mill River, as the existing bridge on 140 generally becomes submerged well before bridge 15. Other benefits include improved response of emergency vehicles, and better access for mail and other deliveries. Replacement of the bridge is the best and most viable solution to the situation.

Sincerely,
Wallingford Selectboard



Kathy Luzader, Chair



Glenn Mayer, Vice Chair



Anne Awad



Rob Barker

Carolyn Behrendt