

1. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

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1.1. Introduction

This document has been prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project is a proposed transportation link located in the southwestern quadrant of the City of Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont providing access between I-189, Shelburne Street and the City Center District (CCD), formerly known as the Central Business District (CBD). A project location map showing the area is provided in Figure 1-1. Planning for this new highway construction project began in 1965. In 1979, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) approved an alternative consisting of a highway on new alignment from I-189 to Battery Street. At that time, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) NEPA regulations did not require a Record of Decision (ROD). This document refers to the 1979 approved alternative as the Selected Alternative or Null Alternative. One section of the project at the southerly limit of the project has been constructed, but never opened to traffic. This Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) addresses changes since the 1979 FEIS.

1.2. Summary of Project History

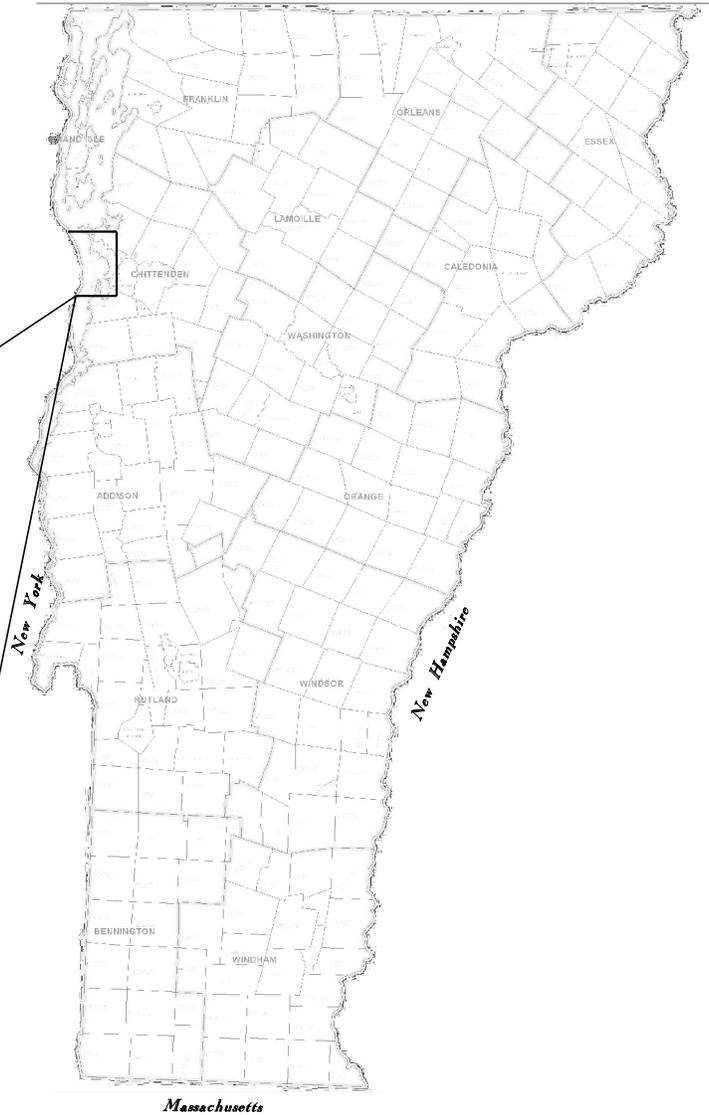
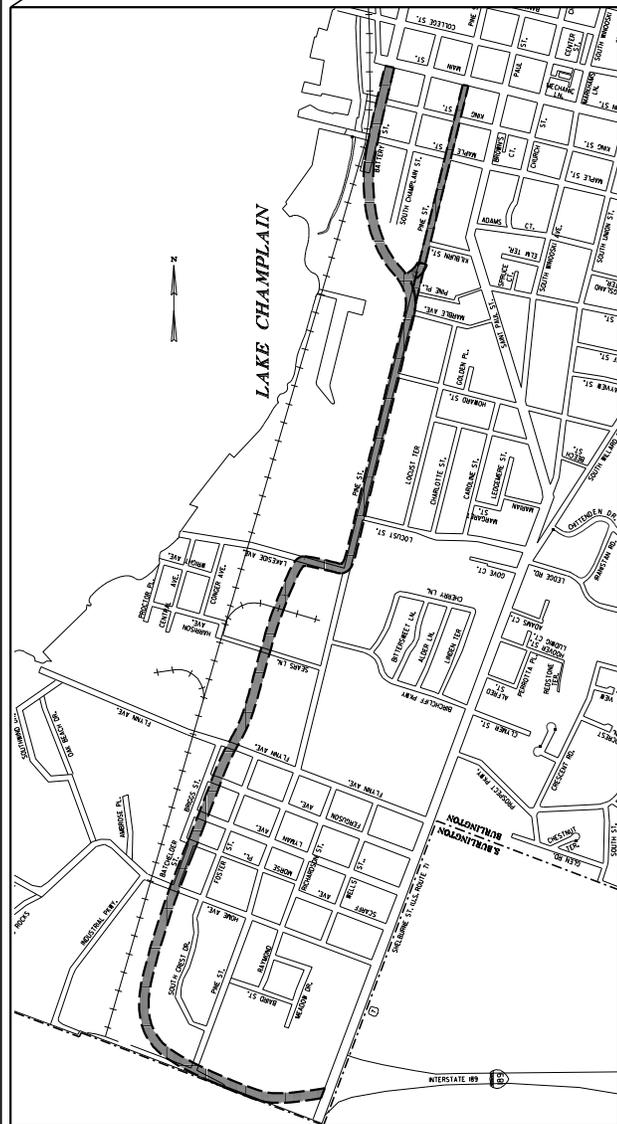
The proposed project has a long history of review and study, dating back to the 1960's. Numerous local and state-sponsored transportation analyses have been conducted, which are evidence of a long-term recognition of a transportation deficiency within this corridor. A number of studies for this project have been completed pursuant to NEPA as summarized in Table 1-1.

As described below, the proposed project has been defined to address transportation deficiencies in the southwestern quadrant of the City of Burlington, and in so doing, also addresses broader city-wide and regional transportation goals.

The genesis of the project dates back to the early 1960's, when the City of Burlington and the Vermont Department of Highways mutually recognized that future growth in the Greater Burlington Urban Area would require major improvements in north-south transportation facilities.

In 1965, the Department of Highways published the "Greater Burlington Urban Area Highway Plan", which included a series of recommendations for highway improvements to accommodate the anticipated increases in traffic for the next 20-years of economic growth. The result of the study was a recommendation that a Burlington Belt Line be constructed, consisting of a four-lane freeway running the entire length of the city, facilitating travel between the various neighborhoods and the CBD.

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Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway

Legend

 Southern Connector/
Champlain Parkway Corridors

Scale: 1"=2000'

Southern Connector/ Champlain Parkway MEGC-M5000(1)

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FIGURE I-1
PROJECT LOCATION MAP

Table 1-1: Summary of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Studies and Actions for the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway Project

Study	Date Issued	Purpose of Study	Action/Decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) 	1977	To document the need for, and identify and assess the impacts of alternatives to improve north/south travel in the southwest quarter of the City of Burlington.	Identification of a Preferred Alternative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) 	1979	To document the need for, and identify and assess the impacts of alternatives to improve north/south travel in the southwest quarter of the City of Burlington. Also, to address comments raised in the 1977 DEIS.	Selected Alternative chosen; resulting in an approved project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) 	1984	To address the environmental impacts of constructing a portion of the Selected Alternative through a wetland contaminated by coal gasification wastes.	<p>No action, no Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) was filed.</p> <p>DSEIS withdrawn per December 23, 2003 Notice of Intent (NOI)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) 	1995	To review interim alternatives to the C-8 Section to address current and future traffic problems, while remediation issues at the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site and the ultimate location of the C-8 Section are resolved.	Circulated for comment in July 1995.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) / Record of Decision (ROD) 	1997	To address comments on the DSEIS and provide documentation for selecting an alternative within the C-6 Section to address existing and future transportation deficiencies for a 5-10 year period (interim).	<p>Selected Alternative chosen.</p> <p>Subsequently withdrawn per December 23, 2003 NOI</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) 	2006	To address design modifications based on the City of Burlington's preferences and to designate C-1, C-2 and C-6 as the preferred final condition of the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project.	Identified a Preferred Alternative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) 	2009	To address comments on the DSEIS and provide additional documentation for supporting the City of Burlington's Preferred Alternative.	Current document.

A portion of the project was funded by the 1966 Legislature, and was opened to traffic in 1971 as a two-lane road from Manhattan Drive to North Avenue. The magnitude of the remainder of the Belt Line project, the extent of right-of-way acquisition on the lakefront, residential displacement in the Old North End, and lack of funding led to a consensus in the City that the Belt Line was too large and disruptive an undertaking to pursue as a whole. The City of Burlington was, however, still interested in improving access to the CBD from the south, and favored building the section of the Belt Line from I-189 to Main Street. In 1974, the City of Burlington contracted with a consulting engineering firm to develop a proposed arterial. The consultant's work, completed early in 1975, proposed a four-lane, undivided street with at-grade intersections. A section of new roadway, generally along the Belt Line route, was proposed to connect I-189 with Pine Street north of Flynn Avenue. In that proposal, Pine Street would be widened northerly to Pine Place, where the arterial would diverge and connect with the southern terminus of Battery Street in the CBD.

At that time, the City of Burlington named this conceptual new highway the Southern Connector to disassociate it from the Belt Line concept that had lost public support. In September 1975, the City of Burlington requested Urban Systems funding for the project from the federal government.

In 1976, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in consultation with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), agreed to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address the proposal. A Citizens Committee representing South Burlington and Burlington was established to provide input during the planning process. Preparation of a DEIS began in 1976. The DEIS stated that the need for the Southern Connector project was generated by the lack of a continuous north-south travel route providing access between the southeast corner of the City of Burlington, near the junction of I-189 and U.S. Route 7, and the CBD.

As part of the DEIS effort, subsurface geotechnical borings were extracted in wetland areas adjacent to the Pine Street Barge Canal. The borings encountered traces of oil, the presence of which was recorded in the 1977 DEIS. The DEIS review comments from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggested a need to determine the nature and extent of the oil-contamination detected in the borings and recommended that measures be included to protect water quality. Contaminated material was to be excavated and disposed of during construction.

After public review and comment on the 1977 DEIS and a Corridor Hearing, VTrans recommended a New Location Alternative as the Selected Alternative. The reasons for the recommendation included superior traffic service through control of access, greater diversion of traffic from existing streets and avoidance of socio-economic disruption. The FEIS, completed in July of 1979 and approved by FHWA, documents the issues involved in this selection.

An application for a development permit under Act 250 (Title 10 V.S.A. Chapter 1511) was filed by VTrans in the Spring of 1980 for the 1979 FEIS Selected Alternative. The presence of oil-contaminated material and the proposed method for treating the soil was an unresolved issue during the Act 250 permit hearings. However, a permit was issued in the Spring of 1981.

The presence of coal gasification waste was recorded during project development. Due to concerns over the presence of the wastes, and the potential for further contamination, the Pine Street Barge Canal area was proposed for inclusion on the EPA's first National Priorities List (NPL) of hazardous waste sites published in October 1981 as a Superfund Site. The Site was officially included on the NPL in 1983, making it eligible for funding of site investigation and remediation activities under the EPA's Superfund program. The EPA then commenced to study the site, currently identified as the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site.

The Burlington Urban Design Study (BUDS) was initiated in the spring of 1983. As initially proposed, its goal was to study design possibilities for the waterfront; however, BUDS quickly evolved to include studies of other critical aspects of the City of Burlington. BUDS was an effort to consider the future of the City and its surrounding areas and to offer recommendations for the future development of the City of Burlington. Its primary goals were to draft long range plans for how a city should grow and to determine what of the existing fabric should be maintained and enhanced. From January to June 1985, task leaders conducted intensive studies of issues ranging from the Southern Connector and Building Heights to Community Gardens and Prototype Housing.

BUDS contributed to several design modifications for the Southern Connector, as discussed below:

1. Reduction of the typical section from a four-lane to a two-lane roadway
2. Landscaping, including the use of a median divider and "green space";
3. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations; and
4. Use of colored paver block crosswalks and decorative lighting fixtures.

In 1984, a DSEIS for the Southern Connector was circulated that focused on issues related to the hazardous waste assessment conducted to date on the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site, and the implications of the soil contamination on the portion of the Selected Alternative (i.e., the C-8 Section) which traversed the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site.

In 1985, the EPA initiated an Emergency Remedial Action consisting of removal of approximately 1,500 tons of coal tar, contaminated soil, and sediment from the

Maltex Pond portion of the Site and capping of the excavated area. Although VTrans conducted several remediation investigations of the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site as part of the 1984 DSEIS, none of the remediation proposals developed met with the EPA's approval. In 1986, the EPA assumed Lead Agency status and became responsible for conducting all further investigations at the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site. Therefore, the FSEIS was not developed and the 1984 DSEIS was subsequently withdrawn.

The construction of the C-1 Section was completed in the late 1980's under the approval granted in the 1979 FEIS, with the exception of final pavement overlay, signs, pavement markings, a bike path and landscaping. The development of a remediation plan for the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site delayed the construction of the C-2 Section and the C-8 Section. The C-1 Section, west of U.S. Route 7, has never been opened to traffic.

During the late 1980's, VTrans began to study interim routing alternatives which would bypass the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site, and provide an interim facility to address the short-term purpose and need of the project. This effort identified alternatives using Lakeside Avenue and Pine Street as the primary transportation corridor. The proposal to expand the existing street system as the primary transportation corridor resulted in potential impacts to Burlington's Street Department building, which had been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Coordination also continued during this period with Vermont Railway, Inc. (VTR), whose rail yard operations would be impacted by any of the interim routing alternatives being considered.

In 1988, the EPA initiated a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site. An initial RI/FS was prepared by PEER Consultants in 1990, and a Supplemental RI/FS was prepared by Metcalf & Eddy in 1992, which attempted to delineate the nature and extent of the site contamination. The investigation area was bordered by Lakeside Avenue to the south, Lake Champlain to the west, the VTR and Curtis Lumber (formerly Gregory Supply Company) properties to the north, and Pine Street to the east.

In November, 1992, the EPA announced that their preferred remedy for the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site would consist of construction of a containment/disposal facility (CDF) over the most contaminated area of the site for long-term management of contaminated soil, dredged sediment, and free-phase product.

In June, 1993, the EPA, in response to overwhelming negative public comments, formally and officially discontinued pursuit of their proposed remedy. In the summer of 1993, the EPA invited local government, public interest groups, and other concerned parties to join a "Pine Street Barge Canal Coordinating Council". The

intent of the Council was to identify remedial response alternatives that would meet the EPA's goals for human health and ecological risk reduction in a manner more compatible with community concerns. The Council is still active and continues to meet and sponsor technical workgroup meetings through which the public and other stakeholders in the Superfund process can participate in investigative and remedial planning.

During the 1990's, the Burlington City Council began referring to the project as the Champlain Parkway rather than the Southern Connector.

In 1994, the City of Burlington contracted with Resource Systems Group, Inc. (RSG) to complete a transportation modeling and traffic operations study. The study focused on assessing the impacts of an interim C-2 Section and the routing of traffic around the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site. The study identified the C-6 Section as a potential interim solution. Additional traffic analyses were performed by VTrans in 1995 and 1996.

In January, 1995, VTrans and FHWA initiated efforts to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), which was focused on documenting the impacts associated with an interim routing of traffic around the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site. Five alternatives and a No-Build Alternative were evaluated. The proposed improvements were intended to provide an interim solution to route traffic around the Superfund Site until remediation measures at the site could be identified and implemented, allowing completion of the previously proposed Selected Alternative approved in the 1979 FEIS.

In July, 1995, a DSEIS was prepared and circulated by VTrans and FHWA for comment. A Public Informational Hearing was held on August 21, 1995 in Burlington, Vermont. The 1995 DSEIS stated, "the purpose of the approved Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway is to improve access from the vicinity of the intersection of I-189 and U.S. Route 7 to the Burlington CBD and the downtown waterfront area; and to improve circulation, alleviate capacity overburdens, and improve safety on local streets in the project study area".

The 1996 Burlington Municipal Development Plan identified the following objectives of the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project:

- To remove trucks from residential streets and serve as a designated truck route. This would be augmented by passage of a Truck Routing Ordinance;
- To remove through-traffic from residential streets by serving as an alternative route into the City. This would be augmented by development of a Traffic Calming Plan for the South End neighborhoods; and

- To blend into adjacent residential neighborhoods with no more than two travel lanes, narrow widths, a low design speed and speed limits, sensitive streetscape design, and safe pedestrian crossings. Sound barriers and fences would not be used.

In addition, the 1996 Municipal Development Plan recognized the multiple design and community objectives that needed to be considered during the planning stages of roadway projects. Access, neighborhood and design objectives were identified in the Municipal Development Plan as important considerations against which each roadway project needs to be measured against. The Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway is consistent with the three 1996 Municipal Development Plan's goals and meets the planning objectives.

On March 7, 1996, a Public Information Meeting was held in Burlington, Vermont with the purpose of obtaining additional public comment on the proposed project. A major issue discussed at this meeting, which had surfaced following the circulation of the 1995 DSEIS, was focused on the need for four-lanes versus two-lanes on the C-2 Section.

Responses to comments on the 1995 DSEIS were presented in the 1997 FSEIS. In February, 1997, an FSEIS was prepared by VTrans selecting a preferred interim alternative routing traffic around the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site. In May, 1997, VTrans and the City of Burlington held a Public Hearing. In August, 1997, FHWA issued a ROD, which approved the interim Selected Alternative, included a statement of commitments and mitigation, and included responses to public comments on the 1997 FSEIS.

On October 21, 1998, the City of Burlington and VTrans executed an agreement delegating the responsibilities for the continued development of the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project to the City of Burlington.

On February 10, 1999, the City of Burlington held a Public Meeting at Contois Auditorium, City Hall, to announce the kick-off of the City of Burlington's management of the project.

On September 8, 1999, the City of Burlington held a public Open House to identify key issues that would need to be resolved during the development of the design.

In October, 1999, the City of Burlington contracted with a consulting engineering firm to provide design engineering services for the development and construction of the Selected Interim Alternative for the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway as described in the 1997 ROD.

On June 21, 2000, the City of Burlington held a Public Information Meeting at the Champlain Elementary School in Burlington, Vermont. The purpose of the meeting was to identify areas of public concern along the proposed alignment and to obtain any additional comments from the public prior to beginning the conceptual design.

On November 9, 2000, the City of Burlington held a Public Information Meeting at the Burlington Department of Public Works (DPW) building. The meeting provided the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed improvements and discuss the design components regarding lane and shoulder configurations, bicycle accommodations and signal placement.

The 2001 Burlington Municipal Development Plan carried forward the same objectives of the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project that were identified in the 1996 Municipal Development Plan. These objectives include the removal of trucks from residential streets, development of a traffic calming plan for the South End neighborhoods, and to blend the project into adjacent residential neighborhoods with no more than two travel lanes.

In 2001, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission identified the following goals for transportation, including the following which would be addressed by the proposed project:

- Preserve, maintain, and improve existing transportation facilities, particularly main access corridors and bridges.
- Complete the major access corridor improvements, as well as other similar projects included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), in ways that support the goals of this plan. Many of these projects have been in the planning stages for many years and are projects upon which the communities have based their local plans. These include the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway, Circumferential Highway, Shelburne Road reconstruction, Limekiln Bridge, Exit 13, and others in the TIP.
- Expand the network of sidewalks and bike paths where appropriate to improve the mobility and safety of pedestrians and bikers.

In March, 2002, the City of Burlington formalized their efforts to modify the 1979 Selected Alternative and the 1997 Selected Interim Alternative as a result of public comments and the City of Burlington's preferences to blend the roadway design into the surrounding neighborhoods. Specifically, the roadway typical section would be reduced from a four-lane roadway to a two-lane roadway. The City of Burlington and VTrans also agreed to formally abandon the C-8 Section through the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site, and designate the C-1 Section, C-2 Section and C-6

Section as the permanent alignment for the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway (See Appendix 1).

In August, 2003, the City of Burlington, VTrans and FHWA initiated the development of a new Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to facilitate and accomplish the modifications to the project.

In October, 2005, VTrans recommended that the City of Burlington consider an alternative that would consist of the C-1 Section and C-2 Section only, with improvements on Lakeside Avenue to Pine Street. This alternative would consider minor operational improvements within the existing right-of-way of Pine Street from Lakeside Avenue to Main Street (See Appendix 1).

In November, 2005, the Burlington City Council passed a resolution supporting the evaluation of VTrans' recommended alternative as shown in the 2006 DSEIS (See Appendix 1).

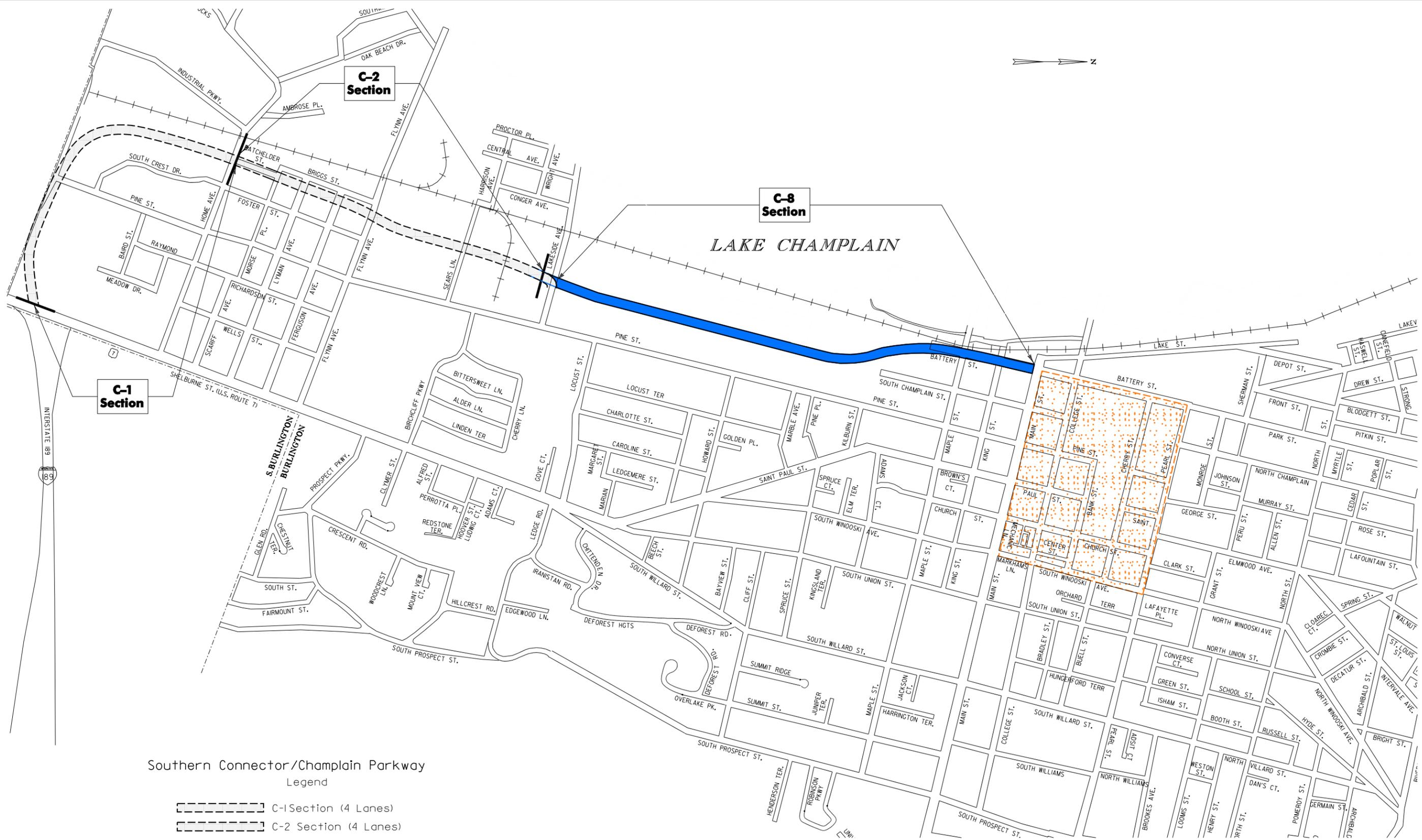
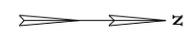
On November 1, 2006, the City of Burlington, VTrans and FHWA circulated the 2006 DSEIS for public and agency comment. The 2006 DSEIS identified Build Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative. A Public Hearing was held on November 30, 2006 at the Champlain Elementary School in Burlington, Vermont. Subsequent to the Public Hearing, the City of Burlington continued to evaluate potential alternatives to provide access between Pine Street and Battery Street, similar to Build Alternative 1, as described in the 2006 DSEIS. After substantial investigation and coordination with Federal, State and local agencies, it was determined that any alternative similar to Build Alternative 1 would result in greater environmental impacts when compared to Build Alternative 2. Therefore, the City of Burlington is continuing to identify Build Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative. The responses to public and agency comments are contained in this 2009 FSEIS.

1.3. Project Description

The Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project has been divided into several construction contracts, representing sections or portions of the entire project. It is not an uncommon practice to divide the construction of large transportation projects into multiple contracts. The three primary sections of the previously approved Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project are referred to as the C-1 Section, the C-2 Section, and the C-8 Section. These were presented in the 1979 FEIS.

Within the limits of the C-8 Section, a two-lane roadway on an alternative alignment was introduced in the 1995 DSEIS as an interim corridor to avoid the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site until the C-8 Section could be constructed. This alternative alignment was referred to as the C-6 Section.

The sections of the project are illustrated on Figure 1-2, and described below:



Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway

Legend

-  C-1 Section (4 Lanes)
-  C-2 Section (4 Lanes)
-  C-8 Section (4 Lanes)
-  Burlington City Center District (CCD)

Scale: 1"=1000'

Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway MEGC-M5000(1)

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FIGURE 1-2

1979 FEIS SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

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- The C-1 Section consisted of reconstruction of the I-189/Shelburne Street (U.S. Route 7) interchange, and construction of the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway to approximately Home Avenue for a length of approximately 0.6 mile. This portion of the project has been constructed as a four-lane facility, but never opened to traffic.
- The C-2 Section would commence at the northern terminus of the C-1 Section, near Home Avenue, and extend northerly for a length of approximately 0.7 mile, as far as Lakeside Avenue. A four-lane concept for this portion of the project was previously designed, and the right-of-way acquisition limits that corresponded to that design have been acquired.
- The C-8 Section is the alignment through what was later identified as the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site. Under separate actions the EPA has implemented a remediation plan at this designated Superfund Site.

In addition to the 1979 Selected Alternative, an interim Selected Alternative was approved in the 1997 FSEIS. This is illustrated on Figure 1-3, and described below:

- The C-6 Section was the proposal to temporarily route traffic around the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site utilizing the existing city-street network and the proposed connection between Pine Street and Battery Street known as the Battery Street Extension. The interim C-6 Section commences at the terminus of the C-2 Section at Lakeside Avenue, and proceeds easterly along Lakeside Avenue to Pine Street. It then follows Pine Street to Pine Place, departs Pine Street near the former Burlington Street Department property, and continues northwesterly to the intersection of Battery Street and Maple Street. From this intersection, the C-6 Section continues on Battery Street, northerly to Main Street. It should be noted that this is the same terminus of the C-8 Section.

It should also be noted that there is no C-3 Section, C-4 Section, C-5 Section or C-7 Section.

1.4. Statement of the Project Need

The City of Burlington extends for approximately seven miles along the eastern shore of Lake Champlain in Chittenden County, Vermont. As the City has grown from its late 18th century beginnings, the transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with development, resulting in a number of highway deficiencies. One of the most distinct deficiencies has been the evolution of a city-wide street pattern with few north/south travel routes that are continuous.

This deficiency is particularly pronounced in the southern end of the City, on streets that carry traffic between the U.S. Route 7 (Shelburne Street) interchange on I-189 and the CCD. The intersection of two Principal Arterial highways, I-189 and U.S. Route 7, is a focal point of traffic moving north and south, to and from downtown Burlington and points east.

Shelburne Street is the northerly extension of U.S. Route 7 into Burlington. As it proceeds to its north end at the intersection of St. Paul Street and South Union Street, Shelburne Street carries four lanes of traffic, plus turning lanes, for approximately two thirds of the distance between the I-189 interchange and the CCD. The traffic volumes on this section of Shelburne Street are on the order of 24,000 vehicles per day (two-way) based on Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) 2002 traffic data. This section of Shelburne Street is also heavily developed with commercial properties, most of which have direct access onto U.S. Route 7; therefore, traffic wishing to proceed into the CCD or through the City is heavily congested.

Motorists wishing to avoid the traffic impediments on Shelburne Street often times divert from this primary thoroughfare onto the local street network in an attempt to bypass the congestion. For these reasons, the principal alternate routes into the CCD from the south are St. Paul Street, which extends from the north end of Shelburne Street; and Pine Street, which parallels St. Paul Street and Shelburne Street.

St. Paul Street and South Union Street are both two-lane residential streets which commence at the Y-intersection at the northern terminus of Shelburne Street (refer to Figure 1-2). South Union Street is narrower than St. Paul Street, does not provide direct access to the CCD, and is restricted to one-way northbound traffic, between King Street and Main Street. South Winooski Avenue, which diverges from St. Paul Street, is also a narrow, residential street, limited by one-way traffic restrictions. As a result, St. Paul Street carries the majority of traffic between Shelburne Street and the CCD. However, St. Paul Street does not have adequate capacity for the traffic it is forced to carry.

Pine Street provides a continuous and direct route from the southern end of the City to the CCD. Beginning at its southern terminus with Queen City Park Road and continuing north to Flynn Avenue, Pine Street is a two-lane residential street. North of Flynn Avenue, Pine Street continues to be a two-lane roadway, but the character of the area changes. With the exception of the Jackson Terrace Apartments and the Champlain Elementary School, Pine Street is lined with commercial businesses and light industrial uses between Flynn Avenue and Kilburn Street. As Pine Street continues north to Main Street and the CCD, the area returns to a high-density residential neighborhood. Pine Street is highly desirable as an additional north-south route providing access between the CCD and points to the south.

However, Pine Street has no direct connection to the two Principal Arterials, I-189 and U.S. Route 7. Pine Street is only accessible by traffic migrating to and from Shelburne Street over local, residential streets which include Home Avenue, Lyman Avenue, Ferguson Avenue, Flynn Avenue, Birchcliff Parkway, Locust Street and Howard Street. These local streets are not intended to, nor do they have the capacity to carry the volume of traffic which is diverted from arterial or collector systems.

In addition, the existing street pattern encourages use of neighborhood streets by trucks due to the lack of alternative routings. This mix of traffic has created conflict and access concerns in the vicinity of the C-2 Section neighborhoods, and the King Street/Maple Street neighborhood, located at the north end of Pine Street. These conditions have caused congestion and resulted in safety and neighborhood concerns throughout the southwestern quadrant of the City of Burlington. The need for the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project was identified by studies conducted early in the history of the project, as discussed in Section 1.2.

The need to improve traffic flow has neither abated nor has it been addressed in the 30 years since the 1979 FEIS was approved. It is necessary that a facility be constructed to service the routing of traffic through or around the Pine Street Barge Canal Superfund Site, to provide relief of congestion and improve safety in the southwestern quadrant of Burlington.

In summary, the existing problems and deficiencies that have been identified are:

1. Congestion (including insufficient capacity to appropriately service traffic volumes and provide appropriate access);
2. Safety concerns created by vehicles utilizing roadways that functionally operate at a higher classification than intended, both along the minor arterials and in neighborhood areas which are acting as short-cuts; and
3. Mix of local and through-traffic in neighborhood areas (including truck traffic) created by a lack of a north/south arterial to access the CCD.

1.5. Project Purpose

The purpose of the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project is to improve access from the vicinity of the interchange of I-189 and U.S. Route 7 to the Burlington CCD and the downtown waterfront area; and to improve circulation, alleviate capacity overburdens, improve safety on local streets in the project study area and provide traffic relief in the southwestern quadrant of the City of Burlington.

The purpose of the project is also to eliminate the disruption to local neighborhoods and separate the local and through-traffic. Truck traffic that is destined for the CCD or the industrial areas accessed from Home Avenue and Flynn Avenue would be directed onto the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway and removed from the local street network. The proposed transportation corridor is expected to become the major routing for north-south through-traffic in the area. The reassignment of the majority of through-traffic to this route would reduce traffic volume levels along neighborhood streets and improve accessibility to adjacent neighborhood areas.