

HB 854 – VT State House 2015

Quechee Gorge Bridge Bill

Regina-Anne Cooper, MPH

Today's presentation:

- ✳ My Background
- ✳ Background of Problem
- ✳ Bill Process
- ✳ Current Status

Then:

Med Student

Working ~70 hours wk in hospital

Mom of identical twins

Now:

Work for CMS QIO contract

Director Derek Cooper Fund

Volunteer - Community Groups,

Community service,

Facilitate faith-based community groups

My
Background



Background of problem:

All photo citations at end of presentation





PHOTOS: Another jumper shuts down Quechee Gorge





Legislative Bill Process

Identify the problem

- Narrower the scope the better

Why is this a problem?

Why would state government or public care?

How many lives lost or impacted by problem?

Can you produce and define evidenced based or primary source data? Published journal articles?

Experts/SMEs?

Who are your legislative partners?

Do you, or your advocates and experts, have resilience, energy, and sustainability to possibly spend decades fighting this issue?

Bill Process: Your competition

Average of 2000 proposed bills accepted per legislative session (year)

Legislature can only accept less than 100 to review

Roughly 60 are selected for consideration for Bill Introduction

Roughly 10-25 out of the 2000 make it through process to hearings.

Approximately 5 Final Bills a year are passed into law.

Average time introduction to bill signing: 25 years (or, ~ 5 Bill Introduction attempts)

Success rates of bill passing: ~10% of Introduced Bills become law

Barriers: Naysayers, opposition, bill fatigue, re-writes

Center for Health and Learning



- * Connected via recommendation of employer and previous NH legislative or Trauma (efforts) stakeholders
- * Involved early in process
- * Served as Advocate for Bill process
- * Guidance, spot checking progress
- * Assisted legislative sponsors with Letter (Bill Introduction)

Letter of Bill Introduction

- Develop your social media strategy, email lists, supporters, champions
- Find experts to help you, be a voice of authority on the topic
- Write the rough draft
- Meet with your local Representatives or Legislators
 - Ask for two sponsors

Social Media Plan/Campaign for Success:

Diffusion of Innovation model works best.



Identify champions willing to write news articles, Social Media memes, post, call, email.

Be consistent in messaging.

Be relentless. Send, and Send again, and Send again, until you get a Reply.

Contact press.

Center for Health and Learning



- * Assistance from CHL draft Bill Introduction email campaign
- * Helped draft mass email for DOI campaign
- * Provided guidance and recommendations for DOI potential Champions and 'contact groups'
- * Served as SME
- * Served as Bill Sponsor organization
- * Helped us as a grieving family
- * Assisted with data gathering, research articles search

Center for Health and Learning



- * Key player in Diffusion of Innovation for messaging, communications
- * Guidance, spot checking progress
- * Editing bill, assistance with written part of legislation
- * Guidance with writing and rehearsing, coaching for live testimony
- * Testified as SME
- * Remained engaged throughout process, until end.

Data:

Gather your data

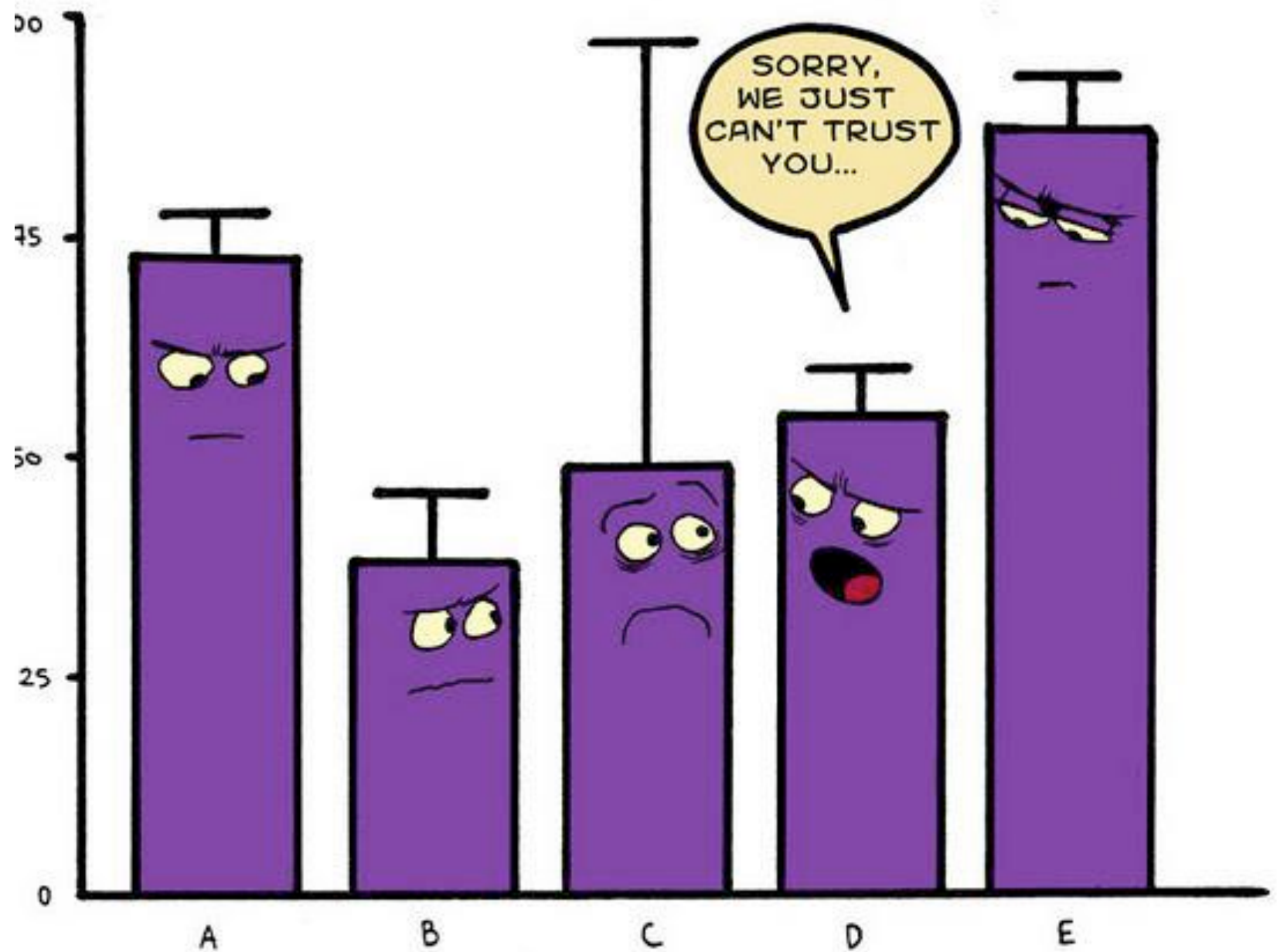
Evidenced based

Primary sourced

Journal articles (5 year limitation)

Obtain permission to use/publish
utilized data

Make understandable to public



Smart Plan for Letter of Bill Introduction:

No more than 2 pages.

Introduction: (About you, your sponsors, why you are bringing this to legislative attention, why this is an important problem to be addressed.)

SMEs/Experts: (Who are the experts willing to help you with this bill Introduction, Testify, or carrying forth results as SMEs for implementation?)


Bill Sponsors: Name them

Data: At this point, you need to have your data solidified and vetted

What are your expectations for successful outcomes of this bill?

Letter of Bill Introduction

Will have many drafts and rewrite requests prior to consideration.



If selected to be 'Read' by a committee, you can suggest which committees are the best fit.

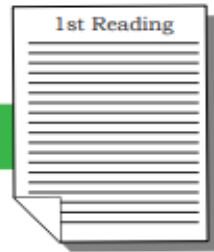


This needs to be your strongest, most solid part of the process.



If not written comprehensively or compellingly, won't go further.

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



BILL INTRODUCTION/ FIRST READING

Any legislator from either the House or Senate can sponsor a bill to amend Vermont law. The bill is assigned a number and then introduced on the floor of the sponsor's chamber during first reading.



OTHER CHAMBER CONSIDERATION

After passage in one chamber, the bill remains in that chamber for one legislative day and then the bill — as it passed the first chamber — goes through the same process in the other chamber. If the second chamber proposes any amendments, the bill must go back to the first chamber so it can consider those proposed amendments, and the first chamber may agree to those amendments or agree and propose additional amendments.



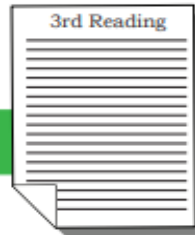
BILL REFERRAL

Upon first reading, the bill is referred to a standing committee of the chamber based on the bill's subject matter. The bill may be subsequently committed to other committees based on its subject matter.



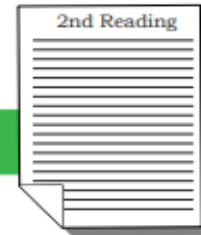
COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

If the committee decides to pursue the bill, the committee may take testimony on and recommend amendments to it. Committee votes on any amendments and whether to pass the bill out of committee are taken by majority vote.



THIRD READING

Third reading happens the legislative day after second reading and it is another chance for members of the chamber to propose amendments and debate the bill. After voting on any amendments and then reading the bill a third time, the chamber votes by majority vote on whether the bill should pass.



SECOND READING

After it is voted out of committee, the bill is sent to the chamber floor for second reading. A member of a committee to which the bill was referred or committed and considered will report the committee's recommendations; members of the chamber may propose amendments to the bill or to a committee's recommended amendments; and the bill and any amendments are debated. The chamber will take majority votes on any amendments and whether to read the bill a third time.



COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE

If the two chambers are unable to agree on the bill or the proposed amendments, a committee of conference may be appointed in which members of each chamber will attempt to reach agreement on a final version — called a committee of conference report — which is then submitted to both chambers for approval. The chambers cannot amend the committee of conference report and will adopt or reject it by majority vote.



GOVERNOR'S CONSIDERATION

If both chambers agree on a final version of the bill, the bill passes and it is sent to the Governor who normally will sign it into law, allow it to become law without his or her signature, or veto it. If the bill is vetoed, the House and Senate may override the veto by a two-thirds vote in each chamber.



BILL ENACTMENT

Once the Governor signs the bill into law or allows it to become law without his or her signature, or if the chambers successfully override the Governor's veto, the bill becomes an official law of Vermont and is assigned an act number.

Advocates and Sponsors

- CHL collaborated with sponsors
- Helped with last minute communications
- Helped keep us on track
- Helped us during grieving
- Provided guidance and rehearsal for testimony
- Assisted arranging order of testimony; choosing best speakers



Testimony

You may be asked questions posed from Committees.

You may be asked for more data, more evidence.

The Bill could get tossed out and Closed, or moves on in process.

Committees vote which Bills move into Legislature for votes.

Legislature votes on Bill. (Ours went through two rounds of voting with one re-write request before Passing the Legislature.)

If passed, Bill moves onto Senate.

Senate:

New to Bill, know nothing about it. Tougher group to convince. More at stake.

- If Accepted Return from Legislature, revote.
- Pass/Not Pass on to Governor.

Bill becomes State Law

9 PM night of Final Votes, Senate changes HB864 to be rolled into major Transportation Bill that is sure to pass.

10 PM HB 864 becomes a 'line item' add on rolled into TB, with new assigned number for both.

Sponsors now defer to lobbyists and larger bill sponsors.

12am: out of our hands as last arguments proceed.

Call from Governor's Office 4:32am

Bill was Signed into law 1:32 that morning.

Bringing A Law to Life

You think you're done, right...?

No!

What are your plans to fix the problem your law is meant to fix?

What did you propose in your bill?

What obstacles are in the way of launching the fix?

VT AOT

...and now the real hot mess begins...

- ★ Engineers hired by AOT discover a slew of 'issues' about the bridge
- ★ Out of ADA compliance
- ★ Bridge needs some under side work
- ★ Pedestrian walkway doesn't meet standards
- ★ Vehicle lanes out of compliance
- ★ Railings out of compliance
- ★ Who's gonna shovel the snow?
- ★ There's no cell signal for calling in suicide attempts

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/projects/quechee>

Community/stakeholder involvement

- * Committees formed of stakeholders, AOT, engineers
- * Stakeholders: businesses, VDH, CHL, victim families, town officials, first responder communities, FOD, The Haven, WUHS, colleges, DHMC
- * Emails, meetings (quarterly at first)
- * Media



- VTrans Home Page
- About the Project
- Schedule
- Document Library
- FAQs
- Contact Us



SCHEDULE

The Quechee Bridge Project is in the Preliminary Design phase. Plans will include rehabilitation of the historic steel arch to preserve it for future generations as well as improvements to the bridge deck, including a wider sidewalk with safety barrier.

QUECHEE BRIDGE PROJECT SCHEDULE



Structural steel deterioration.



Existing Bridge

- 3-Span Steel Deck Arch over Ottauquechee River
- Owned by State of Vermont
- Constructed in 1911 as a railroad bridge
- 1930s converted to a highway bridge
- 1972 project added 4'-2" sidewalks
- 1988 project replaced interior sections of deck
- 2018 temporary barrier fencing installed
- “Forever Bridge” due to the site and historical significance

2018 Structural Condition

Deck	7 - Good
Superstructure	5 - Fair
Substructure	6 - Satisfactory





Current Status

Temporary fence
installation completed
on October 30, 2018

April 8, 2019: Public
meeting to vote on
permanent fencing.

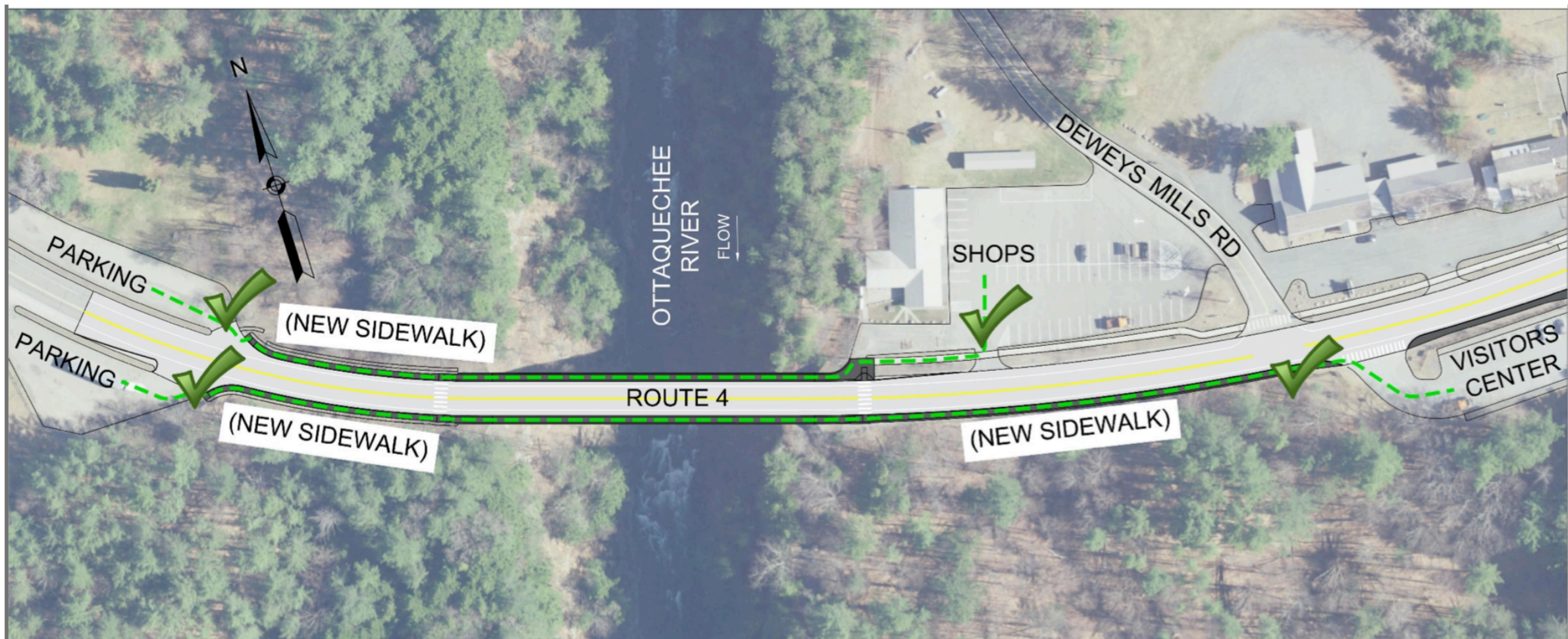
Epidemiology

No deaths since temp fence.

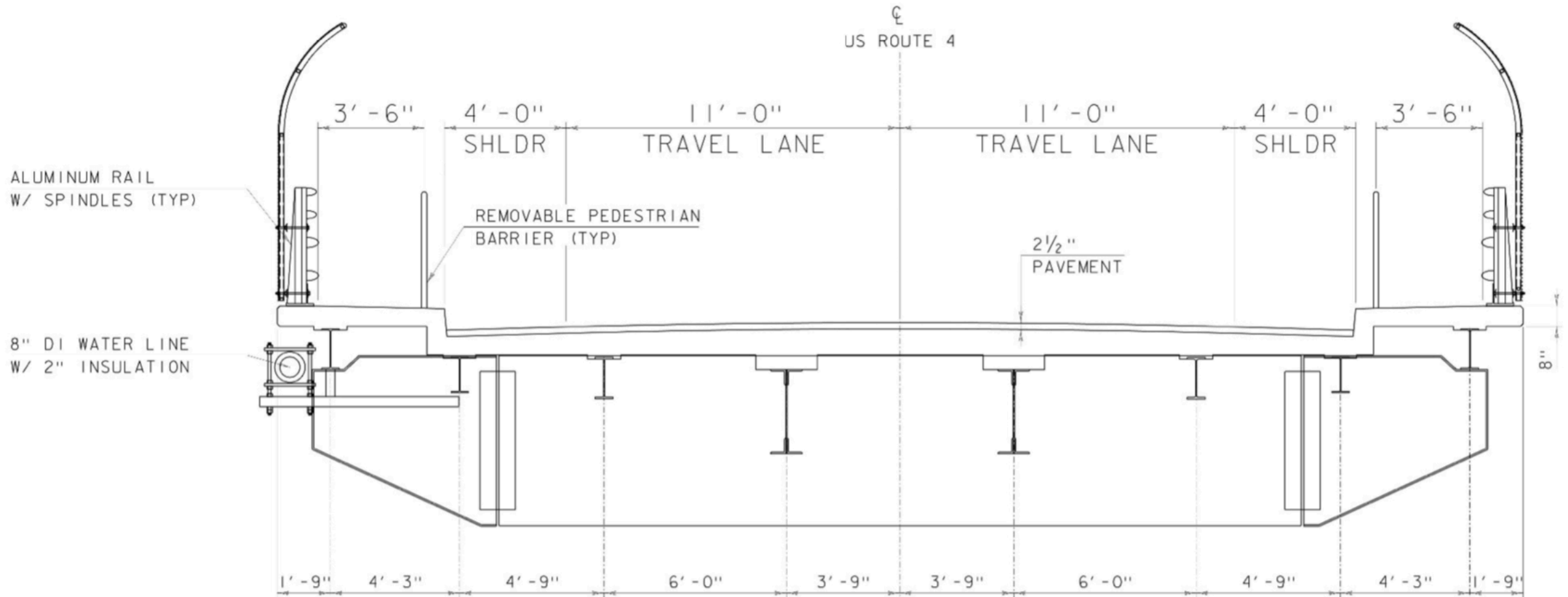
Two attempts since temp fence (November 2018 and May 16, 2019).

Only one phone call made using satellite cell station.

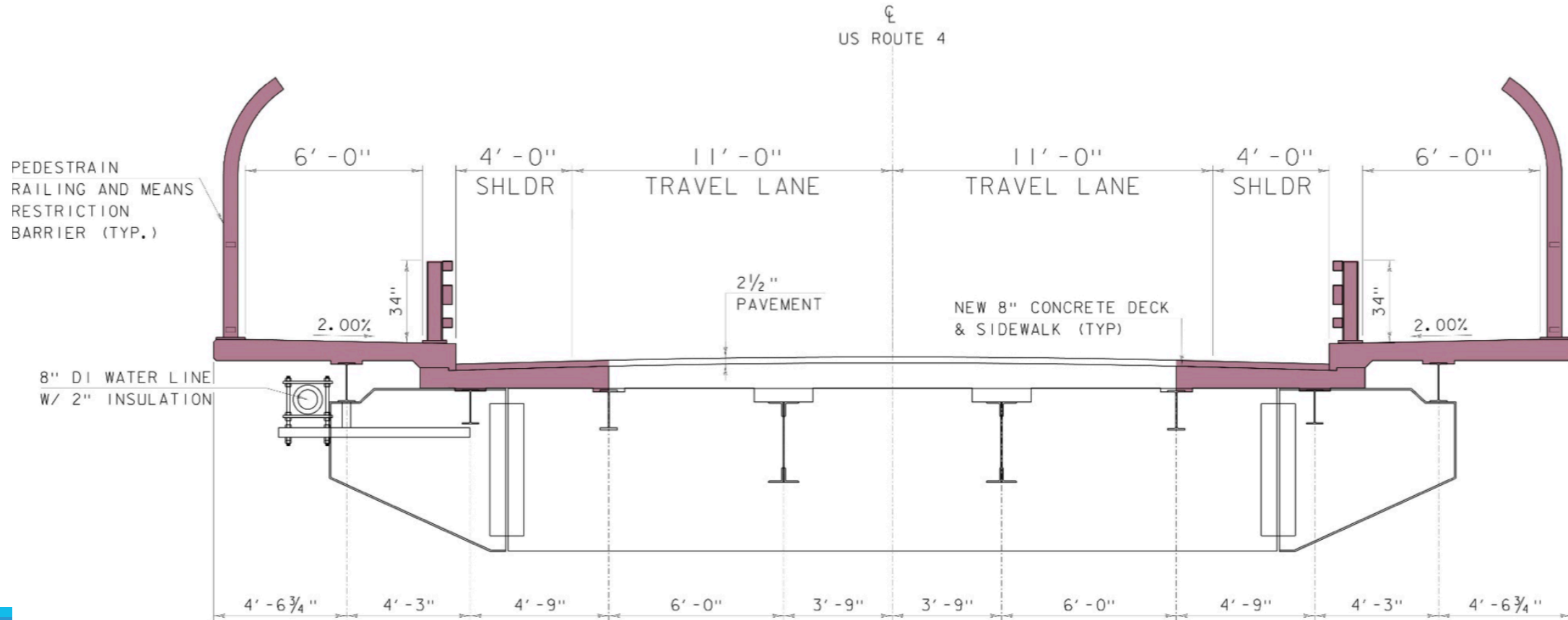
Increased cell signal strength > cell calls to 911.



Existing Bridge Cross Section



Proposed Bridge Cross Section



Option 2: Barrier Color – Green



Straight



Curved

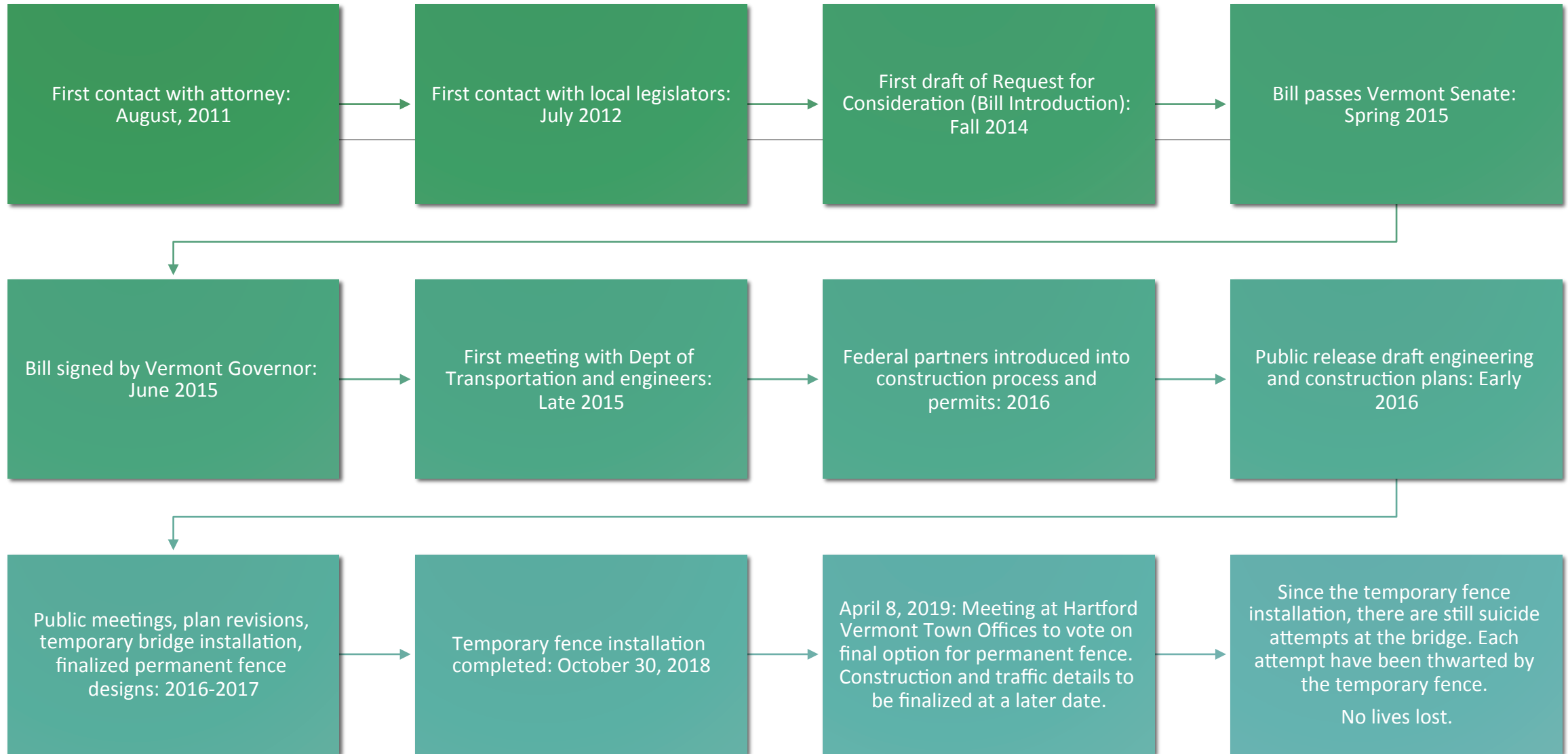


Angled

Option 2: Upper Barrier Treatment – Curved

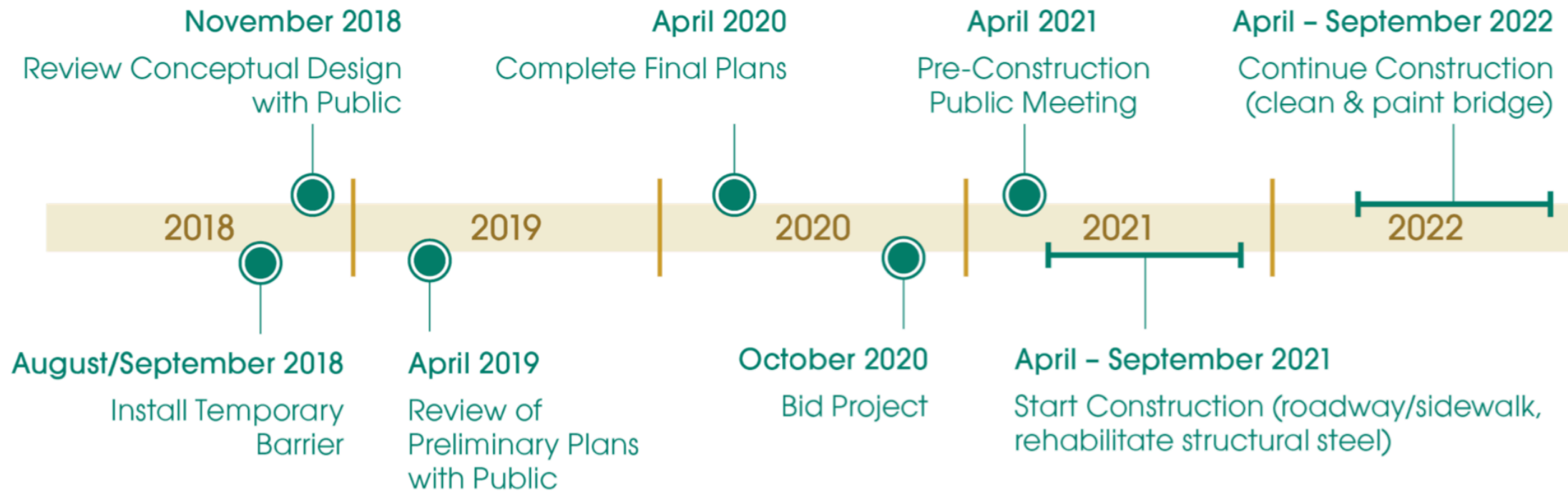


Timeline



Project Timeline Overview

QUECHEE BRIDGE PROJECT SCHEDULE



This Bill process was done to get from this...



...to this.





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Questions?

Thank You.

Photo sources:

https://www.google.com/search?q=derek+cooper+hartland+vt&tbm=isch&tbs=ring:CcsrBd4iGBvRIjgURFSMA-IQVFhAo41tTsoiZ8AD-G1LChjS908P1ee3ozzmJq-8weci_12TIWhq-1YUyMrsH4EYoNCoSCRREVIwD4hBUEbOjvYdDHUODKhIJWECjjW1OyiIRIbUyMEooHVsqEglNwAP4bUsKGBEiN6tTWfptOyoSCdL3Tw_1V57ejEcPUIhx0Rb3TKhIJPOYmr7zB5yIRBn3UH9OMf3kqEgn_1ZOVaGr79hRGNAJac4HA_1wSoSCTIyuwfgRig0ES_1ILQ2POkDo&tbo=u&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjT_tTipr7hAhUjVt8KHcacAScQ9C96BAGBEBg&biw=1280&bih=881&dpr=1#imgsrc=it6xWbPj5Q9oaM:

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<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/projectsites/quechee/Hartford%20%28Quechee%29%20Preliminary%20Design%20>