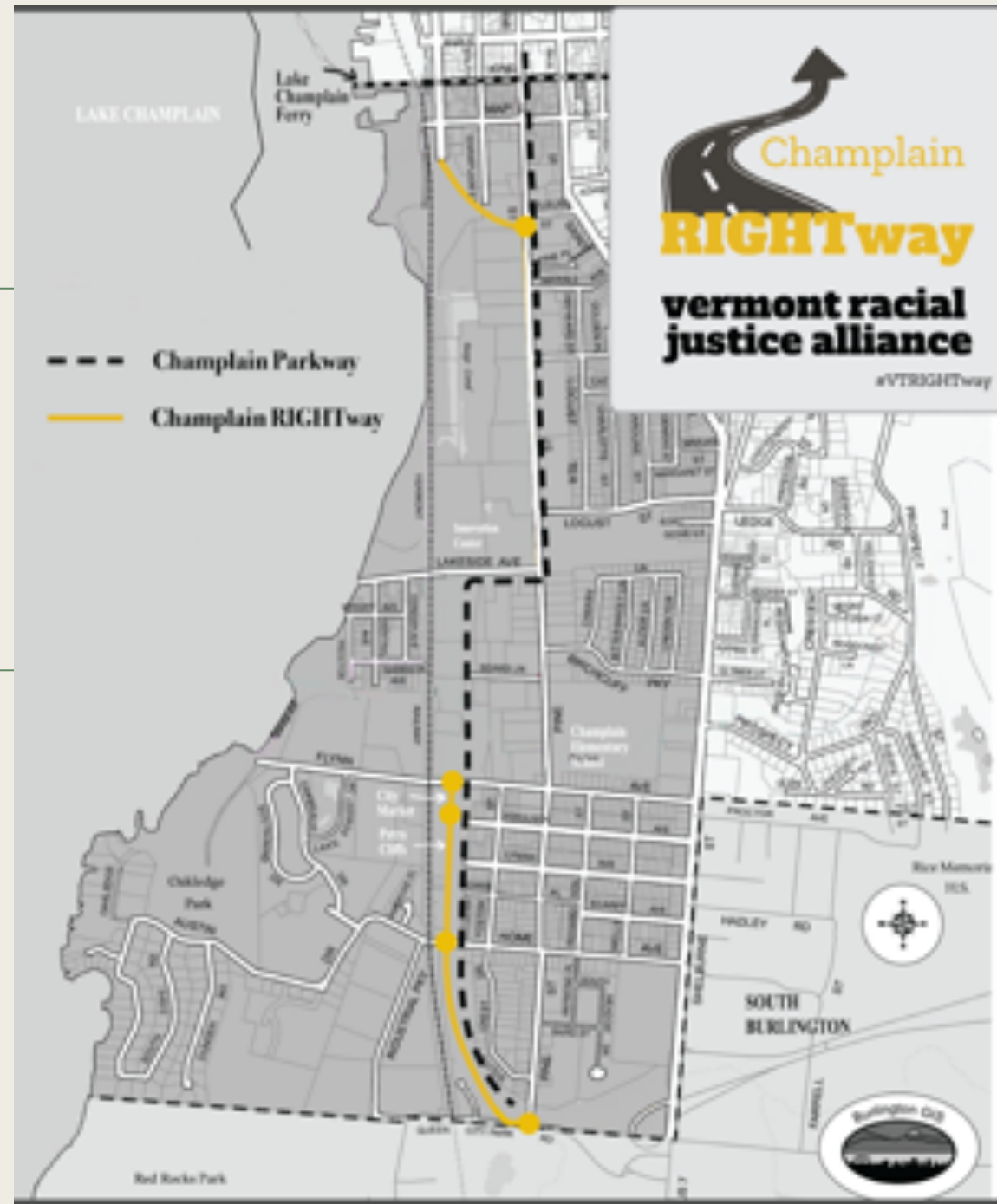




**vermont racial
justice alliance**

CHAMPLAIN RIGHTWAY

The Environmental+Justice Solution
Neighborhood Planning Assemblies
May 2021
Steve Goodkind and Tony Redington



What is the Champlain Parkway Project?

The Champlain Parkway when it originated in the 1960s, aimed to connect I-189, U.S Route 7 (Shelburne Street) and waterfront as part of a “Ring Road” around Burlington. The original design hoped to **improve traffic circulation, reduce traffic burdens in residential neighborhoods and improve motorist and pedestrian safety on local streets in the Southwestern section of the City.**

HOWEVER

As decades have gone by, the circumstances of traffic, urban planning, and cultural societal environment of the city has drastically changed—a new solution is necessary.

Quick “Ring Road” History:

- 1960s—four lane divided highway “ring road” around Burlington
- I 189 to continued from Shelburne Road as “Champlain Parkway onto the waterfront then through Old North End to the “Beltway”, VT 127
- The “Circumferential Highway” completes the “Ring Road” from Beltway in Colchester via to VT 289 to I 89 at Williston—community opposition caused Governor Shumlin to cancel the Circumferential Highway in 2011

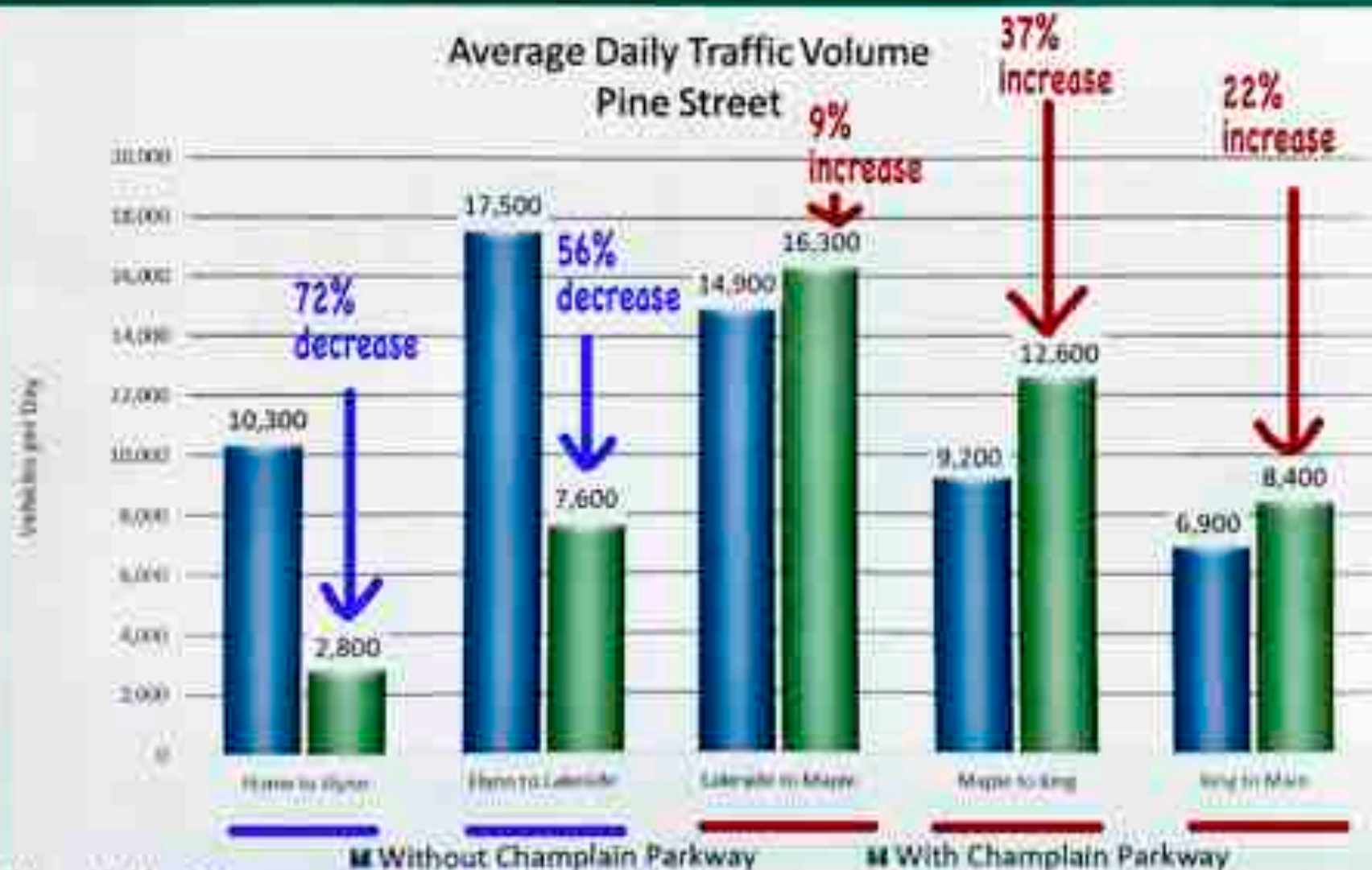
- Traffic to Maple/King neighborhood would increase to **12,600 vehicles per day**, a **37% increase in traffic** in neighborhoods housing minority and low-income families with children.
- **The project would increase the traffic and disruption to the Maple-King neighborhoods as well as the Lakeside neighborhood and those along Pine Street.** The Project also **fails** to meet the goal of improving circulation, mobility, and safety on local streets in the study area.
- The proposed plan would further eliminate parking, create risks of floodplains, add to global warming, potentially release hazardous materials from the soil and add to noise and air pollution.

The project itself malignantly ignores the affected low-income community, marginalizes the affected minority community and fails to consider public health impacts and the quality of neighborhood character.



Students enter a.m. school bus at Pine/Maple Streets Intersection (all-way stops)

Vehicle Traffic Volume



Notes edited by C. Bates.

How does it affect YOU?

- Constant traffic flow and lack of appropriate bike/pedestrian facilities creates safety risks in our communities. **Heavy traffic reduces the quality of life and diminishes the ability of area residents to enjoy walking and biking** for health, fun, or transportation. **More traffic means higher risk of pedestrian fatalities. Adding 6 traffic signals means more pedestrian injuries and delay for all.**
- The project as proposed would **create a wall** bisecting the community from north to south, **creating a divided community which isolates neighbors.** The vibrant sidewalk life we have today promotes tolerance and diversity, create safe spaces for families, and nourish an engaged community. This will be destroyed.
- The environmental implications of the release hazardous materials from the soil and additional noise and air pollution, will create an unpleasant and dangerous community to live in.



We are watching a state and city government **completely disregard an environmental justice concern**, and knowingly add risk to a minority and low income community. If we have learned anything in 2020 it is, this divide cannot continue. It does not have to happen to you, for you to care.

But can we change this?

The Environmental Impact Statement is beyond insufficient, ignoring the environmental justice impacts of throwing additional commercial traffic into minority communities.

The FHWA, VTrans, and City of Burlington are re-considering the present proposal.

This gives us the opportunity to become part of the decision make process, and have our voices heard, proposing new alternatives.

“We would rather promote car alternatives and more effective traffic routes, rather than disrupt our communities for more car traffic.”

--Pine Street Coalition comments on EIS

One of several Champlain Parkway Environmental In-Justice “disproportionate impacts” on the King Maple neighborhood as clear as day:

Traffic increase in King Maple on Pine St: **Up 37%**

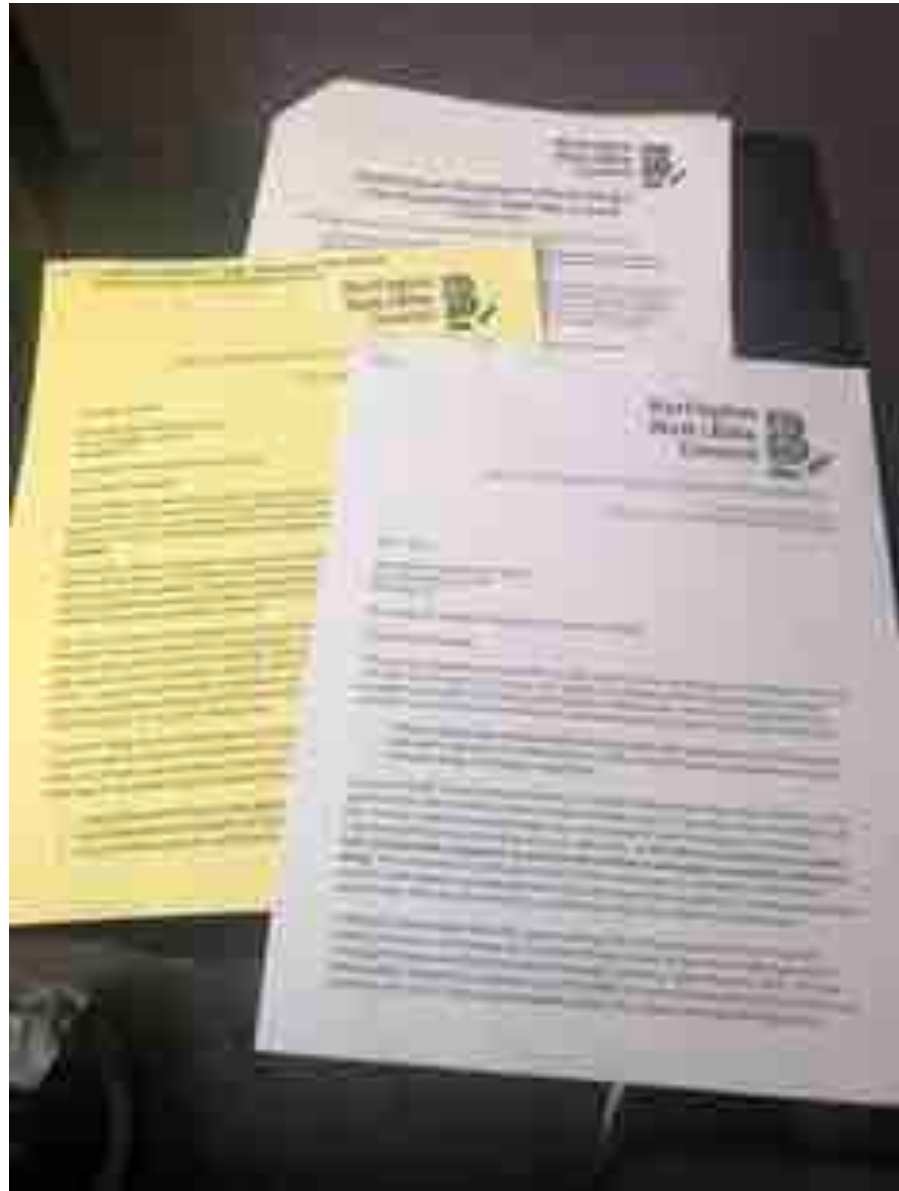
Traffic decrease below Flynn Ave on Pine St: **Down 72%**

King Maple Census (Tract 10) Percentage of
Low/Moderate Income Residents: **77%**

All Burlington South of Flynn Avenue Census
(Tract 11) Percentage of Low/Moderate
Income Residents: **34%**

First Things First: Railyard then Redesigned Parkway Elements!! Put King Maple First!!

- Pine Street this month for the first time calls for building the “Railyard Enterprise Project” (Railyard) between Curtis Lumber/Kilburn St and Battery Street first, thereby immediately cutting King Maple neighborhood, traffic congestion, delay, pollution as well as markedly improving quality of life, safe and comfortable movement within the neighborhood.
- Then, second, build the redesigned balance of the Champlain RIGHTway elements in accordance with the principles and recommendations set by the Pine Street Coalition.
- Putting Railyard first insures Parkway will not cut King Maple in two! Reverses the already existing blatant environmental and economic injustice!





Example of Champlain RIGHTway (left), separate bikeway and sidewalk (right)—Santa Barbara, CA

Champlain RIGHTway 3 elements

1. NORTH: Pine Street from Marble Avenue to Main. The North element of the Champlain RIGHTway consists of the northern segment of what the NEPA process calls Alternative 1, which is otherwise now called the Railyard Enterprise Project. This element relieves traffic congestion from the Maple-King neighborhood – a black and immigrant community which is also a registered historic district and designated by the Governor as a low-income area—avoiding King Maple had been a compelling goal for the project until abandoned by the City in 2009.

2. CENTRAL: Flynn Avenue to Pine Street at Marble Avenue. The Central element of the Champlain RIGHTway comprises pedestrian and bikeway construction along the project right-of-way to Lakeside, and along Lakeside and Pine Street from northwards. This element supports the City's commitment to green infrastructure, avoids truncating access to residential and vital economic areas with failed traffic conditions at Lakeside, supporting both the environment and innovative growth.

3. SOUTH: Route 7 at I-189 to Flynn Avenue. The Southern element of the Champlain RIGHTway is effectively the existing C-1 section of the Southern Connector (the “road to nowhere”) amended with a roundabout rather than dead-ending Pine Street, plus construction to Flynn Avenue, all with a cost-saving smaller tarmac profile. This element relieves congestion and truck traffic from the Home-Flynn neighborhood and provides easy access to the South End's growing industrial hub.

Champlain RIGHTway is a multi-modal transportation improvements alternative to the **obsolete, environmentally harmful and racially unjust** Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway proposal.



ROUNABOUT TYPE AT PARKWAY/FLYNN AND PARKWAY/CITY MARKET SOUTH END—SEPARATE BIKE & PED

Champlain RIGHTway will

- bring **relief from traffic congestion** to both the King-Maple and Home-Flynn neighborhoods without harm and injustice to the City's cohesive Black and immigrant community;
- facilitate truck traffic to the South End's industrial hubs to **support economic vitality**;
- eliminate failed traffic configuration** at Lakeside Avenue, ensuring continued access and growth in this most vibrant City sector;
- minimize impact to Englesby Brook**—the City's only remaining above-round watercourse and wildlife corridor;
- employ “best practices” road designs for ensuring highest safety levels and lowest levels of global warming emissions;
- provide a corridor length safe pedestrian sidewalk and bike corridor accessing the City center
- save significant real dollars** by constructing/maintaining a shorter roadway

What can you do?

Sign the **Stop the Champlain Parkway Project and Choose the Champlain RIGHTway Petition**: <http://chng.it/tS9Ts5FjDx>

And spread the word with your community!

The Parkway is fueled by little more than inertia and a lack of imagination. It was conceived at a time when Burlington was the retail center of the county, something no longer true. It came at a time when automobile traffic dominated planning. Now traffic planning is multi-modal. And it was born when heavy industry was leaving the city and there were few signs that a new economy of artisan/arts production, small manufacturing with a retail dimension, and digital information services would take their place. Will the City squander our tax money to put all this at risk?

Charles Simpson, NPA 5 Meeting, October 17,
2019