

Vermont Agency of Transportation

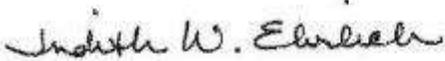
Non-Historic Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Use Clearance Form

VTrans Request for *De Minimis* Finding

Based on the information provided, and the analysis below, VTrans believes that the Section 4(f) use of this property is considered de minimis as defined in 23 CFR 774.17.

VTrans and FHWA agree that the impacts of this transportation project on a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge qualifies as a de minimis project under Section 4(f) because:

- The transportation use of the Section 4(f) property, together with any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures incorporated into the project, does not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f);*
- The public has been afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the effects of the project on the protected activities, features, or attributes of the Section 4(f) property; and*
- The official(s) with jurisdiction over the property, after being informed of the public comments and FHWA's intent to make the de minimis impact finding, concur in writing that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f).*



8/1/2025

Judith Ehrlich, VTrans Historic Preservation Officer
Vermont Agency of Transportation

Date

FHWA De Minimis Finding



8/12/25

Click or tap to enter a date.

Elizabeth Shipley
Environmental and ROW Program Manager
FHWA Vermont Division

Date

Project Information

Date: 5/21/2025	Project Location: Burlington and Winooski, Chittenden County
Project Title: Proposed Improvement – Bridge No. 150 Replacement	Project Route: Colchester Ave, Riverside Ave, US Route 2/7
Project Number: BF RAIZ(2)	Lead Agency: FHWA

Resource Information

Type of 4(f) Resource: Public Park
Section 4(f) Resource: Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park
Official with Jurisdiction: James Gibbons, Director of Policy and Planning, Burlington Electric Department

De Minimis Documentation:

1. Describe the Section 4(f) property and the attributes and features that qualify it for Section 4(f) protection.

The Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park is a recreation facility on the Chace Mill Hydroelectric Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission “FERC” Project No. 2756), which is located in Winooski, Vermont; but operated by the Burlington Electric Department, which is a municipally owned electric utility company owned by the City of Burlington, VT. The hydroelectric facility has been referred to as the Chace Mill Hydroelectric Project (or Chace Project) as well as the Winooski Hydroelectric Project. It has been in operation since 1993.

As stated in the FERC license, Project No. 2756 recreation facilities include an approximately 660-foot-long paved walkway on the north shoreline of the impoundment and an approximately 745-foot-long public access trail on the north shoreline of the Winooski River, to the west of the project dam. This path connects to West Canal Street. The project includes a 200-foot-long access road on the northern bank of the impoundment. An existing plaque at the north end of the paved walkway dates to 1993 and identifies the park as the “Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park”. Note that on many maps, including Google Maps, the paved walkway and public access trail are identified as the “Champlain Mill Path”.

The recreation facility/park provides public access to the river and to the dam. Visitors to the facility can walk the path, view the river, the dam, and mill remains on the south side of the Woolen Mill, and experience the outdoors away from the bustle of downtown Winooski. The facility recreation path is connected to Winooski Falls Park via a paved path and stairway, as well as to the Champlain Mill Park via a path underneath the bridge. (Winooski Falls Park and Champlain Mill Park are Section 4(f) resources. The path under the bridge was constructed as part of the Winooski One Project and is therefore believed to be owned by the City of Burlington / Burlington Electric Department.) Linked together, the parks form a larger network of riverfront

parks on the north side of the Winooski River. The City of Winooski's Open Space Master Plan identifies this network of parks as an important asset to the community, including the Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park. Note that in the Open Space Master Plan, this park is identified as part of the larger riverwalk park, even though it is City of Burlington property. The Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park is a significant, publicly owned resource that qualifies as a Section 4(f) park resource.

2. Describe the impacts to the Section 4(f) property, and why they are considered de minimis as defined by 23 CFR 774.17. Include all avoidance, minimization, or enhancement measures.

Project Burlington-Winooski BF RAIZ(2) ("Project") proposes to replace Bridge No. 150 in Burlington and Winooski, Chittenden County, VT. There are multiple Section 4(f) evaluations for project Burlington-Winooski BF RAIZ(2) including a Bridge Programmatic, a Net Benefit Programmatic, a historic de minimis, and two Non-Historic (parks) de minimis, all of which address different Section 4(f) resources.

The Project is being undertaken using a Design-Build contracting approach. Design-Build contracting is a project delivery method that incorporates final design and construction into a single contract. While the contractor is ultimately responsible for final design, VTrans maintains a strong role in preliminary design, review of final design plans, environmental coordination, and construction oversight. Because the final alignment of the new bridge will not be determined until further along in the Design-Build approach, this Section 4(f) evaluation (as well as the other types) have assumed the greatest potential impacts and effects on the 4(f) resources.

The project requires one permanent easement measuring approximately 1,437 SF for the purpose of highway construction from the Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park (ROW Parcel 4). The parcel is 4.28 acres. The easement is located on the northeast end of the facility, adjacent to US 2/7 at the northeast quadrant of the bridge. See attached ROW plan sheets.

Throughout the project, some access to the park will be closed, such as from Winooski Falls Park and the under bridge path; however, the hydroelectric project park will be able to be accessed from the driveway at West Canal Street. The driveway is paved. Visitors to the park will still be able to use the walkway alongside the Woolen Mill and be able to view the river and the dam. As part of the project, all temporarily closed park areas will be restored, as well as the path under the bridge that connects the Winooski One Hydroelectric Park/facility to the Champlain Mill Park.

During construction, because the under-bridge path will be closed between the parks, access between the Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park and the Champlain Mill Park will be detoured via West Canal Street, across Main Street, and Winooski Falls Way. There are existing pedestrian crossing signals and sidewalks, and the detour will be signed to direct pedestrians along this route. The project will not result in adverse impacts during or after its completion. The Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park will retain its features that qualify it as a Section 4(f) resource and its amenities will remain and/or be restored where they have been temporarily affected during construction.

3. For parks, recreational facilities, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, describe the public outreach that has been or is being conducted.

This project has been coordinated with the City of Winooski officials, City of Burlington officials, the State Historic Preservation Officer, as well as other stakeholders, community groups, and the public. Beginning with the scoping process, the project has been the subject of project advisory committee (PAC) meetings and public meetings over a period of 6 years. Throughout the process, the virtual and in-person meetings have been well attended. Meeting presentations and relevant documentation are available on the project website (<https://burlingtonwinooskibridge.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/>). There have been multiple means of communication for project comments. The meetings have included discussion about the project phases, design, and impacts to adjacent resources. The public involvement specifics, including dates and meeting types, is detailed in the Section 106 project review memorandum.

Specific to the work involved on the hydroelectric facility project, VTrans, on behalf of FHWA, has communicated with the Burlington Electric Department and FERC to inform them of the project, its effects, and to comply with FERC licensing requirements.

4. For parks, recreational facilities, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, the concurrence of the official(s) with jurisdiction that the protected activities, features, or attributes of the resource are not adversely affected must be in writing (23 CFR 774.5(b)(2)(ii)). Has the appropriate official(s) provided the necessary concurrence?

Yes, the letter of concurrence from the OWJ is attached.

Form Prepared by:
Judith Ehrlich, VTrans Historic Preservation Officer



Figure 1: The blue highlight shows the FERC project boundary. The bridge can be seen in the center of the image, with Winooski to the north (above) and Burlington to the south (below).



Figure 2: Plaques at the north end of the paved pathway shows the name of the two parks: Winooski Falls Park and Winooski One Hydroelectric Project Park.