



Brian Carpenter Remarks on the Reopening of Main Street and Merchants Row September 18, 2020

Today we gather as friends, fellow citizens, and partners to reopen downtown Middlebury.

I believe that great things happen when people work together.

And in this regard, we have been fortunate to work with our own Neighbors Together, whose volunteers have worked tirelessly to manage the impact of this project on our downtown community.

With Middlebury College, the National Bank of Middlebury, and so many other businesses and organizations that saw the potential benefits of this project.

And with some of the very best in the business at the Vermont Agency of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, VHB, Vermont Rail, and Kubricky and its subcontractors.

Four years ago, no one imagined the additional challenges from COVID our community and our state would face as we approached the high-water mark of the downtown rail and bridge project this summer.

What began as the need to replace two 100-year-old bridges in central downtown can now be seen for what it has become: an investment by the state of Vermont in the future of Middlebury, one of Vermont's great shire towns.

Take a minute to look around. Observe the transformation of downtown that has taken place in 10 weeks. Imagine how this new-found public gathering space can help bring our community back together as we recover from the devastating effects rendered by COVID.

Today begins a new and exciting chapter in the long life of our town.

As we work to restore and revitalize our downtown, our storefronts will once again draw residents and visitors alike, and our streets will be full of life.

Similar to Vermont's recovery from Tropical Storm Irene, during which many of us observed closely the resilience of everyday Vermonters, let's show we're Middlebury Strong!

In closing, I want to thank our community and our partners for all that we've accomplished together. I'm looking forward to celebrating the end of the project in style next summer!