

1 Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization
2 Regular Meeting
3 Minutes
4

5 Date: Wednesday, December 15, 2004
6 Time: 7:00 p.m.
7 Place: CCMPO Offices, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 102; South Burlington, VT
8 Present:
9 Voting: Bill Keogh, Burlington
10 Jeff McDonald, Charlotte (Vice-Chair)
11 Chris Conant, Colchester
12 Jeff Carr, Essex
13 Dale Arango, Essex Junction
14 Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg
15 Bob Penniman, Jericho (Chair)
16 Virginia Clarke, Richmond
17 Jim Dudley, Shelburne
18 Jim Condos, South Burlington
19 Stan Hamlet, Underhill (7:15)
20 Tom Buckley, Westford
21 George Gerecke, Williston
22 Mike O'Brien, Winooski
23 Dawn Terrill, VTrans Secretary
24 Ex-Officio: Chris Jolly, FHWA
25 Lew Wetzel, CCRPC
26 Others: Chapin Spencer, Local Motion
27 David Dill, VTrans Deputy Secretary
28 Matthew Langham, VTrans
29 Polly McMurtry, VTrans Planning Coordinator
30 Rich Ranaldo, VTrans Special Projects Office
31 Melody Zagami, Vermont Times
32 Staff: Bill Knight, Executive Director
33 Peter Keating, Sr. Transportation Planner
34 Christine Forde, Sr. Transportation Planner
35 David Roberts, Sr. Transportation Planner
36 Susan Smichenko, Sr. Transportation Planner
37 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner
38 Paul Craven, Project Manager
39 Bernadette Ferenc, Executive Assistant
40

41 The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the Chair, Bob Penniman. Mr. Penniman
42 introduced the new Secretary of Transportation, Dawn Terrill and the new Deputy Secretary,
43 David Dill.
44

45 1. Changes to the Agenda. There were none.

46
47 2. Public Comment Period on items not on the Agenda. There were none.
48

1 3. Action on Consent Agenda. There were two items on the Consent Agenda (Report from the
2 Executive Committee and Minor TIP amendments). JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO
3 ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA. CHRIS CONANT SECONDED AND THE MOTION
4 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5
6 4. Approval of Minutes. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF
7 NOVEMBER 17, 2004 WITH BOARD MEMBERS EDITS IF ANY. GEORGE GERECKE
8 SECONDED. Andrea Morgante asked that we correct page 3, line 30 to say Jim Condos agrees
9 with "Jeff Carr" rather than with "Essex" and that we be consistent in the way we report this.
10 MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.

11
12 5. Adopt Rail Resolution. Bob Penniman noted that the Executive Committee had been
13 discussing rail priorities when we were approached by the Western Vermont Corridor folks. We
14 feel we need to understand the previous actions of this board and we asked staff to put together a
15 resolution outlining previous studies. There was also a change of rail earmark monies from FTA
16 to FRA to be better access those monies for capital improvement in the State of Vermont. Bill
17 Knight asked Daryl Benoit to speak to this. Daryl noted the resolution was passed by the
18 Executive Committee and includes purchase of ROW along Burlington-Essex corridor, transload
19 facility, railyard relocation, etc. This is not new information. It was identified by the
20 stakeholders group as part of the freight study we did in 2001. MPO has been project manager
21 of the Burlington to Essex corridor since 1998 and has had discussions with VTrans and FHWA.
22 It seems as though VTrans support is not as strong as it had been. There was a misconception
23 that this resolution was done in response to State Rail Plan and that's not true. This has been
24 advocated by the MPO for a while. Bob Penniman said the Executive Committee had felt it
25 necessary to go on record with what we had talked about before regarding these various issues
26 through previous studies. Bill Knight noted that a few months ago Matthew Sternberg came to
27 speak to us about the Western Vermont Corridor project and there was a piece north to St.
28 Albans. The only hole was in Chittenden County and we decided we should try to tie this
29 corridor together. This grew over time to document history of where MPO is with rail and where
30 we fit in the larger picture of the Western Vermont Corridor. The ABRB project was then
31 questioned why Essex wasn't in the loop when any western corridor could not be complete
32 without it. BILL KEOGH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AS
33 PRESENTED TO US AND RECOMMENDED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. JIM
34 CONDOS SECONDED. There was much discussion and several friendly amendments that were
35 accepted by the maker and seconder. Those are indicated by ~~striketrough~~ for deletions and
36 underlining for additions in the resolution which follows:

37
38 **RESOLUTION OF THE**
39 **CHITTENDEN COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**
40 **AFFIRMING RAIL PROJECTS FOR CHITTENDEN COUNTY**
41

42 WHEREAS, the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO), which was
43 designated by the Governor of Vermont to meet the requirements of federal
44 transportation laws, is responsible for managing the continuous, cooperative and
45 comprehensive Transportation Planning process in Chittenden County; and
46

47 WHEREAS, the Chittenden County Freight Stakeholders Forum in August 2000 recommended
48 shifting the Burlington Railyard to a more accessible location and expand its facilities; and
49

50 WHEREAS, the Chittenden County Freight Stakeholders Forum recommended identifying and
51 developing sites for transload and container ramp facilities; and
52

1 WHEREAS, the CCMPO Board accepted the *Chittenden County Regional Freight Study*,
2 February 2001 which outlined a number of proposals for the movement of freight,
3 including rail infrastructure; and
4

5 WHEREAS, the *Chittenden County Regional Freight Study* and the *2025 Metropolitan*
6 *Transportation Plan* (MTP) affirm that Chittenden County has a demand for a number of
7 transload facilities for the transfer of bulk commodities between truck and rail; and
8

9 WHEREAS, the State of Vermont's Rail Policy Plan calls for promoting and facilitation of freight
10 projects on an interstate basis (particularly intermodal services) where a resultant
11 increase in overhead traffic and revenues for Vermont rail lines can be identified; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the truck network in Vermont is inadequate for 53 foot and double 28 foot trailer
14 operations, which limits access to Chittenden County and the surrounding economic
15 region and hurts this region as national carriers move toward larger trailers and the use of
16 multiple trailer sets; and
17

18 WHEREAS, Vermont does not have a truck/rail intermodal ramp; and
19

20 WHEREAS, US 7 and VT 22A are insufficient as a north/south freight corridor in Western
21 Vermont; and
22

23 WHEREAS, there are marginal highway connections to the State of New York from Vermont; and
24

25 Whereas, rail freight represents only 8% of the freight tonnage in Vermont; and
26

27 WHEREAS, on March 20, 2002, the CCMPO Board by resolution amended the Metropolitan
28 Transportation Plan to include the purchase of the rail line from College Street in
29 Burlington to Essex Junction for commuter rail, intercity rail and freight movement; and
30

31 WHEREAS, in July of 2002, the CCMPO Board added \$4.8 million in federal funds to the FY02-
32 04 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) representing congressional earmarks for
33 the Burlington to Essex Commuter Rail Project, now known as the Route 15 Corridor
34 Study, to be used for acquisition of the operating rights and right-of-way (ROW) as a top
35 priority for the region and this funding is still contained in the current TIP; and
36

37 WHEREAS, Senators Jeffords and Leahy have committed to including in the FY 2005
38 Transportation, Treasury and General Government Bill the combining of various rail
39 earmarks under the current authority of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA),
40 transferring them to the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), and extending the Albany,
41 Bennington, Rutland, & Burlington (ABRB) project to Essex Junction;
42

43 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:
44

45 The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization affirms that it is our interest intent
46 to pursue a program of integrated intermodal projects in order to improve transportation
47 through, to, and within Chittenden County in order to reduce the negative impacts of
48 increased highway traffic, to support effective economic development, to improve our quality
49 of life, and save those things which makes living in Vermont so precious to us by
50 implementing the following:
51

- 52 1. The top Chittenden County rail priority of CCMPO is for the State of Vermont to purchase the
53 Burlington to Essex rail line right-of-way from the Burlington Railyard to the Essex Depot;
54
- 55 2. The second priority is to examine the feasibility for development of a Rail Transload
56 intermodal freight facility within Chittenden County;
57

- 1 3. Expedite the project to provide interstate passenger rail [currently Amtrak] service between
2 New York City, Albany, Bennington, Rutland, & Burlington (ABRB) and now to included
3 Essex, along the western corridor of Vermont;
- 4
- 5 4. Developing a passenger multimodal terminal for rail and bus service along the VT Route 15
6 Corridor;
- 7
- 8 5. To examine the relocation of the Burlington Rail Yard from the Burlington Waterfront;
- 9
- 10 6. To enter in discussion with the operating railroads within Chittenden County to initiate shared
11 use of existing rail rights-of-way;
- 12
- 13 7. Facilitate and foster support for multimodal passenger and freight transportation along
14 Vermont's strategic Western Rail Corridor;
- 15
- 16 8. Improve rail freight utilization;
- 17
- 18 9. Encourage adoption of new financing strategies to leverage federal, state, local, and private
19 investment in (rail and truck) freight transportation gateways;
- 20
- 21 10. Strategically increase economic efficiency and support economic development along rail
22 lines; and
- 23
- 24 11. Provide flexibility between modes (i.e. freight and passenger), creating strategic
25 redundancies whilst streamlining capital investment.
- 26

27 Tom Buckley serves on the Chamber Transportation Committee and all the items are consistent
28 with things that committee heard and recognized. Dawn Terrill is planning to abstain because
29 she does not feel comfortable taking a position that is so centric to the CCMPO at this time.
30 Chris Jolly mentioned that ABRB was funded with federal demonstration money in TEA 21 and
31 it was specified that money could be used between Albany and Burlington. Bill Knight said in
32 the most recent transfer, Sen. Leahy extended that to Essex. VOTE: MOTION CARRIED
33 WITH ONE ABSTENTION FROM SEC. TERRILL.

34

35 6. FY05-07 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Christine Forde noted that we had
36 solicited information for an FY05-07 TIP and had a preliminary draft when everything ground to
37 a halt after the circ decision. Then we began to make amendments to each year of the FY04-06
38 TIP. Now we find ourselves in December. In a month or two we'll begin to develop a new TIP
39 so we don't see a need to formally develop an FY05-07 TIP. Right now we don't have an FY07
40 year, but in July we'll have a new TIP and we'll need to amend the FY06 year further to the end
41 of the fiscal year. There is not really a negative to waiting to prepare an FY06-08 TIP. Bob
42 Penniman noted legally we only have to adopt a new TIP every two years and FHWA and
43 VTrans have agreed we could proceed with the FY06-08 TIP. When asked if there is any issue
44 with our not having anything in FY07 when VTrans is doing their budget, the Secretary doesn't
45 feel it'll be an issue. Christine Forde said VTrans staff has updated dollars for projects in FY07,
46 so she doesn't believe they'll be pulling them out.

47

48 7. Warn for Public Hearing on the 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Bob
49 Penniman noted that coming into this meeting we tried to make everyone understand that we
50 intend to warn for public hearing tonight. Peter Keating said we asked for substantive issues.
51 He collected 60 different comments, but put two in the memo that we felt were major:

- 52 1. Winooski would rather not have Exit 15 project in this version of the plan, but put in for
53 future planning.

- 1 2. Colchester has recommended that we remove the second paragraph on page 41 regarding
2 refined alternatives and Peter would recommend we remove that.

3
4 Bob Penniman read a memo from Penrose Jackson, Chair of the CCRPC, stating that although
5 they haven't had time for a thorough review, they did convene a special meeting of two
6 committees and found no issues that rose to the level of "red flags." They will submit comments
7 and suggestions after review by the full commission.

8
9 JIM CONDOS MADE A MOTION THAT WE APPROVE THE TWO SUBSTANTIVE
10 CHANGES AS RECOMMENDED IN STAFF'S MEMO (as noted above) AND WARN THE
11 DRAFT MTP FOR PUBLIC HEARING FOR OUR JANUARY 2005 MEETING. JEFF CARR
12 SECONDED. After some discussion about how members would review other comments and
13 suggestions, it was agreed that Peter would distribute the comments received to date; and we will
14 put a deadline for additional comments of Friday, January 7th so staff can assemble them and
15 make recommendations on how to handle them, for distribution prior or the board meeting. It
16 was noted that we'd have to accept comments at the hearing as well. When asked who else in
17 the general public will see the MTP, Bill Knight noted that we have to send it to the adjacent
18 regions, state agencies and those who have expressed interest. Jeff Carr thanked staff for their
19 hard work to get this plan out, especially Peter Keating. Bob Penniman could not stress enough
20 the importance of adopting this MTP. He thinks Chris Jolly was pretty clear at the last meeting
21 about our need to have an adopted transportation plan. When asked who is in charge of the
22 public information on this, Bill Knight said we have a plan but not a consultant. The draft MTP
23 will be put on our website as soon as we incorporate these two changes; and notices will be sent
24 out regarding the availability. VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO WARN
25 THE DRAFT MTP FOR PUBLIC HEARING AT OUR JANUARY MEETING.

26
27 8. Circ EIS Update. Bob Penniman said there was nothing substantive to report. The intent to
28 do the EIS was put into the federal register. Rich Ranaldo said next week they're starting the
29 first round of beta interviews with cooperation of MPO and RPC staff. The questionnaire will go
30 out to municipalities and other interested parties. Virginia Clarke asked how the list was
31 determined as to who would get the questionnaire. Rich Ranaldo said it is going to the chairs of
32 the selectboards and those who commented on the EA. They'll also be sent to communities right
33 outside of Chittenden County (along the corridors into the county). When asked how many
34 would be interviewed, Rich Ranaldo said over 40, but he wasn't sure if the municipalities were
35 included in the 40. He noted that they have a flow chart that describes the five-step process
36 they'll be taking and when that is ready, he'll give it to the MPO to put on our website. Polly
37 McMurtry noted that the questionnaire will not be answered and returned as such. It'll be the
38 basis for interviews where you can answer the questions. It's a way to get feedback. Andrea
39 Morgante suggested that the questionnaire be put on the website so other folks can be thinking
40 about the questions as well. Sec. Terrill suggested the MPO may want a list of who's getting the
41 questionnaire.

42
43 9. Executive Director's Report.

- 44 a. He notified board members by email about who's on the Unified Planning Work Program
45 (UPWP) committee for FY06. He's trying to set up the first meeting for early January.
46 There are more board members on it because we've come to realize the UPWP is a policy
47 document. We will have a tighter budget for next year.
48 b. Enhancement grants and bike/ped grants have been awarded and Chittenden County is in
49 good shape this year.

- 1 c. Transportation model is on schedule and we're now getting into the freight model.
2 d. We'll have FY05 mid-year adjustments coming up in the next couple of months.
3 e. Bill Knight and Bob Penniman will be attending the NARC (National Association of
4 Regional Councils) Washington Policy Conference in February. Since no other Executive
5 Committee members are able to attend, there is an opening for another board member if
6 you're interested.
7

8 10. Members' Items:

- 9 a. Bill Keogh was disturbed to read about a Highway Infrastructure committee meeting where
10 they say we need to spend more money on highway and bridges and less on public
11 transportation. He's also read about curtailment of service between Montpelier and
12 Northfield. He feels CCTA will be asking for more money from member communities while
13 cutting back on service and we haven't resolved the alternative funding issue. Bill Knight
14 said this isn't dying, we need to take it slowly. We're going to put an ad hoc committee
15 together to meet right after first of the year to continue. The VLCT (Vermont Leagues of
16 Cities and Towns) and VPTA (Vermont Public Transportation Association) have agreed to
17 work with Chris Cole and we're trying to get VAPDA (Vermont Association of Planning and
18 Development Agencies) involved as well. Bill Keogh feels we're going in the wrong
19 direction with public transportation. Bob Penniman said the Executive Committee is waiting
20 for a new scope of services for a new task and associated costs. Members agreed we need to
21 keep this alive.
22 b. Jim Condos asked the Secretary about the Highway Infrastructure meeting. Sec. Terrill
23 noted there was a meeting in Montpelier regarding bridges and highway, but public
24 transportation was not mentioned in that meeting. Jim Condos said as a local government
25 person, the enhancement grant program just had \$8M in applications and only \$3M in funds.
26 It's a very popular program and we shouldn't be decreasing funding. He doesn't think taking
27 \$2.5 M from bike paths will give you much in paving, where it will go a long way in the
28 communities. Andrea Morgante said if we're going to focus on bridges and roads we have to
29 realize they're multi-modal and need to remember that.
30 c. Our annual legislative briefing will be held this Friday morning at 8 a.m. Jim Condos, Sonny
31 Audette, and Bill Keogh have called all the Chittenden County legislators to remind them.
32 d. Secretary Terrill noted that she wants to continue to have the cooperative relationship
33 between CCMPO and VTrans.
34

35 JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, DULY SECONDED, TO ADJOURN AT 8:35 P.M.
36 MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

37
38 Respectfully submitted,
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41

42 Bernadette Ferenc
43 Executive Assistant