

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

5 Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2005  
6 Time: 7:00 p.m.  
7 Place: CCMPO Main Conference Room; 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 102; So. Burl., VT  
8 Present: Andy Montroll, Burlington  
9 Al Voegele, Colchester Alternate  
10 Jeff Carr, Essex (Sec.-Treas.)  
11 Dale Arango, Essex Junction  
12 Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg  
13 Rick Moulton, Huntington  
14 Bob Penniman, Jericho (Chair)  
15 Virginia Clarke, Richmond  
16 Jim Dudley, Shelburne  
17 Jim Condos, South Burlington  
18 Tom Buckley, Westford  
19 George Gerecke, Williston  
20 Mike O'Brien, Winooski  
21 Polly McMurtry, VTrans Planning Coordinator  
22 Ex-Officio: Lew Wetzel, CCRPC  
23 Chris Cole, CCTA  
24 Others: Rich Ranaldo, VTrans Special Projects Office  
25 Larry Pesesky, Louis Berger  
26 Matthew Langham, VTrans  
27 Sam Lewis – VTrans  
28 Greg Brown, CCRPC Executive Director  
29 Charlie Moore, New England Central Railroad  
30 Anthony Otis, Lobbyist Railroad Association of Vermont  
31 Andrea Sisisno – Vermont Rail Advocacy Network  
32 Staff: Bill Knight, Executive Director  
33 Peter Keating, Sr. Transportation Planner  
34 Christine Forde, Sr. Transportation Planner  
35 Dave Roberts, Sr. Transportation Planner  
36 Susan Smichenko, Sr. Transportation Planner  
37 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner  
38

39 The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chair, Bob Penniman. He welcomed Al  
40 Voegele, Colchester Town Manager who is here as Marc's alternate. Mr. Penniman then noted  
41 that the consent agenda is different as we have moved the TAC report and Draft Executive  
42 Committee Minutes as part of the Committee Reports item. The Executive Committee will then  
43 approve those minutes at its next meeting.  
44

45 1. Changes to the agenda. There were none.  
46

47 2. Public Comment Period. There were no members of the public present.  
48

49 3. Action on the Consent Agenda. There was one minor TIP amendment to add \$100,000 in  
50 federal earmark funds in FY05 and \$2,327,184 in FY06 for the Burlington South End Transit

1 Center. GEORGE GERECKE MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JIM DUDLEY, TO  
2 APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. When asked where this transit center would be located,  
3 Andy Montroll said it'll be near their public works building off Lakeside Avenue behind General  
4 Dynamics. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.  
5

6 4. Approval of Minutes. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY DALE  
7 ARANGO, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 20, 2005 WITH CORRECTIONS.  
8 MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.  
9

10 5. Public Hearing for Amendment for Winooski Riverwalk Project on FY04-06 and FY06-08  
11 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Bob Penniman opened the public hearing.  
12 Christine Forde explained that this amendment will add \$404,888 (fed) in FY05 and \$116,112  
13 (fed) in FY06 for the Winooski Riverwalk project. It is a major amendment because this is a  
14 32% increase in cost resulting from actual bid costs being higher than the cost estimate. In  
15 addition, they have decided to use galvanized steel to construct the structure for easier long-term  
16 maintenance. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. JIM  
17 DUDLEY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.  
18

19 MIKE O'BRIEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JEFF CARR, TO APPROVE THE  
20 AMENDMENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AS  
21 PRESENTED. Andy Montroll said 32% seems to be a pretty high increase. Mike O'Brien said  
22 there was only one bidder and the original cost estimate was four years old. VOTE:

23 Burlington	Yes (4)	Colchester	Yes (2)
24 Essex	Yes	Essex Jct.	Yes
25 Hinesburg	Yes	Huntington	Yes
26 Jericho	Yes	Richmond	Yes
27 Shelburne	Yes	So. Burl.	Yes (2)
28 Westford	Yes	Williston	Yes
29 Winooski	Yes	VTrans	Yes

30 MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, with 18 of 24 votes, and 13 of 18 communities present  
31 and voting.  
32

33 6. Circ Williston EIS Presentation. Rich Ranaldo is the project manager representing VTrans.  
34 They were here six months ago and had described the five steps in this process. They're in the  
35 middle of the second step. Larry Pesesky of Louis Berger Group reported that they're screening  
36 alternatives, which is where they take many concepts that were suggested in scoping and decide  
37 which ones should be looked at in greater detail in the draft EIS (Environmental Impact  
38 Statement). The draft EIS is intended to give the decision making agencies (VTrans and FHWA)  
39 an understanding of what the consequences are with different courses of action. There are  
40 existing deficiencies in the project area of Williston, Essex and Essex Junction – traffic  
41 congestion, safety (crash and pedestrian) and mobility issues (moving people and goods). These  
42 problems manifest greatest on Route 2A between Exit 12 and Five Corners. He reviewed the  
43 steps involved in alternatives screening. They had 60 concepts out of scoping and they screened  
44 them to see which ones might meet the purpose and need, and eliminated others that didn't seem  
45 to fit or do anything to improve the problems. In the next month or two there will be a short list  
46 of alternatives that'll be determined by VTrans/FHWA and others of what should be included in  
47 the draft EIS.  
48

49 They're testing 15 alternatives and then they may take parts of some and combine them with  
50 others to make them meet the purpose and need. Non-automobile alternatives include TDM –

1 Public Transportation: rail (including to St Albans) and vanpool/carpool. They want to be robust  
2 in the public transportation and go beyond the study area. Alternatives considered in improving  
3 existing roadways include:

- 4 • VT 2A corridor improvements with Transportation System Management (TSM) – this would  
5 include 4 through travel lanes from Exit 12 – Five Corners.
- 6 • VT 2A corridor improvements with roundabouts
- 7 • VT 117 corridor improvements
- 8 • North Williston Road corridor improvements.
- 9 • Multi-corridor improvements with TSM
- 10 • Multi-corridor improvements with roundabouts
- 11 • Brownell Road corridor improvements, including a new interstate interchange. When Jim  
12 Condos asked if they looked at Exit 12b, Larry Pesesky said no because it's in the TIP and  
13 they consider that part of the no-build scenario.

14 He then reviewed the new roadways alternatives:

- 15 • Circ A/B – limited access highway
- 16 • Circ A/B as a boulevard which would have intersections with Route 2 and Mountain View  
17 Road vs. interchange.
- 18 • Circ new alignment – limited access highway
- 19 • Circ new alignment – boulevard. They had been told to take a fresh look at this so they  
20 looked at an alternative alignment. They discovered that they really couldn't go too much  
21 further east than Old Stage Road because then it limited the benefit for Route 2A.
- 22 • Circ A Partial
- 23 • Circ B Limited Access – this would go from Mountain View to 289.

24 He doesn't really know how many of the alternatives will be on the short list. They're still  
25 studying that. They just don't want to leave any stone unturned. It is likely that one alternative  
26 will not solve the problem and it'll probably be multi-modal or multi-corridor.

27  
28 Rich Ranaldo said it is important to reach out to the local officials so they are inviting local  
29 elected officials; planning staff and representatives of CCMPO and CCRPC to a meeting on  
30 Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>. They may have an afternoon as well as an evening session. It will be in Williston,  
31 although the exact location is yet to be determined.

32  
33 When asked where the indirect and cumulative impacts meetings come into play with these  
34 meetings, Larry Pesesky said they plan to have a third set of meetings in October. They have  
35 been coordinating with CCMPO & CCRPC staff on build out analysis and population forecasts.  
36 Larry Pesesky said they will be looking for feedback from the public officials meeting, public  
37 forums and resource agencies to help them hone down the list of alternatives. Rich Ranaldo  
38 noted that their website includes all documents published, minutes of meetings, etc.  
39 ([www.circeis.org](http://www.circeis.org)). Mr. Pesesky noted that the CCMPO and CCRPC staffs have been very  
40 professional and very responsive in reviewing material.

41  
42 7. New England Central Railroad (NECR) Presentation. Charlie Moore is the Regional Vice  
43 President for RailAmerica which is the company that owns NECR. He appreciates the support of  
44 Senators Leahy and Jeffords, as well as Sam Lewis and Sec. Terrill, in recognizing the  
45 importance of rail. NECR is very healthy. They provide good, high-paying jobs with better  
46 than average benefits and employ 150 people. They have recently put in a regional dispatch  
47 center in St. Albans, and through the dispatch center work with Homeland Security and FBI on  
48 security concerns. NECR route runs from St. Albans to Long Island Sound for 325 miles. Their  
49 trains transport the wood chips for the Burlington plant and other necessities. They are good

1 neighbors and there are several opportunities for us to work collectively. One is the Burlington  
2 branch, 7.8 miles of track between Essex Junction and Burlington. Right now a limiting factor is  
3 the capability of the track to carry only 263 lbs. (263,000 lbs/car) vs. national standard of 286  
4 lbs. The Amtrak Vermonter operates on NECR from St. Albans to Palmer. The Burlington  
5 branch is important to Chittenden County and to NECR as it is their major connection to the  
6 Vermont rail system. He wants to bring the Vermonter into Burlington and we can do that by  
7 starting it earlier out of St. Albans (6:30 or 7 instead of 8:30), going to Burlington and still reach  
8 Essex Junction at 9 a.m. to be on schedule. He just needs support to make that happen. (They do  
9 not want to replace the Ethan Allen Express.)

10  
11 Railroads are graded by Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) standards and the Burlington  
12 Branch is Class 1 and is limited to 10 mph. NECR would like to upgrade the track to Class 2,  
13 which would allow 25-30 mph. That's as fast as we'd want to operate on that line because of  
14 curvatures, etc. Bob Penniman noted that the Burlington/Essex study capital costs assumed  
15 going to Class 3-4 to allow 50-60 mph and you really don't want to go that fast in this section.  
16 NECR estimates upgrading the 7.8 miles of track from Class 1 to Class 2 will cost \$1.3M. .

17  
18 Bob Penniman noted that another item they had discussed was the fact that you can put bike  
19 facilities in the railroad ROW and it has been done. Charlie Moore did note that trespassing is a  
20 major problem with railroads with suicides, etc. Bike trails and railroads do not really marry too  
21 well, but you can work together to include barriers that could make it happen.

22  
23 Mike O'Brien noted that in discussing the cost of upgrading the track from Burlington to Essex,  
24 we were told the most expensive issue is the tunnel. Charlie Moore said they recently inspected  
25 that 7.8 miles and the tunnel is safe structurally. Its brick lined and is starting to fall down so  
26 they'd have to resurface the inside and this estimate includes retying. There is not a major  
27 problem in this tunnel. When asked about the height being an issue, Bob Penniman said with the  
28 higher speed the tunnel was a problem, but what they're saying is you can go through there at  
29 10mph safely. We'll never be able to improve the tunnel to handle double stack, but we can  
30 handle regular coaches. In further discussion it was noted that the upgrade to Class 2 would be a  
31 short term fix but that doesn't mean we shouldn't continue to look into further upgrades.

32  
33 We're trying to get a meeting together with a NECR transload expert to discuss a transload  
34 facility. Charlie Moore said another thing that is important is that we've got state owned roads  
35 and NECR and we're making strides to grow a relationship to work together. The Burlington  
36 branch upgrade is a step in the right direction but we need to look at relocation of the Burlington  
37 railyard. There is a location in Milton and although the line is NECR, there are railroads  
38 operating on other's lines all over the country. Bob Penniman said the whole Vermont Railway  
39 system is on state-owned rail line. The private sector shouldn't be disadvantaged because the  
40 state owns the rest of the system. The summer study committee is trying to see what we can do  
41 in the best interest of the state. Charlie Moore said NECR supports commuter services and they  
42 really wanted to operate the commuter service from Swanton, St. Albans right to IBM.  
43 Discussion ensued about travel to Boston vs. NYC. There is a study considering high speed rail,  
44 but Rick Moulton noted that New Hampshire has let the track go so there is no way to get to  
45 Boston.

46  
47 8. Project Prioritization. Bob Penniman said the Executive Committee discussed this and feels  
48 we were rushed and need to come up with a better prioritization process. The action we're  
49 taking tonight is very qualified because further prioritization has to have much more science to it  
50 and more buy in. Polly McMurtry said the legislature asked VTrans to do a prioritization of the

1 capital budget. VTrans asked the regions to weigh in on this with a regional prioritization that  
2 will be incorporated into the VTrans prioritization. All the RPCs have completed their  
3 prioritization and submitted their scores and VTrans has begun to incorporate those, and if MPO  
4 approves this tonight this will be incorporated as well. VTrans data is much more qualitative:  
5 crashes, LOS and each program is developing its own system of prioritization (roadway,  
6 pavement, bridges, etc.) This is just the first cut. It's an evolving system. Christine Forde noted  
7 that we've been asked to prioritize the projects in the "back of the book" which are on the  
8 development list. The following questions and concerns were raised by members:

- 9 • Inadequacies in our process that would have sidewalks the #1 priority in Chittenden County.
- 10 • That the bottom five projects are in rural communities.
- 11 • That the MPO doesn't seem to be included in the VTrans budget development timeline.  
12 Polly said it is implied in the RPCs.
- 13 • How VTrans was dealing with sidewalks and enhancements – are they separate lists.  
14 Matthew Langham said they are currently not including bike/ped or enhancements. The  
15 reason sidewalks show up here is because the CCMPO put these in the roadway program  
16 budget last year.
- 17 • That every RPC/CCMPO used a different process to prioritize.
- 18 • We had a prioritization system that really didn't work. This is a step in the right direction.  
19 Staff did a great job with the short amount of time, but we have a lot more work to do on this  
20 for the future.

21  
22 Polly McMurtry noted that this will be a very open process throughout the state. They gave us  
23 the legislative language and asked each region to do what works for us. Most of the regions did  
24 try to give projects regional significance. She thinks in the future we may want more  
25 consistency, so we need to start now to be more prepared next year. Jeff Carr pointed out that  
26 this was a very short time line and we could all find fault with the ratings our projects received,  
27 but he thinks staff did a heck of a job in the time allowed. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION  
28 THAT WE APPROVE THE PROJECT PRIORITIES AND SEND IT ALONG TO VTRANS  
29 ACCORDING TO THE STAFF ECOMMENDATION. GEORGE GERECKE SECONDED.

30  
31 A lengthy discussion ensued with members wanting to be sure we could make any changes to  
32 these priorities that our new system might suggest. Polly McMurtry thinks there is room for  
33 flexibility. It's not cut and dry. There will be dialog. This is just for this year. It'll be done  
34 again next year with a more refined system. When asked when it is too late to make changes  
35 before it goes to legislature, Polly said they're just beginning the process which will last several  
36 months. There will be a lot of discussion with VTrans and all of us. They've been pleased with  
37 the effort everyone has made in this process.

38  
39 Discussion ensued about how staff made judgments on projects that may have tied. Christine  
40 Forde said in some cases she used functional class because it seemed to work the best. Mike  
41 O'Brien made a suggestion for clarification on the motion that as we have discussed, the  
42 prioritization process that was developed by staff was good for the short term, but there are  
43 things we all agree need changing. MIKE O'BRIEN MADE A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT TO  
44 THE MOTION THAT THIS IS OUR INITIAL OR FIRST SHOT AT THE PRIORITIZATION  
45 PROCESS AND WE WILL BE REVISITING THIS OVER TIME. JEFF CARR AND  
46 GEORGE GERECKE AGREED TO ADD THAT TO THE MOTION. When asked if we are  
47 going to learn what the VTrans scoring system was, Christine Forde said we will as soon as it's  
48 finished. JEFF CARR CALLED THE QUESTION.

1 MOTION: THAT WE APPROVE THE PROJECT PRIORITIES AND SEND IT ALONG TO  
2 VTRANS ACCORDING TO THE STAFF ECOMMENDATION. THIS IS OUR INITIAL OR  
3 FIRST SHOT AT THE PRIORITIZATION PROCESS AND WE WILL BE REVISITING THIS  
4 OVER TIME. **VOTE:** MOTION CARRIED WITH HUNTINGTON VOTING NO AND  
5 WESTFORD ABSTAINING.  
6

7 9. Strategic Planning Update. Bob Penniman said the Board charged the original committee to  
8 decide how to proceed after the retreat. We've expanded the committee to include Christine  
9 Forde as another staff person and Tom Buckley and Jeff Carr in addition to Virginia Clarke and  
10 Bob Penniman representing the board. This new committee will draft a vision statement and  
11 goals and then they'll come back to the board with specifics to discuss. The new group will  
12 consist of several working committees. We felt strategic planning needed to be done by the  
13 board since we have to take ownership, as the plan is for the organization itself. Bob thanked  
14 Virginia Clarke for her efforts and Tom and Jeff for agreeing to serve.  
15

16 10. Reauthorization of Transportation Act – SAFETEA-LU. Bob Penniman noted that right  
17 now everyone is speculating about what the legislation says and we need to wait until VTrans  
18 and CCMPO are on the same page. A big issue appears to be whether there will be enough state  
19 match dollars for all of the money. He feels we knew this would be a once in a lifetime  
20 opportunity with Sen. Jeffords in the senior position. It'd be a shame not to come up with match  
21 enough to get these projects built.  
22

23 11. Executive Director Search Update. Bob Penniman reported that the application deadline  
24 was Monday – we received 8 applications. Peter Keating and Bob opened the applications on  
25 Tuesday. The Search Committee will meet on August 24 at 7:30 a.m. He believes they will be  
26 able to short list to interviews with the possibility of a recommendation to this board next month  
27 on a new executive director. He reminded everyone that the Search Committee consists of the 6  
28 members of the Executive Committee, plus Dave Davis from CCTA board; Penrose Jackson of  
29 CCRPC and Dawn Terrill. (Note: Peter Keating represents staff.)  
30

31 12. Executive Director's Report. Members should have received the report electronically  
32 yesterday.  
33

34 13. Committee Reports.

35 a. Executive Committee draft minutes are enclosed for information.

36 b. Technical Advisory Committee report is also enclosed for information.

37 c. CCRPC Report. Mike O'Brien apologized to CCMPO and CCRPC for forgetting about the  
38 July 25<sup>th</sup> RPC meeting. Lew Wetzel reported that they're getting input from communities on the  
39 Initial Draft of the Regional Plan. Greg Brown said they'll be completing this round of  
40 community visits in September. Ideally they want comments by September 2<sup>nd</sup>, but will accept  
41 them from communities after that.  
42

43 THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, JIM CONDOS MADE A MOTION TO  
44 ADJOURN AT 9:10 P.M. JEFF CARR SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED  
45 UNANIMOUSLY.  
46

47 Respectfully submitted,  
48

49  
50 Bernadette Ferenc, Executive Assistant