

CHITTENDEN COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2007
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Contois Auditorium, Burlington City Hall, Burlington, VT 05401
Present: Andy Montroll, Burlington Jeff McDonald, Charlotte (7:07)
Jeff Carr, Essex (Sec-Treas.) Dale Arango, Essex Junction
Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg (7:15) Rob Zimmerman, Huntington Alt.
Bob Penniman, Jericho (Chair) Ken Nolan, Milton
Virginia Clarke, Richmond Jim Dudley, Shelburne
Tom Buckley, Westford George Gerecke, Williston
Mike O'Brien, Winooski (VC) (7:30) Matthew Langham, VTrans
Ex-Officio: Chris Jolly, FHWA Chris Cole, CCTA
OTHERS: Meredith Schuft, CATMA Corey Berman, Burlington Bike Council
Kit Perkins, Intervale Center Jon Slason, Burlington resident
Deb Sachs, So. Burlington resident Jim Drophy, Burlington Bike Council
Kirsten Merriman Shapiro, CEDO Katy Demag, Vermont Times
Nicole Losch, Burlington DPW Chapin Spencer, Local Motion
Juli Beth Hinds, So. Burlington Glenn Taulton, Regional Adv. Council
Sylvia Lane, Burlington resident Christina Colombe, Winooski resident
Beth Kuhn, Champlain Initiative Jane Helmstetter, VT AHS
Chris Schuft, Richmond
Staff: Scott Johnstone, Exec. Dir. Peter Keating, Sr. Trans. Planner
Christine Forde, Sr. Trans. Planner Dave Roberts, Sr. Trans. Planner
Susan Smichenko, Sr. Trans. Plan. Daryl Roberts, Trans. Planner
Michelle Mraz, Trans. Planner Bernadette Ferenc, Exec. Asst.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by the Chair, Bob Penniman.

1. Changes to the agenda. Andy Montroll welcomed everyone to Contois Auditorium in Burlington. He reminded board members that it's hard for the audience to hear without the microphones.

2. Public Comment Period. There were none.

3. Action on Consent Agenda. There was one item on the consent agenda for a minor TIP amendment to add funds to the Route 15 slope stabilization project in Essex. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. GEORGE GERECKE SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Approval of Minutes. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2006 WITH CORRECTIONS IF ANY. JIM DUDLEY SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Executive Director's Report. Scott Johnstone reminded board members that we have a lunch meeting for our legislators on Monday, January 22nd at noon. This is an opportunity to offer comments to the Chittenden County delegation. Scott then introduced Michelle Mraz, the new

Transportation Planner at CCMPO. She will work on on regional and interregional bike/ped issues and how to ramp up the small community initiative to reach out to the rural communities.

6. FY 08 Annual Work Plan (UPWP) – Public Input Forum. Bob Penniman noted that this is the second year we've held a public forum to obtain ideas from the general public. Scott Johnstone noted the MPO prepares many documents but the most important include the MTP (long range transportation plan) to plan for 20 years, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the four-year capital program for construction, and UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) is the work the staff and/or consultants will be doing over the twelve-month fiscal year to plan for transportation in the county. It's a wide range of projects and programs and he gave examples. We haven't begun to prepare a draft work program yet as we wanted to get your ideas. He encouraged folks to tell us what you'd like to see us do over the next fiscal year, or what your problem is and we'll try to figure out how to deal with it.. Bob Penniman asked folks to come to the table and speak into the microphone.

Kit Perkins is the Executive Director of the Intervale Center in Burlington. She is here to talk about Intervale Road. The Intervale is a 700 acre flood plain in Burlington. It has a long history of agriculture and in the 1970's and 1980's was abandoned. Then Will Rapp of Gardener's Supply and the Intervale Foundation (now Intervale Center) had a vision to bring agriculture back to the Intervale. Now there are 13 independent farms producing over 500,000 lbs of food every year, which represents 7% of Burlington's needs. They recycle 20,000 tons of organic waste and compost products; they have a youth farm, and native plant nursery. Intervale Road is the major road serving all of these, especially the community garden which has 145 plots, where 450 people garden, the DPW clean fill storage area, and the McNeil Generating Plant. There is an extreme mix of people and businesses using that road, from the 18 wheelers bringing wood chips to parents pushing baby carriages. The road is in very poor condition and is extremely unsafe to walk, ride bikes or drive on. They have been working hard to bring attention to the need to improve the road. They've gotten grants for signage, etc and have been the ones improving the dirt portion of the road. In March 2006 it was determined that this is a city road and they're working with DPW to get some attention to the paved portion as well as the dirt portion of the road. They want improvements to safety and access. She feels that they really need planning funds to deal with the road to help all the users of this road. It's also economic engine for Burlington and Chittenden County with many FTEs in that area including Gardener's Supply.

Jon Slason is a resident of Burlington and a young professional. He was born and raised here, attended school here and now works here. "I issue this statement in light of the recent activities convened by the State of Vermont to study how to retain Vermont youth and provide employment opportunities – I feel that many of their efforts have been misguided by not focusing on the primary issues. Put simply – to keep people in the State – we need to build a State in which the youth want to live in. From my perspective, many of those youth you want to retain, simply want a lifestyle that we don't currently offer – an urban culture. As we talk about consensus on growth and development in Burlington and Chittenden county – I feel that from a youth perspective - that there is a disconnect between the goals and vision of the future between the generations. I see too often that many of the older generation do not want growth and development, especially here in Burlington. I think is short-sighted. It is the youth that will be saddled more and more with the responsibility of the State economy as the aging population moves out of the workforce. Already, education and social services are chewing up 68% of our

state and local revenues. As our population ages, the education costs may decrease slightly, but increasing costs of social services that we provide will require a greater share of the revenue. All this leaves less money to do other things with, especially fund transportation. The most fundamental way I see to decrease transportation costs is to build denser. The benefits of an urban environment are plentiful and go beyond simple definable costs – cities reduce emissions by reducing vehicle miles driven, reduced overall pavement miles, increased transit, increased walking and biking, and increased mobility for those without an automobile, an important consideration as the population ages. If mixed-use urban centers become a goal rather than a byproduct – more trips can be made without the use of the private automobile. With fewer private autos – there should be less congestion leaving more room for transit and other modes of travel. The MPO should lead the charge by encouraging the formation of innovative incentive mechanisms through transportation to develop dense, compact urban centers.”

Deb Sachs is a resident of South Burlington and Director of Alliance for Climate Action, of which the MPO is a member. Today more than anytime in the past public attention is turning to global warming and climate change. Vermonters are concerned and she’s getting many calls from communities and individuals asking what they can do about climate change. She’s here to appeal to the MPO to raise efforts towards addressing climate change and give folks solutions to climate change and what transportation means and how it relates to greenhouse gases. She knows we’re doing a lot of things that are leading the region and the state, but we need to help folks know that we’re reaching unhealthy levels of certain air pollutants and that we’ll be breathing unhealthy air. She feels we have the talent on the board, with the staff and the communities to address this and we could help relieve transportation demand in a number of ways. MPO has opportunity to improve transit and mode choices for Vermonters. She’d like to see the UPWP continue to invest to strengthen the message to the public on unhealthy air quality; and strengthen partnerships with other agencies such as Vermont Lung Association, Vermont Dept. of Health, Champlain Initiative, Lake Champlain Committee, etc. She’d like to see us collaborate more and coordinate on public outreach and marketing initiatives. We have a begun branding with Way to Go Week program and we need to elevate that to take it to the next level with significant investment. We should work with employers on a daily basis to see how they can work with their employees. More importantly, communities need to understand how greenhouse gases and transportation emissions are connected. So, what are they doing in terms of infrastructure improvements and behavior change. She thinks if we can help make the connection into the communities we can make the grass roots efforts more effective. We need to strengthen connection between land use, transportation and environmental quality assessments. Other places have made significant strides and she feels Burlington and Chittenden County can pull together and get us going forward on it. She applauded Safe Routes to Schools because by engaging youth and they can help us move forward. She hopes we continue to invest in these things. She’s getting calls from all over the state for help and she’s asking us to continue to invest in this.

Corey Berman is a resident of Burlington, an employee at UVM and the new chair of the Burlington Bike Council. He only moved here two years ago but seeing the sign “Welcome to Burlington” he noted that the waterfront is terrific. Working at UVM he spends a lot of time around the jughandle, Exit 14 and Main Street entrance to the campus and would love to see improvements there. It’s pretty harrowing to travel there. It needs more work for bicycles and pedestrians and even motor vehicles to be more welcoming. Colchester Avenue is another area that we should focus on. Winooski has done some work with developing UVM housing in their

new development, but he would like to see us reduce traffic and increase multi-modal transportation from that direction.

Glenn Taulton is a resident of Burlington since 1992. He uses CCTA on occasion, but being involved in the community he sees people who are struggling with work issues who don't have transportation particularly late in the evening. They have jobs working until 10 p.m. and they have no way to get to and from work, such as on Shelburne Road. These are people who just don't have enough money to own a vehicle. If buses could run on hourly basis it would help them immensely, even if they used smaller vehicles that are not as gas guzzling as the big buses. He hopes this is something we can address.

Juli Beth Hinds is the Planning Director in South Burlington. She said she has sometimes put in a shameless endorsement for Peter Keating's work on Safe Routes to Schools and the TLC (Transportation for Livable Communities) Grant Program. A couple of things that have come up in South Burlington show the need to continue these programs. Safe Routes to Schools is the highest impact program that has been brought to South Burlington by a regional agency - period. The effectiveness of that in helping their development review committee and planning commission really understand how their microlevel decisions affect transportation, community land use and livability of transportation system is hard to overstate. She also said the issue getting most of the air time in the South Burlington and now statewide, is education administration. How are we going to administer schools in Vermont with shrinking enrollment and rising budgets. She feels that will impact land use and transportation decisions. Are we going to have walkable community schools (that means more of them). Are we going to restructure our land use around schools? That has some implications. What kind of energy challenges are we facing if we have consolidation and we are moving kids around from geographic area. These are not going to be easy issues. She encouraged MPO to keep transportation and energy and community issues at the forefront. She hopes to see MPO support realistic transportation funding for transit and investment in other areas. The MPO has a unique and enviable position to be somewhat above politics and we'll need that in the coming fiscal year and she hopes we include it in our work program.

Sylvia Lane is a citizen of Burlington since 1971. She has never been able to drive and has always used the buses. All her comments have to do with CCTA. She has had a Medicaid pass for several years and she heard (and we may not have anything to do with it) that they're talking about eliminating the passes and instituting some other program and she doesn't know how they could do it. She doesn't know why. Over the past years they have lost bus stops that were convenient to people, because they interfered with traffic flow and she feels the priority should be public transportation especially as we baby boomers get older. She has never been able to drive, but some who drive now may no longer be able to drive in the future, and we have to be able to improve and concentrate on public transportation and that needs to be a priority not just what it has been. We really have a desperate need for something besides the side thing next to Old Navy to wait for buses.

Christina Colombe is a resident of Winooski. She complimented CCTA for recently extending the CATMA shuttle into Winooski, although she doesn't think the ridership is what it could be if fellow Winooski residents realized they have 14 minute service and extended hours to the hospital and Pine Street both am and pm. Her only issue with CATMA is that the CCTA drivers need some sensitivity awareness that it's not solely a paying commuter shuttle. Because the

Medicaid card is used a drive should not assume that the person doesn't know where they're going. She would rather they not make an issue of the Medicaid card, once a destination has been identified. The reconstruction of downtown Winooski has made improvements but she's disappointed/unsettled that a bus stop that you're counting on using, and allowing x number of minutes, moves (the one for Champlain Mill inbound to Burlington). It didn't move far, but when you're counting on taking time to get to the bus stop and see it moved, it causes panic. It's been a chronic musical chairs for two years and it's getting old. She observed someone made a comment to the driver that the Essex Junction route doesn't go anywhere near E. Spring Street, except for once in the evening, and the route brochure should reflect that infrequency. She's not sure if the problem has been addressed by CCTA (she has emailed them), but all the signs for the stops disappeared during the time she waited for her Medicaid card to be resumed. She asked the sign be put back up so folks don't have to wave the bus down. She feels if the drivers know the sign has disappeared, why does the customer have to call to have the sign put back up.

Bob Penniman thanked everyone for coming. He believes the cold night impacted our turnout, but for the TV audience, we will take comment through the end of the month and perhaps after. We did find this input very useful last year. Scott Johnstone noted that oftentimes people come and give input and we don't answer immediately because we're here to listen. We'll pull these comments together and you'll be able to find them on our website. Once we go through the process of developing our UPWP, we'll let you know what we did with each comment.

7. Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Resolution. Scott Johnstone noted the CEDS project was completed two years ago and they're required to do an annual report. As part of the process of submitting the report they need regional organizations to sign off on them. This gives our communities one more place to look for funds as they look to invest in economic development. Scott is on the steering committee and put together a resolution showing our support for this process. Scott noted that in front of members was a new copy of the table that was included in your packet because Jim Condos found an error in the amount for the Airport Parkway Wastewater treatment project (#4) that should be \$13M instead of \$30,000. In reviewing this, members questioned why #3 - a research project would cost \$13M. Ken Nolan said we don't need specific numbers to pass this resolution. He noted that this is real money. Milton was able to get \$2M for their sewage expansion program and he recommended we support the resolution.. **JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE CEDS RESOLUTION. JIM DUDLEY SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. FY07 Mid Year Budget Adjustment. Scott Johnstone said every year the MPO adopts a work program and in the midpoint of the year we check to see our progress and where we need to make adjustments for the rest of the year. This year all of the fiscal pressures were downward. We have added a couple of staff people, but the process took a little longer than anticipated so we have lower than anticipated staff levels. Some programs went down a few thousand dollars and most of those were because we didn't have staff. In other cases we had consultant dollars in place and we now realize we don't need them. There was additional demand for locally managed scoping and technical assistance. The overall budget is slightly higher because there is some additional money in locally managed match dollars and we made an error in our original budget for Route 15 when we didn't include \$25,000 in match money from the communities and institutions. **JIM DUDLEY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MID-YEAR ADJUSTMENT FOR FY07. JEFF CARR SECONDED.**

Jeff McDonald questioned the freight transportation plan task. Scott noted the major downward trend was the lesser effort needed for the Burlington railyard relocation. Tom Buckley said last week there was a meeting that took comment on the Vermont bike/ped plan and he questioned the decrease in 3.03.1 (Bike/Ped) and the increase in 3.03.2 (regional and interregional bike ped). Scott noted that the second bike/ped task refers to increased effort with Michelle on board and the other task reflects Peter's time going in other directions. Andy Montroll spoke to freight transportation and said the issue of railyard relocation comes and goes and wanted to be assured that money would be available if the issue comes up. Scott said yes, we redistributed it because we didn't think there was time to engage a consultant in the time we had left in this fiscal year. VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update Goals Reaffirmation. Peter Keating said on page 16 of the packet it gave some background on this issue. The guidance from the board a year ago was to update the plan we adopted two years ago. The TAC had suggested changes to the goals, but the MTP committee felt we should leave the goals as is because it is just an update and the next MTP could adjust them. Ken Nolan said the committee did spend a fair amount of time reviewing the TAC comments; and although they felt their suggested changes were minor it was felt they could be construed as major changes to the goals and felt it was appropriate to leave them as is. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO READOPT THE MTP GOALS AS PRESENTED. TOM BUCKLEY SECONDED. Andrea Morgante asked if the recommendations of the TAC should be considered in the actual body of the MTP even if we don't change the goals. Ken said they'll be part of their discussions. When asked for completion schedule, Peter Keating said they hope to have a draft at the end of this calendar year and adoption next calendar year. When asked if the goals are listed in order of importance, Bob Penniman said they are not. Brief discussion continued. Peter Keating said one thing driving this schedule is to be synchronized with the regional plan because we use their land use data. VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. Public Transportation Policy. Peter Keating said this policy deals specifically with new starts. It basically says that if we agree to fund new starts we will continue to fund a viable service. Tom Buckley said the public transportation committee has struggled with how to deal with sustainable funding. The committee developed a policy statement in September 2006 that was subsequently modified by the Public Transportation Committee (below) and then the Executive Committee (in *italics*):

POLICY RECOMMENDATION: The CCMPO believes that public transportation is an essential component of our Chittenden County transportation system and the present system is inadequate to meet the need. ***While we commit to preserving the existing levels of public transportation services, we also recognize that*** expansion of public transportation as the region grows requires a commitment to sustainable funding. ***Therefore***, CCMPO approval of a TIP that includes funding for a transit "New Starts" service commits the CCMPO, in subsequent TIPs, to promote the continued funding of the operations of this service, unless it is demonstrably shown that the service is nonviable using criteria agreed upon at the start of the service.

Although a vote was taken (and supported unanimously), when we transcribed the minutes and reviewed the meeting tape, it was discovered that there had been no motion made or seconded. We will add this to the next board agenda for formal action.

- a. Executive Committee minutes from December 6 and January 3 were included in the packet for members' information.
- b. TAC report from December 5 was included in the packet.
- c. Strategic Planning Committee. They met in December and talked about potential committee structure that would be responsive to the TAC and would meet some of the objectives of the board. They will have a dialog with the TAC. They began dialog on voting and when and how we should deal with increase of votes. They talked about Census and how things change and we talked about how good the mid-term Census numbers are and the committee has not reached any conclusions yet. He thinks they're at a place where after a couple more meetings they may have recommendations.
- d. Public Transportation Committee. We just heard from them regarding the policy statement.
- e. Finance Committee. We just dealt with the mid-year adjustment. Jeff Carr noted their next item is to help staff with project management system to be sure we get good product by keeping consultants on their toes.
- f. CCRPC. Bob Penniman said the adopted regional plan left open the question of defining "regional impact." They've asked each community to appoint a representative to that committee.
- g. MTP Committee. We just reaffirmed the goals.

12. Members items: There were none.

JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 8:20 P.M. JEFF MCDONALD SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernadette Ferenc
Executive Assistant