

Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, March 21, 2007  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Place: CCMPO Offices, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, South Burlington, VT 05403  
Present: Andy Montroll, Burlington Jeff McDonald, Charlotte  
Marc Landry, Colchester Jeff Carr, Essex & Essex Junction Alt.  
Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg Rob Zimmerman, Huntington  
Virginia Clarke, Richmond Paul Bohne, Shelburne  
Tom Buckley, Westford George Gerecke, Williston  
Mike O'Brien, Winooski (VC) Neale Lunderville, VTrans Secretary  
Ex-Officio: Chris Jolly, FHWA Chris Cole, CCTA  
Others: Amy Bell, VTrans Plan. Coord. Matthew Langham, VTrans  
Chapin Spencer, Local Motion  
Staff: Scott Johnstone, Executive Director Peter Keating, Sr. Trans. Planner  
Christine Forde, Sr. Trans. Planner David Roberts, Sr. Trans. Planner  
Susan Smichenko, Sr. Trans. Plan. Daryl Benoit, Trans. Planner  
Eleni Churchill, Sr. Trans. Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by the Vice Chair, Mike O'Brien, who chaired the meeting. He welcomed folks to the meeting, with specific welcome to VTrans Secretary Neale Lunderville.

1. Changes to the Agenda. Consent item C-1 was added to the deliberative agenda as item 4.1; and we added item 9.1 Prioritization.

2. Public Comment Period. There were none.

3. Action on Consent Agenda. The remaining item was C-2 – Public Transportation Policy. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY TOM BUCKLEY TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Approval of Minutes. MARC LANDRY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GEORGE GERECKE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2007 WITH CORRECTIONS IF ANY. Page 8 – changed Native Plan Nursery to Native Plant Nursery. MOTION CARRIED WITH MARC LANDRY AND JEFF CARR ABSTAINING.

5. Executive Director's Report. This report was sent electronically to members.

6. Introduction – VTrans Secretary Neale Lunderville. Sec. Lunderville noted that VTrans values the relationship with CCMPO. The Secretary offered opening thoughts relating to his proposed "Road to Affordability", which he believes must realign our focus to system preservation – focus on bridges and culverts- while still can at reasonable cost. The need to focus on preservation and maintenance results in long promised new capacity projects being delayed and now needing to see these projects on a more realistic timetable. In the future we will need to focus on prioritization systems resulting in more open transparent system.

1 Next the Secretary offered his thoughts regarding the House Transportation Bill, offering that  
2 they have largely done a good job, but there are four disagreements:

3 ? Prioritization system modification - low ranked projects moved up.

4 ? Splintering of Transportation Fund – local funds separated off; VTrans disagrees.

5 ? Public Transportation not addressed – to be addressed separately; must be considered along  
6 with all other goals.

7 ? \$800K cut to ITS – 511 system is funded by this source; VTrans disagrees.

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9 The Secretary kindly offered to answer questions from the Board:

10  
11 When Jeff McDonald asked how the gas tax works, Sec. Lunderville said the gas tax is a fixed  
12 per gallon price. If folks buy less gas, dollars go down, so now we are tapping a declining  
13 revenue source. The administration is not interested in raising it as they believe it to be a  
14 regressive tax. When asked how he intends to deal with diminishing gas tax dollars, Sec.  
15 Lunderville said 1) continuing to reduce JTOC; 2) look for cost effective choices before looking  
16 at new revenues. When asked if we are at risk of not matching federal dollars, Sec. Lunderville  
17 said no.

18  
19 Rob Zimmerman asked what the State’s guidelines are for prioritization. Sec. Lunderville said  
20 this has been determined in legislation and include: condition, project momentum and regional  
21 significance (economic impact should be part of this section).

22  
23 When Tom Buckley asked the Agency’s position on the public transportation budget and the  
24 separated bill, Sec. Lunderville said they don’t necessarily disagree, but rather that the  
25 disagreement is more about the time needed to review from House Transportation perspective.  
26 House wants more money into public transportation. Further, the Secretary noted the importance  
27 of making budget decisions in the context of all the competing fiscal pressures on the Agency.

28  
29 Chris Cole asked about the linkage of prioritization at the MPO and the TIP. How can projects  
30 within the MPO TIP not be included in Budget Proposal when agreed to by VTrans in the past.  
31 What is role of executive branch in honoring the TIP once constraint is set? Sec. Lunderville  
32 said when money is tight, discussion gets tough. VTrans proposed budget for next fiscal year is  
33 actually proposed to be lower by 17 million dollars ; which results in much more difficult  
34 decision making.

35  
36 George Gerecke asked if the gas tax could be indexed (sales tax vs. flat fee), would that stabilize  
37 revenues? Sec. Lunderville said he believed such a change would likely be less stable. Jeff Carr  
38 said energy prices in all sectors are impacting gas revenues; indexing would create greater  
39 volatility. Tourism is also down due to energy costs, further impacting the transportation fund.

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41 Virginia Clarke questioned why VTrans would oppose setting dollars aside for towns as  
42 suggested by the House Transportation Committee? Can you assure that reducing funding to  
43 towns will not result in a tax shift to towns? Sec. Lunderville said it’s not intended to be a tax  
44 shift, adding that school decisions are the driving force behind all local tax issues.

45  
46 7. Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Work Program (UPWP). Scott Johnstone gave an update on the  
47 process. We collected 44 ideas for new initiatives from various sources. Both UPWP committee  
48 and the TAC have offered early comments. Now staff are developing formal proposal for review  
49 by UPWP committee, TAC and Board in April/May.

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2 8. Way to Go Week. Peter Keating led the discussion on Way to Go Week using the project's  
3 website. The most important issue and action is for all to sign up to participate. Good  
4 information on publicity, benefits, prizes, sponsors and resources has been developed and is  
5 available. It was noted that we should add FHWA to sponsor list.  
6

7 Tom Buckley asked if there is an event planned this year. Peter Keating said that there may be a  
8 Governor's press conference on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. An awards presentation will take place May 31<sup>st</sup> at the  
9 boathouse. Sec. Lunderville asked if the Chambers were involved. Peter said Burlington  
10 Business Association and Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility were approached. Jeff  
11 Carr suggested contacting VLCT.  
12

13 9. Legislative Update. Scott Johnstone noted that the Secretary covered most of what's  
14 happening. Not much but fiscal issues are on the table. He noted that he believes that the "Road  
15 to Affordability is missing a key impact , which is that it disproportionately hits Chittenden  
16 County, since our region is home to a large percentage of the congestion and thus capacity  
17 development projects that are pushed off and/or likely to not occur. He further noted that some  
18 Towns are having some success with the Legislature in potentially getting their projects back on  
19 track, but it will really require Town by Town action to accomplish such progress.  
20

21 9.1 Prioritization. Christine Forde presented a memo on the current prioritization process,  
22 noting that the Board wants to insure that Towns were engaged early in this process this year.  
23 The scoring sheets have been sent to each town for review and many have already responded.  
24 Jeff Carr asked the Secretary why the MPO's prioritization only counts as 20% of the score –  
25 noting that it is a difficult process to work through and many wonder if it is worth the effort  
26 when it counts so little. Sec. Lunderville said that is open to discussion over longer term, noting  
27 he prefers to leave the current system as is in the short term.  
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29 10. Committee Reports – none had reports to offer  
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31 11. Members' Items: Jeff McDonald said the meetings are not advertised in Free Press  
32 anymore; please report back.  
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34 JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 8:45 P.M. JEFF MCDONALD  
35 SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.  
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37 Respectfully submitted,  
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41 Scott Johnstone, Executive Director