

1 Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization
2 Regular Meeting
3 Minutes
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5 DATE: Wednesday, November 28, 2007
6 TIME: 7:00 p.m.
7 PLACE: CCMPO Offices; 30 Kimball Avenue; South Burlington, VT 05403
8 PRESENT: Andy Montroll, Burlington Jim Donovan, Charlotte Alternate (7:40)
9 Marc Landry, Colchester (VChair) Jeff Carr, Essex (Chair) & Essex Jct. Alt.
10 Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg Rob Zimmerman, Huntington Alt. (7:10)
11 Bob Penniman, Jericho Andy Legg, Milton Alternate
12 Mary Houle, Richmond Jim Dudley, Shelburne (Sec-Treas.)
13 Jim Condos, South Burlington Steve Owen, Underhill
14 George Gerecke, Williston Mike O'Brien, Winooski
15 Amy Bell, VTrans Plan. Coord.
16 Ex-Officio: Justin Dextrateur, CCRPC
17 Others: Matthew Langham, VTrans Greg Brown, CCRPC Exec. Dir.
18 Paul Craven, Craven Mgmt. Charles Hunter, NECR
19 Staff: Scott Johnstone, Exec. Director Peter Keating, Sr. Trans. Planner
20 Christine Forde, Sr. Trans. Planner David Roberts, Sr. Trans. Planner
21 Eleni Churchill, Sr. Trans. Planner Daryl Benoit, Trans. Planner/IT
22 Bryan Davis, Trans. Planner Jason Charest, Trans. Engineer
23 Bernadette Ferenc, Exec. Asst.
24

25 The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by the Chair, Jeff Carr.
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27 1. Changes to the Agenda. Jeff Carr noted that Secretary Lunderville will not be here tonight, so
28 we will move Item #8 (Rail Update) to Item #6. JIM CONDOS MADE A MOTION,
29 SECONDED BY MIKE O'BRIEN TO CHANGE THE AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED
30 UNANIMOUSLY.
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32 2. Public Comment Period. There were none.
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34 3. Action on Consent Agenda. There were no consent agenda items.
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36 4. Approval of Minutes. JIM DUDLEY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES
37 OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2007 WITH CORRECTIONS, IF ANY. MARC LANDRY SECONDED.
38 The following corrections were noted: page 5, line 7 should read ...transportation of solid waste;
39 page 3, line 39, correct CMCPO to CCMPO; and page 3, line 43 change sentence to read "...
40 benefits of line and sign improvements;..." MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO
41 APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.
42

43 5. Executive Director's Report. This was sent electronically.
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45 6. Rail Update.

46 a. New England Central Railroad (NECR) Tunnel. Charles Hunter, General Manager of NECR,
47 said they're here to talk about the North Avenue railroad tunnel in Burlington which is important
48 to the city and businesses in the area. Paul Craven noted that NECR is the largest carrier in the
49 State of Vermont. NECR runs on the eastern side of the state to Montpelier and then to Essex

1 and up to St. Albans and into Canada. About 7 million tons of freight is moved by rail every
2 year and NECR carries 51% of that. In addition NECR runs the Amtrak Vermonter. There is an
3 8 mile section of track in Essex that services Burlington interchange with 9,000 rail cars per year
4 – carrying cement, home heating fuel, etc. Even if we got Amtrak into Burlington, you need that
5 section because they'd have to turn around in Essex. The tunnel is old - built between 1860-
6 1862, is 350' long and has two curves. The current tunnel could never handle double-stack cars.
7 It was constructed of seven layers of brick built in a large sand pile. There has been rapid
8 deterioration over the past few years. Burlington has water and sewer lines running on top of the
9 tunnel and it's a major electric corridor. If the tunnel fails, it would require a major rerouting
10 and rail traffic would have to go to Bellows Falls. This line also serves the wood chip plant and
11 the tunnel would not affect that facility. However, anything coming from Vermont Railway
12 (VTR) lines has to move through the tunnel. Mr. Craven showed photos of the deterioration of
13 the tunnel. Some improvements have been made but there is seepage and water causing
14 reshaping of the tunnel. In some spots five of the seven layers of bricks have come out. NECR
15 and the City are monitoring this weekly. It was noted that Scott Johnstone, Daryl Benoit and
16 Sec. Lunderville and his staff have seen the tunnel. They're looking to see what can be done for
17 a long term fix. When asked who owns the ROW in all the other systems in the state, Paul
18 Craven said half is owned by the State of Vermont (including VTR and the Burlington railyard).
19 Bob Penniman feels it is in the state's best interest for the State of Vermont to take over
20 ownership from the bottom of College Street to the east side of the tunnel so they would be
21 responsible for the renovations. Charles Hunter said Rail America is willing to put up the 20%
22 match for this improvement. Discussion ensued about who are the railroads and ROW
23 ownership. Mary Houle asked if the viewing public could go on line to get more information.
24 Charles Hunter said Rail America has a website and their local railroad is New England Central
25 Railroad (NECR). Scott Johnstone noted the MPO and the state have rail sections on their
26 websites.

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28 When Andy Montroll asked what the long term fix would be, Paul Craven said the immediate
29 purpose is to keep the tunnel open. Charles Hunter said they've had an engineer in there looking
30 at what could be done long term, but that has not been determined yet. Paul Craven said the
31 trend nationally is to make tunnels larger to accommodate double-stack cars. A lengthy
32 discussion continued. Paul Craven said the reason they're here is because the MPO would need
33 to take action for it to go on the TIP. Scott Johnstone said it would have to come to board to get
34 on the TIP. He noted that he and Daryl went through the tunnel and there are some serious
35 issues to be dealt with on this tunnel.

36
37 b. Coming Trends – Staff Presentation. Scott Johnstone said there are some pretty major
38 changes going to be taking place whether it be in Halifax or closing the Panama Canal. Daryl
39 Benoit noted there are 126 miles of rail line from Bennington to Burlington with 8 miles between
40 Burlington and Essex; and 25 miles from Essex to St. Albans and on to Canadian National
41 Railway. He reviewed proposed changes along the western Vermont corridor. He reviewed
42 forecasted data showing that truck freight will double and rail freight will probably triple for
43 Vermont traffic via ports in Canada. Freight flows are estimated to triple in Chittenden County
44 by 2020. Daryl Benoit reviewed investments that are planned for the Port of Halifax which is
45 one of the largest auto ports in North America. It will become a deep water port to accommodate
46 post-Panamax vessels, which will be the largest vehicles going through the expanded Panama
47 Canal. Daryl then explained the Panama Canal expansion. They're adding two locks – one on
48 Atlantic side and one on Pacific side; and he reviewed other improvements. This is a very big
49 project which started this year and will double the 2005 capacity by 2020. Daryl then explained

1 short sea service for taking freight to other Northeast ports such as Boston and Portsmouth, NH.
2 Scott Johnstone said the point is to show the enormity of what will either have to move on rail or
3 by truck and already there are trucks sitting around looking for drivers. That's why we're
4 thinking this tunnel is so important. Right now freight from Halifax moves to Montreal,
5 Toronto, Detroit and Chicago. After a brief discussion, Jeff Carr noted we'll put Daryl's
6 presentation on our website.

7 c. GRIP Relationship. Jeff Carr noted this began as the Gateway Rural Improvement Program
8 based on a federal program. Since then the group has adopted the acronym by itself. Scott
9 Johnstone said there is \$30M earmark and some folks want to use this to leverage more money.
10 Some would like to use it on the OMYA spur in Middlebury. One of the things in the legislation
11 was to get the tracks to 286,000 lb. capacity. Since then we've been working with the group
12 called GRIP which has been trying for several years to get a hold of how that money will be
13 spent. There had been interest in having us serve on that board, which we declined, but agreed to
14 cooperate with them. We are still working on an MOU to decide what areas we'll agree to work
15 on together. We're prepared to enter into any agreement once we see how the regions will all
16 benefit. Jim Condos said the \$30M was the earmark for the whole western corridor and we made
17 the case that they needed to include the eight mile Essex line to complete the western corridor.
18 He wondered where the earmark funds for the Burlington/Essex rail are and why we couldn't use
19 that for the tunnel. Jeff Carr said that when the earmark for B/E was lost, the former chair and
20 five communities and institutions along the Rte. 15 corridor worked with VTrans to come up
21 with funding and provide local match for the Route 15 corridor study. Jim Condos asked if we
22 could get an audit of where the \$4.8M went in the state. One of the struggles at the state house is
23 that everyone thinks Chittenden County gets all the money. Scott Johnstone wanted members to
24 be updated. We think it's beneficial to be a partner with all the regions along the corridor, but
25 we want to be sure there is a reason for us to participate.

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27 7. Enhancement Proposal Prioritization. Peter Keating noted this is an exercise that most
28 members have participated in before. The enhancement grant program came about in 1991 with
29 ISTEA. It essentially funds things that had not been traditionally transportation projects. In
30 Vermont it was used primarily for bike/ped projects. Several years ago the CCMPO came up
31 with our own criteria and evaluated our own projects to be considered with the statewide
32 submissions. He described how it works with the state review. This year we received four
33 applications: Johnnie Brook Road Path in Richmond; VT Rt 2A shared use path in Williston;
34 VT Rt. 116 sidewalk in Hinesburg Village; and Bridge Street bike/pedestrian scoping in
35 Richmond. The review committee recommended the following priority: 1) Hinesburg; 2)
36 Williston; 3) Richmond Bridge St. Bike/Ped and 4) Richmond Johnnie Brook Road Path. The
37 TAC concurred with the subcommittee and it is here for board approval. When asked the rate of
38 funding for our projects, Peter Keating said over the years it's been a mixed bag and we've
39 scored better in recent years. This year there are 60 projects statewide and only \$2.5M available.
40 Andy Montroll asked how the cost of the project fits into the evaluation. Peter Keating said it's
41 not a criterion we use at the regional level. It is probably a part of the state evaluation but not
42 one of the criteria. He noted that we could change our criteria to include cost. Amy Bell said in
43 her previous job she reviewed all ten years of applications and noted that cost is a factor by the
44 committee plus there is an evaluation. Jim Condos asked if we can see a list of what the funding
45 has been for enhancements over the last ten years. Amy Bell noted that funding for the
46 enhancement program is mandated to be 10% of the STP funds the state receives. BOB
47 PENNIMAN MADE A MOTION THAT WE APPROVE ENHANCEMENT GRANT
48 RECOMMENDATION AS FORWARDED TO THE BOARD IN THE DOCUMENT OF
49 NOVEMBER 28, 2007 BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE TAC. MARY HOULE

1 SECONDED. Bob Penniman said for the record you list the eleven criteria for Chittenden
2 County. What he's not seeing is the priority that should be taken for downtown centers. Peter
3 Keating said Criteria #10 tries to get to that. VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
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5 9. Committee Reports:

- 6 a. Executive Committee. Draft minutes were included in the meeting packet.
7 b. Transportation Advisory Committee. The TAC reports were included.
8 c. Public Transportation Committee. They haven't met recently.
9 d. Finance Committee. Jim Dudley reported that the committee will meet next week and one of
10 the pleasures they'll have is to accept the FY07 audit.
11 e. CCRPC. Justin Dextrateur introduced himself as the CCRPC vice-chair and expressed the
12 level of disappointment the RPC members had with the fact that the MPO had asked them
13 not to comment on the circ draft EIS because comments might be detrimental and so they
14 chose not to, but then the CCMPO submitted comments. Board members asked to be
15 brought up to speed about what happened. Justin said the RPC spent a significant amount of
16 staff time to review the various alternatives and see how they related to the regional plan. It
17 extended over several meetings and ended in a deadlock. After hearing the MPO submitted
18 comments, they voted on Monday night to submit comments after the deadline. Brief
19 discussion. Jeff Carr said the selectboards were asked by CCRPC to review their comments
20 and the circ communities banded together. It should be noted that MPO did not stop this, but
21 rather individual members of the circ communities. Discussion continued. Justin suggested
22 we move forward and feels the communication between the two organizations needs to be
23 more proactive. Jeff agreed and made it very clear that it was not our intention to sandbag
24 anyone.
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26 JIM CONDOS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 9:00 P.M. MARY HOULE
27 SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
28

29 Respectfully submitted,
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33 Bernadette Ferenc
34 Executive Assistant
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