

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
2 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES  
3

4 DATE: Monday, January 7, 2008  
5 TIME: 9:00 a.m.  
6 PLACE: CCMPO Offices, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, South Burlington, VT  
7 Present: George Gerecke, Chair, Williston  
8 Matt Langham, VTrans  
9 Amy Bell, VTrans  
10 Bill McCormick, Intercity Transit Representative  
11 Dennis Lutz, Essex  
12 Bernie Gagnon, Shelburne  
13 Jeff Arango, Essex Junction  
14 Mike Coates, Business Representative  
15 Aaron Frank, CCTA  
16 Dan Bradley, Burlington  
17 Chris Jolly, FHWA  
18 David Spitz, Jericho  
19 Paul Craven, Rail Representative  
20 Marci Ryan, Disabled Community Representative  
21 Dean Bloch, Charlotte  
22 Steve Palmer, Winooski  
23 Jane Marvin, Senior Representative  
24 Stan Hamlet, Underhill  
25 MPO Staff: Peter Keating, Senior Planner  
26 Bryan Davis, Staff Planner  
27 Jason Charest, Transportation Engineer  
28 Eleni Churchill, Senior Planner  
29 Scott Johnstone, Executive Director  
30 Dave Roberts, Senior Planner  
31 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner  
32 Others: Tim Fluck, CCRPC  
33 Greg Brown, CCRPC  
34

35 Chair George Gerecke called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.  
36

37 **1. Consent Agenda**

38 The consent agenda items – Minor TIP amendments related to Kennedy Drive reconstruction, US  
39 2/Industrial Avenue intersection improvements, and Market Street Reconstruction – were  
40 unanimously approved.  
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42 **2. Approval of Minutes**

43 The minutes of November 6, 2007 were approved without changes.  
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45 **3. Public Comments**

46 No members of the public were present.  
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48 **4. FY08 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment**

49 Peter Keating referred to the memo in the meeting packet that explained the addition of two projects  
50 to the FY08 TIP – US 7 paving in Burlington and I-89 Exit 15 safety improvements. These were  
51 classified as major amendments, requiring a public hearing, because they are new. There was some  
52 discussion on the status of the Exit 15 project as to whether it was scoping or design. That project  
53 needed some data updates to a previous scoping study before going into design hence it was

1 referred to as scoping/design. Following discussion, DAN BRADLEY MADE A  
2 MOTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENT. THE MOTION WAS  
3 SECONDED BY STEVE PALMER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.  
4

##### 5 **5. CCRPC Substantial Regional Impact Criteria**

6 Peter explained that the regional planning commission, under state law, was required to define  
7 “substantial regional impact” criteria for potential consideration of the Regional Plan in Act 250  
8 proceedings. The CCRPC sought MPO assistance in helping determine what constitutes substantial  
9 transportation impacts. There was a memo in the meeting packet that provided some background  
10 and two potential criteria for the TAC’s consideration. Tim Fluck provided more detailed  
11 background information on regional planning commission’s responsibilities related to this and he  
12 described the process established by the CCRPC to help determine the criteria – a task force of  
13 municipal officials advising staff. While two separate draft criteria were offered as possibilities, the  
14 CCRPC is not committed to accepting one or the other. They would prefer however to keep things  
15 fairly simple if possible according to Greg Brown. Questions arose related to how a road project  
16 would be treated and what the implications related to transit might be. Greg noted that the schedule  
17 to complete this project was flexible. Members felt that this item required further discussion and a  
18 small TAC group working with staff could help move this along to resolution. TAC members  
19 Aaron Frank, Dave Spitz, Dennis Lutz, Dean Bloch and George Gerecke agreed to assist with this.  
20 Staff will return to the TAC next month with a recommendation.  
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##### 22 **6. Rail Issues**

23 Mike Coates and Paul Craven requested time on the agenda to discuss several Vermont rail system  
24 issues. Mike started by describing current issues related to passenger rail services – the demise of a  
25 rail car contract between the state and Colorado Rail Car, the existing passenger rail services, and  
26 potential Amtrak service on the Western side of the state to serve Burlington. He then spoke about  
27 freight issues, focusing on the need and desire to get more freight off trucks and onto rail, the  
28 problems with the Burlington tunnel, and track not up to sufficient standards. Mike noted that with  
29 completion of the Middlebury rail spur to OMYA, that line will annually carry 44,000 rail cars,  
30 removing thousands of truck trips from the center of Middlebury. Paul focused in more detail on  
31 the conditions of the rail tunnel under North Avenue in Burlington. He distributed a one page fact  
32 sheet based on a recent analysis of the tunnel’s condition and the critical state of its disrepair. Short  
33 term repairs to the tunnel are estimated to be \$300,000 to \$350,000. Since the tunnel is located on a  
34 private line, the state is reluctant to contribute funding for repairs and the railroad owner is seeking  
35 public sector financial assistance for the project. A discussion on the freight implications of  
36 shutting down the tunnel followed. This expanded to a broader discussion on rail freight in a larger  
37 regional context that included the expansion of the Port of Halifax. Paul also passed out a one page  
38 concept paper on Amtrak service to Burlington which noted improvement costs from 2000 and  
39 identified points that argue in favor of such service. Following further discussion, Mike thanked the  
40 TAC for the opportunity to discuss these issues and to hear his concerns.  
41

##### 42 **7. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

43 Scott Johnstone wanted to let the TAC know about two items related to our work program. The  
44 first is that we are about to make some mid year budget adjustments between some tasks although  
45 this entails less movement of funds in comparison to years past. Secondly, developing next year’s  
46 UPWP is about to get underway. There’s a January 25<sup>th</sup> deadline to identify projects for the FY 09  
47 work program and a solicitation to municipalities will be going out to identify potential planning  
48 tasks.  
49

##### 50 **8. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

51 Dave Roberts reported that all comments on the draft Circ EIS were in to VTrans and a record of  
52 decision might come this summer or fall. He also remarked on modeling for the proposed I-89 Exit

1 12 park and ride facility, the Dorset Street signal retiming project – now set for implementation in  
2 late January, a soon-to-be-released RFP for a new household travel survey (the last one dates to  
3 1998), and the House Transportation Committee bridge tour. Eleni Churchill reported that the final  
4 VT RT 15 stakeholders group meeting would take place in February. She also reported on the  
5 status of the Western Corridor study and the Burlington Shelburne Street rotary safety project.  
6 Bryan Davis provided an update on the first year status of the Small Communities Initiative, the  
7 availability of CCMPO Board meetings viewing over the internet, the status of the public  
8 participation plan update, and our role on helping launch a car sharing program in Burlington.  
9 Jason Charest reported that the CCMPO staff has been invited to join with police departments to  
10 form a Chittenden County Traffic Safety Coalition, that signs had been installed on the Westford  
11 Milton Road, and that at the request of Shelburne, staff was looking at development impacts on the  
12 traffic light at US 7/Falls Road/Harbor Road. Peter Keating spoke about the scenario planning  
13 workshop and the staff's intent to incorporate this technique into our next Metropolitan  
14 Transportation Plan. He also mentioned the status of the Pedestrian Bicycle Plan update and the  
15 completion of a public transportation plan for Hinesburg that recommends a local volunteer driver  
16 program and a subsidized taxi voucher system. Daryl Benoit described new Way to Go web site  
17 enhancements that allow individuals and clubs/workplaces/other groups to sign on and compete for  
18 prizes. Scott reported that the recently enacted federal appropriations bill included funding for two  
19 Chittenden County projects – buses for CCTA and VT RT 15 improvements in Colchester and  
20 Essex Junction.

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## 22 **9. CCMPO November Board Meeting Report**

23 George Gerecke reported that this meeting focused on rail discussion, including the Burlington  
24 Tunnel and Daryl's presentation on the freight situation in the Northeast - especially the impacts of  
25 the expansion of the Port of Halifax. He also mentioned that the Board approved the Enhancement  
26 project recommendations forwarded by the TAC.

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28 The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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30 Respectfully submitted,

31 Peter Keating