

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

4 DATE: Tuesday, February 3, 2009
5 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
6 PLACE: CCMPO Offices, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, South Burlington, VT
7 Present: Jeanne K. Wilson, Hinesburg
8 Ed Wildman, Huntington
9 Amy Bell, VTrans
10 Meredith Schuft, Institutions Representative
11 Bernie Gagnon, Shelburne
12 Dennis Lutz, Essex
13 Dan Bradley, Burlington
14 Stephen Palmer, Winooski
15 Seth Jensen, Jericho
16 Robin Pierce, Essex Junction
17 Bruce Hoar, South Burlington
18 Chris Jolly, FHWA
19 Murray Benner, SSTA
20 MPO Staff: Jason Charest, Transportation Engineer
21 Dave Roberts, Senior Planner
22 Christine Forde, Senior Planner
23 Bryan Davis, Transportation Planner
24 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner
25 Peter Keating, Senior Planner
26 Eleni Churchill, Senior Planner
27 Michele Boomhower, Executive Director
28 Janet Botula, Admin./Communications Assistant
29 Others: Annie Bourdon, CarShare Vermont
30 David Crawford, Essex Junction
31 Sawyer Joecks, Essex Junction
32

33 Vice-Chair Jeanne Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
34

35 **1. Consent Agenda**

36 No items this month.
37

38 **2. Approval of Minutes**

39 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2008 BY DAN
40 BRADLEY AND SECONDED BY AMY BELL. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
41

42 **3. Public Comments**

43 No members of the public were present
44

45 **4. CarShare Vermont**

46 Annie Bourdon, Executive Director of CarShare Vermont, gave a PowerPoint presentation
47 about the organization which launched last December in Burlington, as the result of cooperation among
48 many local groups: the CCMPO, the City of Burlington, CATMA, Local Motion, UVM, Champlain
49 College and others. They now have eight vehicles available and have a growing membership of over 150
50 members. She described how the program works, why it is beneficial to individuals as well as businesses
51 and made cost comparisons between owning a car and using CarShare Vermont. She stated that studies
52 have shown that a community with a non-profit car-share organization can benefit from substantially
53 fewer greenhouse gas emissions, better air quality, fewer cars on the road, improved accessibility,
54 less fuel consumed, better land use and increased use of alternative transportation modes.

1 CarShare Vermont hopes to add four more cars in the near future and to expand beyond Burlington in
2 2010.

3 4 **5. Project Prioritization**

5 Christine Forde explained that the Legislature requires VTrans to prioritize projects in order to justify
6 capital budget recommendations. The prioritization is asset-management based so as to keep Vermont's
7 transportation systems – its paving, bridges, aviation, roadway, safety, bicycle, and pedestrian assets in
8 good working order. Both VTrans and CCMPO have input into the prioritization. Projects are scored
9 according to VTrans' program categories which include: Roadway, Safety and Traffic Operations,
10 Paving, Interstate Bridge, State Bridge, Town Highway Bridge, Bike and Pedestrian Facilities, and Park-
11 and-Ride Facilities. Christine stated that VTrans' more quantitative score is weighted 80% while the
12 regional input from the CCMPO is more qualitative and takes into account social and economic issues.
13 Dennis Lutz asked about the prioritizing of the Stimulus Package projects. Amy Bell responded that
14 priority is used but just because your project is ranked first doesn't mean that you'll go first, as readiness
15 and other factors are taken into consideration. The State wants to rely on the priority model and town lists
16 are a moving target. Just how local projects mesh with the State's priorities isn't clear. Christine
17 mentioned that there are three new projects: VT15 footbridge in Jericho, VT15 Pearl Street
18 Improvements in Essex Junction and a sidewalk project in Williston. Project scoring sheets for the 2011
19 project prioritization are being provided to TAC and Board members in February for input and comments
20 which need to be received by February 20. Additional materials were distributed including Attachment 5-
21 2 which highlighted the difference between the CCMPO and VTrans' ranking for the 2010 projects. Each
22 community will get an opportunity to comment on the scores and Christine will present these next month.
23

24 **6. Road Managers Meeting Report**

25 Bryan Davis stated that although road managers in other parts of the state have been meeting regularly
26 to discuss common issues, Chittenden County road managers had not done so since the 1980s. While the
27 TAC meetings allow municipalities to meet regarding policy and planning, staff and partners decided that
28 it was time to reinstitute the meetings with the road managers so that issues such as equipment, new
29 technologies, home-grown solutions and topics of the day could be discussed. As a result, the CCMPO
30 partnered with VT Local Roads and hosted a meeting on January 27th that was attended by 25 people from
31 nine different towns and VTrans. Everyone seemed to agree that additional meetings should be held but
32 how often has not yet been determined. They hope to invite vendors, discuss equipment sharing etc. They
33 agreed that meetings should be held in different locations with the next meeting being in Milton on April
34 14. Bryan is looking forward to seeing how it all develops and welcomes comments. Jeanne Wilson
35 relayed information from Hinesburg's road foreman that it will be important that meetings should not
36 cater only to urban areas but to rural areas as well. Steve Palmer mentioned that both he and his staff
37 thought it was good for the road foremen to have the opportunity to meet each other.
38

39 **7. Federal Stimulus Package and TIP Amendments**

40 Michele Boomhower stated that the CCMPO had started asking for a project list back in December and
41 that since then the list has been winnowed down by about one third. At this point she believes that we are
42 in the \$20 million range for projects that will be "shovel ready" in 180 days. She further stated that
43 CCMPO Board leadership is interested in our projects meeting the mark and that it doesn't want to have
44 to return any funding. Michele and Christine are working on a cover sheet for each project, getting as
45 much detail as possible and assessing readiness. VTrans has asked the League of Cities to use readiness as
46 a factor and they would like a response by next week. Michele explained that each town will get a form
47 for the projects that really seem to have a shot at getting funded based on what qualifies for the federal
48 stimulus package (If it won't move quickly she will not ask for more information). Projects should
49 include detailed descriptions including feet/miles of pavement etc. They will also be looking at the 180
50 day factor in regards to right of way issues and who is responsible for next steps in the project process.
51 Further, they will check to see that projects are in the TIP, if it's a regular priority project, if it's in the
52 Capital projects yet, what steps have been completed etc.
53

1 Michele then spoke about the TIP amendment process stating that amendments usually go the TAC and
2 then to the Board. However, new grant awards can avoid the TAC and go straight to the Board. The
3 Board wants to categorize any projects receiving high priority using Stimulus package funding as new
4 grant awards so that projects can be put into the TIP more quickly and then moved into the STIP.
5 Michele reiterated that the recent list continues to evolve.
6

7 Chris Jolly stated that Michele did a good job summarizing the situation and that things are changing with
8 many amendments in the works. He felt that Vermont stands to receive \$130 - \$150 million. The funds
9 will likely be allocated like the Surface Transportation Program (STP) so that monies can be used across
10 the state. Fed Regulations, Title 23 requires that ten percent of the STP monies go to enhancement
11 projects. If this is true, there would be monies available to local governments. Chris noted that VTrans is
12 doing what it can by authorizing design work etc, so that projects can move and be completed in 180
13 days. They have this additional work plus they still have their annual appropriation to obligate by
14 October 1st which will also take up staff time.
15

16 A long discussion followed, initiated by Dennis Lutz, regarding right of way issues and how that could be
17 a huge impediment to quickly using the federal stimulus package dollars His concern was that sign
18 projects that can easily be completed will receive higher priority than more important but difficult-to-
19 complete road projects. Chris Jolly acknowledged that some of that type of work would happen but by
20 the second year we could catch up on roadway needs. He expects that the feds will mandate that forty
21 percent of the stimulus money must conform to the STP and that the other sixty percent will be wide-
22 open. In response to a comment from Steve Palmer, Amy Bell stated that the Feds are not waiving the
23 ROW process and that municipalities should make sure that their project is worth the effort of jumping
24 through the federal hoops before submitting it. The discussion then moved on to Local Transportation
25 Facilities (LTF) requirements and Amy repeated that VTrans must comply with the federal regulations
26 and VTrans also intends to use LTF procedures for the Stimulus projects. Seth Jensen questioned
27 whether VTrans has the number of staff necessary to keep projects moving and if the Administration is
28 helping out in any way. Michele interjected that VTrans has the ability to use program funds to assist
29 with getting the projects done, including design work. Dennis Lutz, again referring to ROW issues,
30 wanted some indication of whether a project will have a chance of receiving funding before his town
31 spends money for preliminary work. They will do what's needed if it's worth it but if VTrans is using the
32 same "shovel ready" project checklist there's no chance. Both Chris Jolly and Amy said they will do
33 their best to help out with the idea of "simplified plans." Steve Palmer asked about using existing Class
34 2 Paving requirements. Amy noted that the Class 2 Town Highway Paving program uses state funds
35 only, so there is no requirement to follow the federal requirements. However, there's a sizeable bonding
36 proposal pending before the legislature and these monies will be treated as state dollars so there could be
37 more money for Class 2 paving and other programs that use only state funds. Michele mentioned that
38 Richard Westman has commented that certain projects will be better suited to bonding money and others
39 will be a better fit for federal dollars. They are trying to target projects to optimize funding. Dennis
40 stressed that he wants to find a way to make the federal dollars work versus letting our children pay for
41 projects out of bond money. Michele stated that the Blue Ribbon Committee concluded that, due to the
42 lack of funding for maintenance, we will never get so far ahead that we won't require bonding. A
43 discussion followed about the state's ability to meet the material needs for the projects and our capacity to
44 spend federal stimulus dollars in a timely manner. Chris Jolly commented that obligation dates are key
45 and that \$75 million can be used quickly - just a couple of bridge replacements could use it up. There will
46 also be concern from the feds about VTrans using stimulus money for projects they were going to do
47 anyway and the state moving transportation dollars for other purposes. Questions followed about
48 enhancement dollars with Amy Bell and Peter Keating commenting that there are many Bike and Ped list
49 items that are eligible. There was then some discussion about using stimulus package money to complete
50 an earmark project that is ready to go but Chris and Michele stressed that projects must be well defined.
51 Amy Bell wanted the TAC to know that VTrans is doing its best, working extra hours to meet the many
52 demands placed upon them. Fortunately there have only 20 people proposed to be cut from the VTrans
53 staff. Christine mentioned that her Stimulus Package Update handout contains numbers in the right

1 column that reflect changes make after conversations with VTrans. Dennis asked if there will be a way to
2 use stimulus package money to design projects that have been scoped as that also creates jobs and helps
3 with future projects. Chris Jolly said that they could but Amy stipulated that it would only work for
4 projects that could be completed in the required time frame. Chris stressed that they must look at intent to
5 get the project under construction. There was a long discussion about VTrans doing design but Amy was
6 concerned that it would be hard to prove that it wouldn't be supplanting regular allocations with stimulus
7 package funds. At the conclusion, TAC members emphasized that they need to clearly know what's
8 required of them to be eligible for stimulus funding.
9

10 **8. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

11 Peter Keating reported that there has not been much activity with the MTP as several meetings have been
12 cancelled due to weather. The MTP Advisory Committee will meet on February 4th. Richmond Park and
13 Ride plans had originally involved an expansion across the street. They are now proposing just a bus turn
14 around and waiting for town and FHWA approval. At a later date, it is hoped that a whole new Richmond
15 park and ride project will be scoped. There was a short discussion about issues surrounding the
16 Richmond site which concluded with a comment that Richmond has expressed a desire to not become a
17 parking lot for Chittenden County.
18

19 Christine Forde reported that she had a meeting with Williston's Historic and Architectural Advisory
20 Committee on February 2 about the North Williston Road/US2 intersection in which they discussed a
21 roundabout versus a signal. There will be a meeting with the Planning Commission on February 17 and a
22 public hearing on February 23rd. They will also be discussing VT RT 2A/James Brown Drive intersection
23 issues. She reported on the US2/Staples third lane project as well as the status of the Exit 12B study and
24 mentioned that further study of the Tilley Drive connector to Community Drive will be undertaken. She
25 continues to work on the Huntington and Essex bridges as well as Air Quality issues.
26

27 Jason Charest reported that staff had coordinated a meeting with VTrans and Burlington Public Works to
28 discuss three locations that were reviewed as part of VTrans' Highway Safety Improvement Program:
29 The Jug Handle, Main Street/Union and VT189 Off Ramp/US7 across from T.G.I. Friday's. Typical
30 recommendations for improvement that come out of this process are new signage, signal upgrades,
31 striping changes, and pedestrian timers. If the city wishes to pursue any of the recommended
32 improvements they will need to be requested in a letter to VTrans. Projects are eligible for 100%
33 funding. He also met with South Burlington DPW to review the results of a signal optimization project
34 for the Dorset/Swift Street intersection. We hope that updated timing plans will be implemented over the
35 summer. A potential build out analysis of a parcel on Farmall Drive was conducted for the town of
36 Hinesburg. The town was curious about the impacts of increased traffic on the Farmall/Commerce/116
37 signal. Results showed that there would be increased traffic but within the available capacity of the
38 intersection when factoring in proposed improvements by the developer.
39

40 Bryan Davis briefly mentioned his work on the Road Foreman's meeting and CarShare Vermont. He
41 reported that the CCMPO helped gather results for a VTrans Aggregate Survey asking Chittenden
42 County towns about their gravel sources. The TAG grants were approved at the January Board meeting,
43 Notices to Proceed have gone out and there will be another grant round later in 2009. Bryan also reported
44 that registration is now open for Way to Go 2009. The CCMPO Citizen's Guide has been recently
45 updated and he has crafted an e-newsletter with other MPO updates that will be distributed this week.
46

47 Eleni Churchill reported that the Burlington City Council will decide on Monday (Feb 9th) on the
48 preferred alternative for the Shelburne Street Rotary location—Dan Bradley indicated that the Council
49 will have two alternatives to consider that are basically variations of a single-lane roundabout for this
50 location. She explained that the Western Corridor Transportation Management Plan is moving forward
51 and that they have now completed a draft Future Conditions report as well as vision, goals, objectives and
52 strategies for the corridor. The strategies are now being analyzed and will be presented in upcoming
53 public outreach meetings in March at which time different groups will discuss and prioritize the

1 strategies. Eleni reported that she is continuing to work with Essex Junction on the Pearl Street repaving
2 project and will begin work shortly on a circulation and access management study regarding VT-2A south
3 of Five Corners as well as the new crescent road concept which involves bypassing Five Corners. The
4 Exit 16 study is near completion and a draft final report will be available within the next few weeks.

5
6 Dave Roberts reported that there would be a Roundabout webinar on February 4th. He also stated that the
7 MPO's signal optimization program had received a request to examine the signals at Essex Way/VT289
8 which would only require a small portion of the \$125,000 in TIP funding for signal optimization. The
9 MPO was exploring whether the balance of funds could go toward minor signal equipment upgrades,
10 such as new controllers or interconnection hardware. The MPO had recommendations from the Dorset St
11 study which could be relevant to this and he asked the TAC to submit any other ideas for the funds such
12 as timing equipment, controllers, advance-walk features etc. Dave reported that there was no new news
13 on the Circ EIS as the state continues to work through issues related to wetlands. He also reported that
14 there will be more information on the MPO's Transportation Model Update in March or April.

15
16 Daryl Benoit reported that he would be attending the Rail Council meeting on February 4th. He
17 mentioned that at the last meeting the Rail Council agreed that upgrading the track between Burlington
18 and Rutland would be the recommended project for the upcoming economic stimulus bill. A discussion
19 followed about the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Ethan Allen train service (out of Rutland) and
20 replace it with a bus service. It was noted that elimination of the Ethan Allen" would be contrary to
21 establishing a feeder service on upgraded track from Burlington to Rutland.

22 23 **10. CCMPO January Board Meeting Report**

24 Michele Boomhower reported that the Board had approved minor amendments to the TIP, and that while
25 there was a public information session about the recommendations by the Blue Ribbon Commission on
26 Innovative Financing, the Board was still receiving input. They are still working on the feedback, but all
27 seven recommendations were modestly received, especially Recommendations Four through Seven.
28 Michele stated that they are working to enhance project delivery. VTrans has given some early feedback
29 and is not recommending Recommendations One through Three. Mid-year budget adjustments were
30 adopted and it is now time to start on the UPWP 2010 budget. Each member community will have an
31 opportunity for input.

32 33 **11. Chairman's/Members' Items:**

34 Peter Keating reminded the TAC that the next meeting would be on WEDNESDAY, March 4th as
35 Tuesday, March 3rd is Town Meeting day.

36
37 The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

38
39 Respectfully submitted,
40 Janet Botula