

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

4 DATE: Tuesday, September 1, 2009
5 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
6 PLACE: CCMPO Offices, 110 West Canal Street, Suite 202, Winooski, VT
7 Present:
8 George Gerecke, TAC Chair, Williston
9 Ed Wildman, Huntington
10 Amy Bell, VTrans
11 Robin Pierce, Essex Junction
12 Mike Coates, Business Representative
13 Matthew Langham, VTrans
14 Seth Jensen, Jericho
15 Meredith Birkett, CCTA
16 Andy Legg, Milton
17 Steve Palmer, Winooski
18 Mickey Palmer, Colchester
19 Dean Bloch, Charlotte
20 Bryan Osborne, Colchester
21 Chris Jolly, FHWA
22 Bernie Gagnon, Shelburne
23 Murray Benner, SSTA
24 MPO Staff: Jason Charest, Transportation Engineer
25 Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner
26 Bryan Davis, Transportation Planner
27 Peter Keating, Senior Transportation Planner
28 Dave Roberts, Senior Transportation Planner
29 Janet Botula, Admin/Communications Assistant
30 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner
31 Michele Boomhower, Executive Director
32

33 Chair George Gerecke called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.
34

35 **1. Consent Agenda**

36 No items were on the Consent Agenda
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38 **2. Approval of Minutes**

39 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 7, 2009 BY MIKE COATES AND
40 SECONDED BY ED WILDMAN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
41

42 **3. Public Comments**

43 No members of the public were present.
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454. **4. Sidewalk Program Evaluation Criteria**

46 Peter Keating explained that, given all of the attention to the sidewalk program this year, staff had drafted
47 revisions to the criteria and distributed this to TAC and Board members for review. The proposed criteria
48 as well as the comments received in response to the revisions were included in the TAC packet. Peter
49 asked for additional feedback from those at the TAC meeting and stated that he hoped to have a revised
50 version in about a month. In response to a question about the impetus of the revisions, Michele
51 Boomhower mentioned that because the program was relatively new, the Executive Committee felt that it
52 would be wise to revisit the criteria at this time. She also thought it would be helpful if the application
53 included more narrative regarding the criteria so that applicants would have a clearer idea of how the
54 projects would be evaluated. There were no additional comments on Criteria 1 and 2 but a long discussion

1 ensued regarding Criterion 3 and the idea of a “documented” unsafe condition. There was back and forth
2 on the issue but it was determined that an applicant should include some sort of documentation about an
3 unsafe condition and examples of some of the types of documentation accepted should be stated in the
4 grant application. Criterion 4 involved providing a safe, secure, and properly signed pedestrian
5 environment. There seemed to be agreement that this criterion could be consolidated with Criterion 3.
6 Criterion 5 involved providing street trees and landscaping to enhance the environment. A long
7 discussion ensued regarding whether or not this was a valid criterion given the great need for sidewalks
8 and the very limited funding available. While many felt that adding actual sidewalks was the primary
9 purpose of the grant and that landscaping should be left to the communities, others felt that it could
10 demonstrate a more well thought out project, that it might increase the use of the amenity, serve as a
11 traffic calming measure and provide other benefits. Amy Bell suggested the possibility of adding
12 “pedestrian friendly” to Criterion 3. Several others stressed that safety and bridging the gaps was more
13 important, especially since Vermont already has a landscape full of trees. Criterion 6 dealt with
14 leveraging funding. Peter stated that this was included to help determine if a community is really serious
15 and looking for all possible funding sources. Amy added that the State uses this as well as it indicates
16 that a community has thought through the project as part of a bigger objective. Dean Bloch commented
17 that he thought this criterion was difficult for smaller communities with few staff. Others commented that
18 it demonstrated less reliance on this one funding source and benefited those that can leverage local impact
19 fees etc. Timing of the grant with other funding sources also plays a role. Peter stated that projects in the
20 past have received higher scores if they were able to come up with more than the minimum match.
21 Criterion 7 involved enhanced connectivity to public transit and multi-modal facilities. There were no
22 comments received prior to the meeting but, there was some discussion as to whether the criterion would
23 be more advantageous to larger communities and, given that everyone is looking for funding, we need to
24 be aware of small versus large community equity issues. Peter commented that most applications come
25 from larger towns and many rural communities have no sidewalks at all. Criterion 8 asked if the project
26 applicant had previously demonstrated a sidewalk project savings and later returned it to the regional
27 funding pool. This criterion generated the most comments, mostly negative in nature and it was likely to
28 be eliminated. The last three items were not part of the criteria but were to be considered by the
29 evaluation committee. The first mentioned equitable geographic distribution over time and this received
30 mixed comments. Dean Bloch stated that proportionality makes sense but that smaller communities may
31 have a smaller window for which to budget projects and a delay could result in loss of support. Bryan
32 Osborne felt that this criterion works against all the others as it gives weight to a project just because the
33 town has not been recently funded. Andy believed that this criterion should not be weighted more heavily
34 than others but that it will always be a background consideration. The discussion again centered on the
35 difference between large and small communities. Bryan Osborne mentioned the philosophy of the
36 CCMPO which is that since Chittenden County serves such a large proportion of the State’s population, it
37 should get a larger piece of the pie, while VTrans favors more equal distribution around the whole state.
38 He questioned whether this criterion goes against that philosophy. Robin Pierce stated that Burlington
39 provides services to all Chittenden County residents much more so than does, say, Charlotte. There were
40 several other comments on both sides of this issue. Michele stated that including more narrative may help
41 the projects to be evaluated more consistently but there will still be some subjectivity. Andy Legg
42 thought that using a model like the TIP prioritization process might be useful. Michele said that we’ll take
43 all of this feedback and come up with refined criteria and accompanying narrative to make sure we
44 accomplish the goals of the program. Others suggested we use these last criteria as a tie breaker but some
45 felt that the best projects usually rose to the top of the list and that there often wasn’t enough money for
46 some deserving projects. There was then a discussion initiated by Chris Jolly about a sidewalk inventory
47 and the possibility of using that as part of the documentation indicating that a community has considered
48 the project in the past. It was suggested that this could be covered by Criterion 1. The next discussion
49 focused on the \$150,000 project limitation. Andy Legg stated that we need to be clear about if we’re
50 looking at funding more small projects or just a few larger ones. It was agreed that the applicant should be
51 clear about whether it will accept or could use a partial award. The group next discussed the term
52 “constructible” and questions were asked about the use of the funds for other than construction. It should
53 be clear that points won’t be deducted if the project deals with ROW, engineering and design, all of which

1 are eligible. The word “implemented” may be more appropriate. Another discussion centered around the
2 evaluation committee and their knowledge of issues. There was some debate as to the benefit of having
3 each applicant make a short presentation or conducting site visits for the review committee.
4

5 **5. I-89 Proposed Exit 12B Alignment Study**

6 Christine Forde made a PowerPoint presentation on the recently completed I-89 Exit 12B Alignment
7 Study. She explained that there had been many studies and plans over the years addressing a possible
8 interchange at Hinesburg Road. The focus of this study, which is an alignment analysis rather than a
9 scoping study, was to evaluate whether the project can be built given physical and environmental
10 constraints. The study developed two potential alternatives: a modified diamond or a single point urban
11 interchange (SPUI). There are some environmental issues that would need to be addressed. The next
12 steps in the process include conducting a financing study, and preparing an environmental impact
13 statement. For a copy of the alignment study please see our website at:

14 http://www.ccmpto.us/library/scoping/Exit12B_alignment_study/. Creative financing is being discussed
15 with the state, the City of South Burlington, the CCMPO, the airport and private sector partners in an
16 attempt to secure the required matching funds. Impact fees, a special assessment district, tax increment
17 finance (TIF) district and potential earmarks will all be considered. Mike Munson will be doing a build-
18 out analysis and looking at possible tax revenues with various scenarios. He will bring this to the group
19 of private partners to gauge their willingness to participate in the various mechanisms. It is hoped that
20 some of these ideas can be presented to the legislature in January so that the project can advance in the
21 TIP and be put in the capital program. Other comments included the fact that the FHWA has raised the
22 bar for new interchange approvals, and the fact that there is an approved development on the parcel
23 making up the northwest quadrant of the interchange which, if it goes forward, could jeopardize the
24 project. It was also stated that one fact in favor of the project was the airport’s military significance,
25 which could make it eligible for alternative funding sources.
26

27 **6. UVM Civil & Environmental Engineering Service Learning**

28 Peter stated that UVM is seeking service learning projects for the upcoming year. Dennis Lutz had
29 reported previously to the TAC about this opportunity that can benefit municipalities. A list of previous
30 projects and the types of projects being sought was provided. While they do offer free labor, the students
31 require some guidance for their work. Nancy Hayden is the UVM contact person.
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33 **7. Park and Ride Plan Update Information**

34 Peter announced that the RFP for the update to the 2004 Park and Ride Plan was mailed out to consultants
35 on August 28th and is due on September 25th. This plan will be more comprehensive than the last one.
36 While he had some volunteers from a newly formed Park and Ride subcommittee he asked for volunteers
37 to serve on the evaluation team. Mike Coates and Dean Bloch agreed to assist.
38

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

40 Christine distributed the latest TIP and announced that the new TIP flyers would be available next month.
41 She said that two scoping studies were going into design: the US2/Exit 14/Staple’s Lane as well as the
42 VT15/Ethan Allen signal. Two other studies are on-going the 2A/James Brown and the US2/North
43 Williston Road. She is also working on scoping studies for two bridges in Huntington and the Shelburne
44 Bay Road Bridge.
45

46 Bryan Davis reported that he will provide an update on the TAG program at the CCMPO Board meeting
47 on September 16th. He mentioned that he sent out an e-newsletter last week and appreciates any feedback
48 on its value and utility. He also referenced results from the American Community Survey indicating that
49 more people are using alternative transportation modes which we will hear more about in a joint press
50 release with Local Motion, CCTA, CATMA and CarShare VT in late October or early November. He
51 plans to convene the Bike-Ped Committee to review the existing plans and studies to determine how to
52 prioritize and move projects forward. The next Road Manager’s meeting will be in November, but the

1 site has not yet been determined. He has received comments that attendees would like to focus on more
2 road related issues and less on policy.

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4 Daryl Benoit stated that the traffic counts were being wrapped up and that the interns are departing.
5 Work has been completed on Winooski and Huntington speed studies, and pavement data collection has
6 been completed in Charlotte. A report is being written up for Shelburne's 2008 pavement data. Staff is
7 familiarizing themselves with a new GPS unit intended to be used for the Town of Huntington's sign and
8 culvert inventory.

9
10 Dave Roberts reported that the new list of technical assistant consultants was finalized to include: Dubois
11 & King, Lamoureux & Dickinson, Stantec, VHB/Pioneer, and RSG. He has been spending a good deal of
12 time on modeling issues for the MTP. Data from the National Household Travel Survey, which included
13 1500 participants statewide, should be available in October. This should provide a great deal of travel
14 behavior data for Chittenden County. He also mentioned a technical assistance study for South
15 Burlington relative to the location of their proposed new police department offices.

16
17 Jason Charest mentioned his work on the High Risk Rural Roads safety audits for Hinesburg and
18 Richmond as well as the dynamic striping project in Underhill. He is working the final revisions of a
19 signal optimization study for Essex at Essex Way/289 and has worked with the interns to gather data for
20 the Major Collectors Sufficiency Ratings.

21
22 Michele Boomhower reported that Eleni Churchill will be working on wrapping up the Western Corridor
23 Study. She briefly touched on the Blue Ribbon Committee for Innovative Finance and said she would be
24 visiting municipalities this fall and winter so seek their endorsements. She also announced that the
25 CCMPO and CCRPC will host an open house on October 8th between 4pm and 6 pm.

26
27 Peter Keating reported the latest on the MTP and the modeling issues associated with land use and non-
28 automotive trips that have delayed the project. He stated that the management of Way to Go will be
29 transitioning to Tom Horn at Vermont Energy Investment Corporation as it is no longer just a regional
30 effort and has gone statewide.

31 32 **8. CCMPO May Board Meeting Report**

33 George Gerecke reported on VTrans' Rail presentation by Rob Ide, FY10-12 TIP adoption, and the
34 sidewalk grant discussion/decision to refer to the Executive Committee.

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36 The meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.

37 Respectfully submitted,

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39 Janet Botula

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