

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

4 DATE: Tuesday, October 6, 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 Matthew Langham, VTrans

13 Seth Jensen, Jericho

14 Meredith Birkett, CCTA

15 Mickey Palmer, Colchester

16 Bryan Osborne, Colchester

17 Bernie Gagnon, Shelburne

18 Nicole Losch, Burlington

19 Meredith Schuft, CATMA

20 Nicole Losch, Burlington

21 Dennis Lutz, Essex

22 MPO Staff: Jason Charest, Transportation Engineer  
23 Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner  
24 Peter Keating, Senior Transportation Planner  
25 Dave Roberts, Senior Transportation Planner  
26 Eleni Churchill, Senior Transportation Planner  
27 Janet Botula, Admin/Communications Assistant  
28 Michele Boomhower, Executive Director

29  
30 Chair George Gerecke called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

31  
32 **Changes to the Agenda**

33 Matthew Langham requested that the agenda be changed to add VTrans' recommendation for TIP  
34 amendments as 5a.

35  
36 **1. Consent Agenda**

37 No items were on the Consent Agenda.

38  
39 **2. Approval of Minutes**

40 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2009 BY ED  
41 WILDMAN AND SECONDED BY BRYAN OSBORNE. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

42  
43 **3. Public Comments**

44 No members of the public were present.

45  
46 **4. Sidewalk Program Evaluation Criteria**

47 Peter Keating explained that, based on feedback received from the TAC, staff had revised the criteria,  
48 included additional narrative and a weighting system, and attempted to address other issues that had come  
49 up in previous meetings. He also mentioned that he had included a table indentifying the history of  
50 program awards and funding obligations as was requested at the last TAC meeting. He mentioned that  
51 Criterion 10 is new- it explains that points will be deducted if a community has not obligated award funds  
52 within a year of award notification. Before comments began, Amy Bell described a recent conversation  
53 with Sue Scribner who oversees LTF projects. The focus of that conversation was on VTrans' adoption  
54 of an amenities policy that seeks to cut down on things like landscaping. This would apply to the

1 Sidewalk Grant program as well. Amy suggested that criteria that relates to amenities such as  
2 landscaping may need to be removed. This came up in the case of a Colchester project that actually has  
3 the word landscaping in the title of the project. Michele Boomhower questioned if, because locals are  
4 required to have a 20% local match requirement, it would make a difference. Amy responded that  
5 amenities would have to be at a local entity's own expense, that their amenities would be looked at as an  
6 ineligible cost and that the match must go toward eligible project elements. Bryan Osborne questioned if  
7 this policy change is directed towards cost savings and Amy responded that it was part of the Road to  
8 Affordability. Bryan reminded that group that the inclusion of landscaping was part of the criteria.  
9 Dennis Lutz asked about the weighting system as it appeared to be all or nothing but Peter responded that  
10 the intent was to assign a maximum of five points to each criterion.

11  
12 The discussion was next directed towards the obligation of funds. Dennis Lutz stated that given what's  
13 happened with the stimulus funds and ROW issues etc, many factors are beyond the control of  
14 communities, resulting in delays that are not always the fault of a community. Bernie Gagnon agreed that  
15 communities can lose up to six months waiting for action from the state. Amy suggested that funds must  
16 be obligated within a year of the award. After some discussion about the meaning of "obligated", Matt  
17 Langham clarified that funds are generally obligated 30 days before a project goes out to bid for  
18 construction which means that all design and Right of Way (ROW) issues are resolved.

19  
20 Christine Forde then discussed how the Sidewalk grant program does not carry over from year to year and  
21 anything not spent up to the \$250,000 budget amount is gone. Projects that carry over will come out of  
22 the following year's budget. In reality, funds not obligated are lost. Michele stated that she is concerned  
23 about the backlog of projects and questioned what would happen if three or four projects are ready but the  
24 \$250,000 is already obligated to previous years' projects. She is concerned about the pacing of projects  
25 and asked Matt how we might solve this. Matt responded that communities should submit applications for  
26 projects that are ready to go. Peter suggested that communities could apply only for specific phases  
27 and/or separate out costs for each phase but not apply for all three (design, ROW, and construction) at  
28 once.

29  
30 Dennis stated that Criterion 10 was a negative way to go about it. It may be better for communities to  
31 split an expensive project into pieces and go after different sources of funding. If applicants submit  
32 projects in phases, there would be a variety of projects to choose from when trying to select projects that  
33 are ready. He thought that the MPO was going about it the wrong way and that it needs to manage the  
34 system better. There was then some discussion about including a warning that unobligated funds may go  
35 away. George Gerecke thought that it could be hard for evaluators to judge whether an applicant will  
36 miss a deadline. Bryan stated that he interpreted this to mean that if a project misses a deadline, the  
37 community will be penalized in future years. There was a discussion about losing funding. Christine  
38 stated that all federal funds operate on the same year-to-year basis but that the Enhancement grant  
39 program is bigger and VTrans has shown it more year to year flexibility.

40  
41 Christine questioned if it was realistic to expect all funds to be obligated in one year as many projects are  
42 multi-year or phased. We just haven't been able to decide the best way to do this. There are many issues  
43 that can slow a project down. The goal is to use the most funding possible in each award cycle. Bryan  
44 stated that Colchester has taken three to five years to complete projects as he has used the Sidewalk grant  
45 as one funding mechanism for much larger projects and that they've tried to accumulate funds over the  
46 years. If funds need to be obligated in the year of award, his strategy no longer works.

47  
48 Michele stressed that she's concerned and would like the Sidewalk grant to be thought of as a last stop for  
49 funding, not a midway solution. She liked Dennis' idea of a prioritized list with ranked projects in a cue  
50 so that if a project is ready to go, we can move on it, but this may be tricky to manage. In the last few  
51 months of the funding year, we might want to know which projects are really ready. Dennis questioned  
52 the downside of having a backlog of projects that were ready to go - other than communities might not  
53 receive money for construction of their sidewalk project in the hoped-for year. He also noted that there

1 are some projects small enough that if you can get through design and ROW, a community might be able  
2 to fund the project by itself.

3  
4 Bryan stated that he'd rather front load projects with local money and uses the Sidewalk grant for  
5 construction. He doesn't need help with \$40,000 in design; he needs it for a \$600,000 construction  
6 project. Amy interjected that all design must follow Federal regulations if a town plans to receive Federal  
7 funding for the subsequent construction phase. Bernie suggested a local prioritization with the object of  
8 picking projects that can move forward. Either design projects in-house or get a grant, put the project on  
9 the shelf until you accumulate funding. You can use grant programs to supplement your funding. Amy  
10 summarized by saying that each community does it differently but separating out projects into phases may  
11 be beneficial. Flexibility is important so that you can be ready for different scenarios.

12  
13 The general discussion revealed unease over the wording of Criterion 10 while staff stressed that the point  
14 of this was to more strongly stress project readiness – the applicant's ability to quickly put the obligation  
15 funds to use. A clear consensus emerged that this criterion should be eliminated.

16  
17 A short discussion followed on allowing the program funds to be used only for the construction phase.  
18 Making sure the design and ROW phases also followed federal guidelines would be very important in  
19 order to use federal money for construction. Bernie cited an example of this approach on a Shelburne  
20 project on US RT 7. VTrans staff, in their comments, made sure the preconstruction phases, done with  
21 local funds, passed federal muster.

22  
23 The discussion turned back to Criterion 4 – awarding points to projects that include amenities such as  
24 landscaping when these activities, as Amy reported, would not be eligible costs. There appeared to be a  
25 diversity of opinion on this and a suggestion was made to consider including it under Criterion 5 –  
26 leveraging funds from a variety of sources.

27  
28 Peter synopsised the consensus points he heard from the discussion:

- 29 • Nix Criterion 10
- 30 • Rework Criterion 4
- 31 • Consider making funding available to only one specific project phase.

32 This item will be on the November meeting agenda again when we can hopefully pass along a  
33 recommendation to the Board.

34  
35 Peter also asked for any comments on the recommended weighting of the criteria and Michele explained  
36 how and why this was included. The TAC provided no specific critique of the weighting factors. There  
37 appeared to be consensus on clarifying that partial project funding will be allowed. Amy ended the  
38 discussion by reporting that she would run the TAC discussion by the head of VTrans Local  
39 Transportation Facilities (LTF), Sue Scribner.

#### 40 41 **5. Park and Ride Consultant Selection**

42 Peter stated that four proposals were received for the update of the 2004 Park and Ride Plan: Resources  
43 Systems Group (RSG), Lamourex & Dickenson, Smart Mobility and Stantec. RSG was ranked the  
44 highest by a majority of the evaluation subcommittee. Peter asked the TAC for permission to negotiate an  
45 agreement with RSG to undertake the Park and Ride Plan update.

46  
47 A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEREDITH BIRKETT TO ALLOW CCMPO STAFF TO NEGOTIATE  
48 AN AGREEMENT WITH RSG TO UNDERTAKE THE PARK AND RIDE UPDATE. THIS WAS  
49 SECONDED BY DENNIS LUTZ. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### 50 51 **5a. VTrans TIP Amendments**

52 Christine stated that VTrans has requested TIP amendments for the 2010 year of the TIP. These changes  
53 will be made to the FY08-11 TIP because the FY10-13 TIP has not yet been submitted to FHWA for

1 approval. Matthew Langham explained that the amendments are for three interstate projects that will be  
2 going to bid, but are not on the TIP. The projects to be added are: 1) I-89 Culvert Rehabilitation, South  
3 Burlington to Winooski for \$2.5 million; 2) I-89 Culvert Rehabilitation, Richmond and Williston for \$2.4  
4 million, and 3) I-89 Sign Upgrades, Waterbury to Winooski for \$1 million. The sign project will bring the  
5 interstate signs up to new Federal retroreflectivity standards. These changes are not subject to CCMPO  
6 fiscal constraint limit and qualify as minor amendments. .  
7

8 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE TIP AMENDMENTS BY BRYAN OSBORNE AND  
9 SECONDED BY ROBIN PIERCE. THE MOTIION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.  
10

### 11 **6. Town Highway Bridge Program**

12 Christine gave a brief overview of how projects are listed in the VTrans Capital Program. The Candidate  
13 list is the place where projects enter the VTrans' system. She stated that projects on the Candidate list  
14 have no anticipated funding for design or right of way and their construction schedule is unknown. The  
15 various project lists are approved by the Legislature and projects must be included in order for VTrans to  
16 act on them. Christine explained that VTrans is now reevaluating the Candidate list for town highway  
17 bridges. The current list contains no Chittenden County bridges. VTrans is asking the regional planning  
18 commissions (RPCs) and the MPO to submit up to eight top priority town highway bridge projects.  
19 Christine suggested that if communities have a project that they want to be considered, they should fill  
20 out the Priority Scoring Sheet included in the TAC packet for each of their bridge projects. All town  
21 highway bridges in Chittenden County are listed in the table "Chittenden County Town Highway Bridges  
22 over 20 Feet in Length," also included in the TAC packet. Communities should state the project location,  
23 and the reason for inclusion on the list. It was explained that the CCMPO's list will be our eight top  
24 projects and these will be evaluated by VTrans using their prioritization criteria so that they can come up  
25 with a list of the top thirty projects in the state. Amy explained that the VTrans Candidate list has become  
26 stale and that as conditions change and bridges deteriorate, the list needs to be looked at again. VTrans is  
27 asking the MPO and all the RPCs to come up with a list this year and that this will be updated annually  
28 with a new list each year. She noted that this should be done quickly so as to have it in the legislative  
29 budget for this year. A short discussion about sufficiency ratings took place and Christine agreed to look  
30 into Federal eligibility standards. Bryan questioned whether projects on the Candidate list have any hope  
31 of getting constructed soon enough. Christine said that they can move up the list but need to at least be  
32 on it. Amy stated that her hope is that this process will allow projects to be worked on before an  
33 emergency takes place.  
34

35 Amy responded to a question from Bryan that it was her understanding that the data contained in the table  
36 "Chittenden County Town Highway Bridges over 20 Feet in Length," included in the TAC packet was  
37 revised after annual bridge inspections. Christine said that the Town Highway Bridge Program will be  
38 discussed at the next TAC meeting and that towns should submit their projects by October 16<sup>th</sup>. Even if a  
39 project is already in the top eight, the town should let Christine know that they want that project  
40 included. The next step will be to put together a priority list using the CCMPO Project Prioritization  
41 Scoring Criteria and submit the CCMPO's top eight projects to VTrans.  
42

### 43 **7. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

44 Dave Roberts reported on the status of the CIRC EIS stating that it is hoped that the Final EIS will be  
45 ready by the end of the year, as wetlands issues are still slowing the project. He also said that he is  
46 continuing work on the 2060 MTP modeling and is in the process of trying to include planned  
47 projects. Information will be sent to the TAC and municipalities in the next week or so. He stated that the  
48 National Household Survey has been slightly delayed but he's hoping to receive it soon for inclusion in  
49 the transportation modeling. He mentioned and he and other staff had attended a ROW training hosted by  
50 VTrans LTF as the MPO may be helping municipalities with this issue in the future.  
51

52 Jason Charest reported that he was working on a signal warrant analysis in Winooski at the intersection of  
53 Mallets Bay Avenue, West Lane, and Union Street. He has determined that the signal isn't warranted and

1 should be removed. A report will focus on the proper steps for removal as outlined in the MUTCD and  
2 clearing up any sight distance issues. He mentioned that the draft of the Essex Way signal optimization  
3 study has been sent to the Town for review. A significant finding of the study was that there is a loop on  
4 the bridge that is broken. He also reported on a technical assistance project in Hinesburg that will  
5 examine a build out analysis on the southwest corner of the intersection of VT 116, CVU, and Shelburne  
6 Falls Road and its effects on the intersection. He is also assisting VTrans with looking at Highway Safety  
7 Improvement Program (HSIP) locations in Jericho, Winooski and Burlington.

8  
9 Eleni Churchill explained that she is currently addressing comments on the draft Western Corridor  
10 Transportation Management Plan received from the five participating RPC's and VTrans (Steering  
11 Committee) and she is hoping to address these comments by the third week in October. The revised draft  
12 will then be sent to the Steering Committee for their review prior to the scheduled November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.  
13 The draft plan will then be released for public review (4 weeks) and hopefully finalized by December,  
14 2009. She also reported that the scope of work (SOW) for the Burlington Colchester Avenue Corridor  
15 Study is being drafted and will be ready for review by Burlington's DPW by the end of next week. A  
16 Steering Committee is being formed that will oversee the study and they will also get a chance to review  
17 the SOW. This study will go out to bid sometime in November. She mentioned that she met with  
18 Burlington DPW and RSG staff to discuss the SOW for Burlington's Waterfront South study. She  
19 expects the proposed SOW by early next week. The Essex Junction VT 2A/Crescent Road draft report  
20 will be ready for public review end of next week. She mentioned a technical assistance request from  
21 Colchester for Exit 17 and that her work with the modified scoping for Exit 16 is on hold.

22  
23 Christine reported that she had attended a Climate Leadership Academy, in which there was a lot of  
24 interesting discussions on livability, including use of transit, as a way to address climate change issues.  
25 She left the event feeling that Chittenden County is doing pretty well. She also briefly mentioned her  
26 work on the Air Quality Plan report she is working on with CCRPC.

27  
28 Peter Keating reported the latest on the MTP, explaining that our current MTP expires in January.  
29 Because our 2060 MTP is taking a little longer and may not be completed until at least mid 2010, a  
30 contingency plan has been developed to readopt our old plan. More information will be available at the  
31 November TAC meeting. He mentioned that applications for Enhancement grants are due next week at  
32 VTrans and asked for volunteers for the evaluation committee. He will be sending out an email requesting  
33 assistance as no one agreed to assist with this task.

34  
35 Michele mentioned the fact that RSG is now under contract for work on Exit 12B to continue evaluating  
36 ways to develop the interchange. They are looking at how it could be constructed as well as the issues  
37 associated with FHWA's new process and criteria for proceeding to an EIS. She also mentioned her work  
38 on the Creative Financing Initiative related to the proposed interchange. She is working with Mike  
39 Munson to evaluate different revenue streams such as assessment districts and tools for generating  
40 revenue for the private sector share. She is hoping that these ideas can be used for other projects and will  
41 have a report by the end of the year. Michele also reported on her work on the Champlain Initiative which  
42 is part of United Way and its effort to raise an awareness of the relationship between energy and  
43 transportation. She also reminded everyone of the Open House on October 8<sup>th</sup> as well as two upcoming  
44 webinars hosted by the MPO and CATMA.

45  
46 Meredith Schuft gave details about the Tweeting webinar on October 15<sup>th</sup> and about the October 21<sup>st</sup>  
47 webinar on Driving and the Built Environment: The Effects of Compact Development on Motorized  
48 Travel, Energy Use, and CO2 Emissions. Nicole Losch mentioned that the EIS for the southern  
49 connector project was on the VTrans website. Amy announced that Joe Flynn is the new director of the  
50 VTrans Rail Division.

51  
52 **8. CCMPO May Board Meeting Report**

1 George Gerecke reported that there had been a discussion of the Sidewalk grant program and a  
2 presentation by Chapin Spencer on Local Motion activities. Peter noted that the Board had also approved  
3 the Sidewalk Grant awards.

4  
5 VTrans announced that the state will have a public hearing on the latest version of the STIP. The event  
6 takes place at VIT in Williston.

7  
8 The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

9  
10 Respectfully submitted,

11  
12 Janet Botula  
13