

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

4 DATE: Tuesday, December 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 Jeanne K. Wilson, Hinesburg
10 Paul Craven, Railroad Industry
11 Ed Wildman, Huntington
12 Amy Bell, VTrans
13 Robin Pierce, Essex Junction
14 Matthew Langham, VTrans
15 Meredith Birkett, CCTA
16 Meredith Schuft, CATMA
17 Dennis Lutz, Essex
18 Dan Bradley, Burlington
19 Andy Legg, Milton
20 Mike Coates, Business
21 Steve Palmer, Winooski
22 Chris Jolly, FHWA
23 MPO Staff: Jason Charest, Transportation Engineer
24 Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner
25 Peter Keating, Senior Transportation Planner
26 Dave Roberts, Senior Transportation Planner
27 Eleni Churchill, Senior Transportation Planner
28 Janet Botula, Admin/Communications Assistant
29 Michele Boomhower, Executive Director
30 Bryan Davis, Transportation Planner
31 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner
32 RPC Staff: Charlie Baker, Executive Director
33 Julie Potter, Senior Planner
34 Others: Ken Robie, VTrans
35 Mary Anne Michaels, Vermont Railway
36

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

38 **1. Consent Agenda**

39 No items were on the Consent Agenda.
40

41 **2. Approval of Minutes**

42 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF November 3, 2009 BY MIKE COATES AND
43 SECONDED BY ANDY LEGG. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
44

45 **3. Public Comments**

46 No members of the public were present.
47

48 **4. Proposed TIP Amendment**

49 Christine Forde stated that VTrans is requesting a minor amendment to the FY2010 year of both the FY2008-
50 11 TIP and the FY2010-2013 TIP to add \$360,000 in federal funding to complete the Environmental Impact
51 Statement (EIS) for the Circumferential Highway. It involves moving monies originally tagged for project
52 HC003A Circ Williston- preliminary engineering to project HC003E Circ Williston-for preliminary
53 engineering (for the EIS).
54

1 Ken Robie of VTrans distributed the Circ-Williston Fall 2009 Newsletter and made a short presentation to
2 update the TAC on the status of the preparation of the Final EIS (FEIS). There continues to be disparity
3 between the VTrans/ FHWA recommendation for a Circ A/B Boulevard as the Preferred Alternative and the
4 Army Corps of Engineers/EPA preference for VT 2A alternatives with less wetland impacts. As this matter is
5 unlikely to be resolved at the New England regional level, the project decision is expected to go to
6 headquarters in Washington D.C. It is hoped that a decision will be made by June 2010. TAC members
7 expressed frustration over the amount of time necessary to complete the study and the need to put additional
8 funds into the wetlands examination, but agreed to support the TIP amendment request to keep the project
9 moving forward.

10
11 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE TIP AMENDMENT BY DENNIS LUTZ AND SECONDED
12 BY JEANNE WILSON. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

13 14 **5. Draft Air Quality Report**

15 Christie Forde reported that the CCMPO and the CCRPC, guided by an Air Quality Advisory Committee, had
16 been working to develop an Air Quality Report. Christine and Julie Potter, Senior Planner with the CCRPC,
17 made a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the reason for the study, its goals and strategies for various
18 groups within Chittenden County. The report is aimed primarily at the CCMPO and CCRPC Boards, but also
19 for municipalities, employers and the general public. Although Chittenden County currently meets the national
20 ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for six criteria air pollutants set up in The Clean Air Act, the
21 standards may be lowered and conditions may change so that the County could become a non-attainment area
22 which will result in significant regulatory burden and costs for the state, the CCMPO, businesses, and local
23 governments. Goals for the study include identifying strategies that can be employed within Chittenden
24 County to improve air quality and aid in maintaining compliance with NAAQS, documenting the impacts on
25 Chittenden County if air quality fails to meet the NAAQS, documenting the regulatory process and
26 requirements associated with non-attainment of the NAAQS and documenting the interconnected relationship
27 between air quality, energy use and climate change. Voluntary and regulatory approaches to keep the region in
28 attainment were considered. Strategies were recommended for individuals, employers, and municipalities as
29 well as for regional organizations (CCMPO and CCRPC). The priority regional recommendations that were
30 considered most important include: Regional Strategy 4 – Work with VTrans, employers and TDM and transit
31 service providers to expand and enhance Transportation Demand Management services in Chittenden County;
32 Regional Strategy 11 – Develop and implement a regional Energy and Climate Action Plan that includes air
33 quality strategies as well as energy and climate strategies and Regional Strategy 12 – Implement a regional
34 education and outreach program to increase understanding and change behaviors that adversely affect air
35 quality. These three strategies are currently included in both CCMPO's UPWP and the CCRPC's Annual
36 Work Program. As far as next steps in the process, an informational presentation such as the one for the TAC
37 and to the CCRPC on November 23rd, will be given to the CCMPO in December with hope for approval of
38 both boards anticipated at the January meetings. Also recommended is the expansion of the Advisory
39 Committee so as to address related energy and climate action tasks. Eventually work will begin on the
40 recommended strategies recognizing that this will be a multi-year effort.

41
42 Dennis Lutz brought up his concern that Chittenden County could implement all the strategies but still be out
43 of attainment due to other factors that impact air quality such as increased population, pollutants from outside
44 the county, weather etc. Julie agreed that we are not in control of all of the factors and that much will depend
45 on national policies and the state advocating for stronger regulations, but it is important to be proactive and
46 focus on what we can do. After some discussion it was concluded that if the County does go out of attainment,
47 the Report would help demonstrate that we are taking steps and working proactively toward attainment. Mike
48 Coates stated that truck traffic was the cause of many pollutants and that rail could play a significant role in
49 reducing transportation pollutants for both freight and people. Julie and Christine agreed that the future use of
50 rail will be important, but the Report was based on what could be done in the County right now. There was
51 discussion about the location of air quality monitoring stations and how emission reductions could be
52 determined even if many of the strategies were implemented. Chris Jolly pointed out that if the County were
53 to go into non-attainment it would impact new projects and we wouldn't be able to go ahead with projects that

1 would add capacity. He thought this Plan would help to position us for the new regulations in future
2 transportation bills which will focus on climate change and air quality. Christine stated that the proposed
3 strategies deal with many factors such as energy, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality and livability and that
4 they are all interrelated. A discussion about idling followed, concluding that the motivating factors will not be
5 regulations but saving money, improving children's health and perhaps the desire to save the planet. The
6 discussion then turned to the question of non-attainment and what other communities have done when in that
7 situation. Amy pointed out that many of the recommendations in this Report switch from being
8 recommendations to requirements. Steve Palmer expressed his concern that plans start off with great goals but
9 these become a list of unfunded liabilities overburdening municipalities. It was agreed that communicating the
10 benefits of different behavior as well education, incentives and convenience would be a better approach than
11 mandates and regulations.
12

13 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE DRAFT REPORT BY ANDY LEGG AND SECONDED BY
14 ROBIN PIERCE.
15

16 Dennis Lutz and others expressed the desire for more time to review the strategies. After some questions about
17 the review process, Julie stated that the Draft would be sent out to the municipalities and for public review to
18 capture feedback before the CCMPO and CCRPC boards would be asked to approve the plan. Mike Coates
19 referred to a study by Middlebury College and recommended that it be a part of the report.
20

21 A MOTION WAS MADE TO TABLE THE FIRST MOTION ON THE DRAFT AIR QUALITY REPORT
22 AND TO TAKE UP THE DISCUSSION AT THE JANUARY MEETING BY MIKE COATES AND
23 SECONDED BY DENNIS LUTZ. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
24

25 **6. Western Corridor Transportation Management Plan**

26 As a follow-up to her email, Eleni Churchill distributed copies of the Draft Western Corridor Transportation
27 Management Plan and reported that the Draft was now available for public review on the CCMPO website. In
28 response to the Steering Committee recommendations, the draft report briefly summarized the study process
29 and includes excerpts from the extensive appendices that are attached to the draft. The major part of the report
30 is the implementation plan. The report contains an introduction and purpose for the study, corridor conditions,
31 visions, goals and objectives, strategies for accomplishing the vision and goals and finally, and implementation
32 action plan. Approximately 50 strategies were measured using evaluation criteria looking at how they
33 impacted five core areas: highways, freight, public transportation, economic vitality and quality of life. The
34 report provides a detailed description of each selected strategy and identifies the lead agencies and partners
35 responsible for implementation of the plan. She briefly went through some of the strategies stating that specific
36 projects are not recommended but instead the report contains options to be studied through a scoping process.
37 Michele mentioned, because the topic had been discussed when the plan was recently presented to the CCRPC,
38 that the future conditions and the Level of Service analysis reflect conditions of a completion of the entire
39 CIRC project and the traffic conditions resulting from its construction. If certain segments are not built,
40 conditions will be much worse. All analysis are preliminary and would require further scoping to determine
41 conditions under the no build, partial build and CIRC completion scenarios. Eleni continued going through the
42 plan and during the Freight section Mike Coates expressed concern about the term "national" rail standard.
43 Because there is a discrepancy between the Vermont State rail standards (286 for rail and 315 for structures)
44 and those beginning to be used nationally (315 for both rail and structures) it was agreed that "national" would
45 be removed to eliminate the confusion. Other comments that came up during her review included increasing
46 the size of the black boxes on the maps on pages 420 and 421, and including more discussion about the
47 advantage of rail as it relates to air pollution, its discussion under future conditions, and references to the
48 Middlebury College study. In regards to rail, Eleni explained that it was a considered strategy that didn't make
49 it to final list. Michele commented that one of the complexities of the study is that it is multi-modal and trying
50 to get a high level of detail in a comprehensive report like this is difficult. There's a lot of material available
51 in the appendices and it's hoped this effort sets the stage for recognizing that we need to bring all the modes
52 together when planning for transportation in the corridor. It is not meant to replace the State Rail Plan. Mike
53 stated that he thought that the Western Corridor Study originated as the Western Corridor Rail Plan but Eleni

1 believed that the focus was to look at rail and highway, to balance them out and develop strategies that could
2 be considered. Paul Craven brought up Vermont's application for stimulus funds to upgrade the Western
3 Corridor and how this study will relate to the application. Michele responded that although the report has
4 received criticism from the rail community as it goes beyond just addressing rail, the timing of the report, its
5 content and extensive public outreach provided the framework for the justification and will be very beneficial
6 in providing documentation in the application. Mike brought up the fact that the Plan asks for a rail upgrade
7 from Alburgh to Bennington and not just Albany/Bennington/Rutland/Burlington/Essex (ABRBE) and that it
8 does not specifically mention Essex. Michele clarified that the Western Corridor Plan extends beyond the
9 scope of ABRBE to encompass the entire western corridor. Paul commented that he would like to add Amtrak
10 into Burlington in the future conditions sections as well as the Western Corridor from Whitehall to Rutland, as
11 one of the projects underway. He wondered if it would help in the application but Michele thought that what
12 was in the report already was sufficient justification. Michele stated that it was unfortunate that neither the
13 Burlington to Essex route nor the corresponding upgrade to St. Albans was in the report. Dennis suggested
14 attaching excerpts from certain appendices rather than just referencing entire appendices. Eleni summarized
15 the next steps in the process by saying that public comments are due by January 6th. These will be compiled,
16 reviewed and addressed by the steering committee. The report will then be presented to the MPO Board and all
17 involved RPC boards will be asked to approve the plan so that the projects can go to the various working
18 groups that will potentially be set up inter-regionally and by mode so that they can move forward. She
19 requested that all comments be submitted to her by January 6th.
20

21 **7. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

22 Peter Keating reminded the TAC that the existing 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan expires in January
23 and that, in order to keep us in compliance with Federal law, he expects the Board to adopt an amendment
24 before that time. The focus can then return to the 2060 MTP. Nine Enhancements grant applications were
25 submitted and an evaluation team will be meeting the third week of December to come up with
26 recommendations to the TAC in January.
27

28 Bryan Davis announced an upcoming Traffic Impact Study webinar that will be at the CCMPO offices on
29 Friday, January 8th at noon. The November 10th Road Manager meeting was jointly hosted with VTrans,
30 District 5 and was well attended. Several PowerPoint presentations by IMUS and American Trucking
31 Equipment provided information about de-icing enhancers, salt brine, and spreading equipment. No date has
32 been set yet for the next meeting. The CCMPO Bike/Ped committee will be meeting again the first week of
33 December to continue prioritizing plans to potentially move some projects forward. He is also working with a
34 small group to plan the 2010 Bike/Ped Summit as a follow-up to the one in 2007. Bryan is working with a
35 group in Burlington on an urban trailhead project where the 127 bike path comes into the Old North End. He
36 asked if anyone had extra curbing supplies that could be used for the project. Dennis Lutz brought up the topic
37 of municipal bike plans, and their consistency with the regional Bike/Ped plan. Amy, Bryan and Michele
38 assured him that technical assistance and resources were available to assist towns with bike/ped plan updates
39 and that it was desirable that they be consistent with the regional plan.
40

41 Dave Roberts mentioned that, in response to his request at the last TAC meeting, he had received information
42 about additional known projects for the new MTP. These will be incorporated and he will get back to the TAC
43 with the revised list.
44

45 Jason briefly discussed his work in response to South Burlington's request to look at corner sight distances at
46 the T intersection of Van Sicklen Road and VT 116. The sight distance looking southbound from Van
47 Sicklen Road was found to be inadequate. As a result, a couple of trees were recommended for
48 removal.
49

50 Christine Forde mentioned that three scoping projects were underway: there will be a meeting on December 7th
51 for bridges #8 and #10 on Main Road in Huntington in which alternates will be presented, a local concerns
52 meeting for Gentes Bridge was held in Essex recently, and environmental concerns are being discussed
53 relative to Bay Road Bridge in Shelburne. She deferred to Michele to discuss the 12B issues.

1
2 Eleni Churchill reported that the Colchester Avenue RFP went out about two weeks ago. Proposals for the
3 project that covers the area between the Winooski Bridge and the South Prospect/Pearl St./Colchester Ave
4 intersection are due December 9 with a consultant selection meeting scheduled for December 18. The scope of
5 work has been refined for the Waterfront South Access Study in Burlington and this has been sent to VTrans
6 for comment. She has received a consultant report and commented on a small technical assistance project for
7 Exit 17.

8
9 Michele reported on two studies taking place related to the 12B Intersection. The first is a creative finance
10 study using RSG who has retained Mike Munson to assist with analyzing different combinations of financing
11 mechanisms to bring in private sector funding to finance the proposed interchange. The study includes sections
12 of So. Burlington and Williston and they will be looking at where revenues might be obtained from
13 commercial expansion and development in those areas. TIF districts as well as other financing mechanisms
14 that are currently authorized by the legislature or would need to be authorized by state and local governments
15 are also being explored. Funding through the Burlington International Airport and National Guard Defense
16 Fund and other such measures are being looked at as well. The group will be meeting on December 2 to
17 receive preliminary findings. They will be refining the study based on feedback and want to have it submitted
18 to the Legislature by the end of December so that it can be considered in the upcoming session. The second
19 study is an Interstate Access Study which is being done by RSG. The FHWA requires an Interchange
20 Justification Report if there is to be a break in the system. RSG will be looking at safety, land use,
21 environmental and any other anticipated constraints of a break in the interstate beforehand to see if there are
22 any fatal flaws prior to undertaking an EIS, which will be needed prior to submitting the project to the FHWA.
23 The study is getting underway now with completion expected in April or May.

24 25 **8. CCMPO November Board Meeting Report**

26 George Gerecke reported that the Board had approved the Town Highway Bridge Prioritization list as well as
27 the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Innovative Finance. He commented that he thought
28 Frank Bryan's presentation had been well received. It was also mentioned that several people had been
29 recognized at the meeting: Jane Marvin for her service on the TAC, Neil Boyden as he retires from his role as
30 Public Works Director for Williston, Jeff McDonald for his 15 years as a MPO Board member, Dave Roberts
31 for his 10 years as a MPO staff member and finally, to Bernie Ferenc in recognition of her 25 years of service
32 to the organization.

33
34 Chris Jolly mentioned that VTrans has recently submitted a new STIP for the FY2010-2013. It is hoped that
35 the required approval of FHWA and VTA will occur within the next two weeks.

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37 The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.

38
39 Respectfully submitted,

40
41 Janet Botula
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