

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

4 DATE: Tuesday, January 5, 2010
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 Paul Craven, Railroad Industry

10 Amy Bell, VTrans

11 Robin Pierce, Essex Junction

12 Matthew Langham, VTrans

13 Meredith Birkett, CCTA

14 Meredith Schuft, CATMA

15 Dennis Lutz, Essex

16 Steve Palmer, Winooski

17 Bernie Gagnon, Shelburne

18 Bryan Osborne, Colchester

19 MPO Staff: Jason Charest, Transportation Engineer

20 Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner

21 Peter Keating, Senior Transportation Planner

22 Dave Roberts, Senior Transportation Planner

23 Eleni Churchill, Senior Transportation Planner

24 Janet Botula, Admin/Communications Assistant

25 Michele Boomhower, Executive Director

26 Bryan Davis, Transportation Planner

27 Daryl Benoit, Transportation Planner

28 RPC Staff: Charlie Baker, Executive Director

29 Julie Potter, Senior Planner

30
31 Chair George Gerecke called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

32
33 Peter Keating requested that Item 6 be removed from the agenda and tabled until the February meeting due to
34 the mix up with Milton's Enhancement grant application. As the state had not included them on their list, they
35 were not part of the CCMPO evaluation process. The Enhancement review committee will need to reconvene
36 and consider Milton's application with the other submittals.

37
38 Michele Boomhower made a correction to Item 4 on the agenda. She stated that it should read "Draft Air
39 Quality Report" rather than "Draft Air Quality Plan."
40

41 **1. Consent Agenda**

42 No items were on the Consent Agenda.
43

44 **2. Approval of Minutes**

45 A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF December 1, 2009 BY DENNIS LUTZ AND
46 SECONDED BY MEREDITH BIRKETT.

47 Michele wanted the minutes corrected on page 2, Item 5. Draft Air Quality Plan. Any references to the word
48 "plan" should be replaced with the word "report."
49

50 THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
51

52 **3. Public Comments**

53 No members of the public were present.
54

4. Draft Air Quality Report

Michele wanted it clarified that the report was not designed to be a plan or policy at this point but that it was meant to educate and serve as background material outlining potential options. A variety of comments had been received and they would be incorporated where appropriate.

Julie Potter mentioned that while Dennis Lutz had submitted the longest set of comments, others comments were expected to come in. One handout summarized the changes that had been made in response to comments that had been received thus far and the other handout responded specifically to Dennis' list. Julie then discussed the fact that Chittenden County is very close to being out of attainment for ozone, especially if, as expected, EPA adjusts its standards. Once we get to that point, it gets much more complicated and expensive. That's why we are looking at this issue and what we can do to be proactive. She wanted to create a document that works and was willing to make changes, deletions etc. but she wanted to get the report accepted by the CCMPO and CCPRC Boards to provide credibility to the document.

Michele stated that the FY 2010 UPWP has follow-on activities from this report but that they are not dependent upon its acceptance. She wanted to emphasize the section for requirements for non-attainment areas in terms of transportation planning requirements found in sections 86---B9 in the report. Our slate of activities would change significantly should we go into non-attainment as would the period of time for which we would be responsible for this new paradigm of how we do transportation planning. This would be not just for just a year or even two, if we could get out of non-attainment, but a ten-year time period. This report is useful in helping to understand the implications of non-attainment.

Dennis said he appreciated the responses to his comments but expressed concern about the mixing of elements between particulate matter and ozone. He was concerned about the lack of science and thought that more was available and this should be included in the report before specific strategies are recommended. Otherwise, it just becomes another regulatory requirement. His recommendation would be that this should go forward as soon as we can but he recommended that we leave it on the table—make some of the changes that can be made, take some of the pieces out, add some in, and maybe add an appendix more specific to air quality data. He thought it needed to better make the arguments that lead to the strategies. It then it becomes a more complete report that we can use to move forward with the strategy. It doesn't change where the MPO is going but he feels that there are some improvements that need to be made before he can give it his stamp of approval.

Michele stated that she appreciated Dennis' comments and shared his frustration about the lack of identifiable and relevant data relative to our contribution versus those from outside the area. Regardless, once we go above the threshold we will have to meet the federal requirements. It was agreed that the first part of the report should include a statement saying that we lack some of the scientific data. As we develop strategies we will try and do more data collection or obtain the information to make a definitive connection between the science and the strategy wherever possible.

Charlie Baker clarified that this report is really doing background research on a range of strategies. In no way was it meant to imply that certain strategies were the right ones. The next phase of work will be to do a plan. This is a report documents strategies that have been done elsewhere. Some of the strategies described in the report may or may not be appropriate here. The report is intended to educate our board and the municipalities about the range of options and strategies but not to commit or indicate that these are the things that need to be done here in Chittenden County.

Paul Craven questioned why Chittenden County is going through this process at this point and wondered what the state was doing. Julie responded that the state does the air quality monitoring. Christine interjected that there will be funding implications for the MPO's planning process as well as for project implementation. The state will, however, have a big role and take the lead.

Dennis reiterated that we need to clarify that the science isn't there and that he would like the report cleaned up, certain parts removed and then for staff to come back with the final draft. He felt that we might be forced

1 into implementation even if we don't have the science yet. Christine stated that, at that point, modeling would
2 come into play and provide more answers.

3
4 Bryan Osborne questioned whether any funding opportunities would be created if Chittenden County were to
5 go into non-attainment. After some discussion, it was determined that non-attainment status would not be
6 profitable. Regulations would focus on where the money could be spent and additional dollars would not be
7 available. Bryan then asked if there were any examples from around country of areas similar to Chittenden
8 County that have gone into non-attainment and then implemented a mixture of these types of strategies and
9 eventually been brought back into attainment successfully. Charlie responded that it would involve the state
10 and ANR doing vehicle testing and inspections. There is a lot more to be done than what we see in this report.
11 Julie responded to Bryan's question by saying that, because it takes so long to get back into attainment, and
12 because it's hard to find parallels to places that Vermonters might think of as a relevant comparison, the data is
13 difficult to come by. She mentioned that Vermont was out of attainment in the 1970's and early 80's and it
14 took quite an effort to bring it back into attainment. Some of it had to do with vehicle fuel and a change in
15 practices. Bryan thought that he might be able to overlook some of the lack of science issues if the report
16 contained some examples of communities where certain strategies have worked. He felt that this would help
17 others to buy in to these strategies.

18
19 Julie stated that the report did include some discussion about our last experience with non-attainment. Once in
20 non-attainment the state and non-attainment area must work together to develop a plan that is sufficiently
21 convincing so that EPA will approve it. That's where modeling plays a role but the models are not always
22 accurate. There will be a lot of scrutiny about what gets proposed for getting us back into attainment but it is
23 possible. Julie said that there are not many stories about communities getting back into attainment but it's
24 partly because ozone standards are dropping. You may be making progress but it's a moving target. Charlie
25 said that the report was focused on what could be done locally and regionally and he thought that we should
26 think about what the CCMPO could possibly eventually commit to two or three years from now. At this point,
27 we're just trying to lay the educational groundwork about what can be done locally. The state implementation
28 plan will require a lot of action on the state level. This report includes the local and regional strategies and is
29 not the whole ball of wax. Christine stated that this was only the transportation piece but the state plan will
30 cover all sources. A discussion then followed about the impact of increased fuel prices, a gas tax, and emission
31 inspections. It was felt that unless you did some of these things, behavior would not change. Unfortunately
32 these actions would ultimately impact those whom could least afford it and result in losing revenue to pay for
33 transit. The question of why the CCRPC/CCMPO wants to get ahead of the state on air quality came up again.
34 Julie and Michele responded that we're only getting ahead on the educational curve and laying the groundwork
35 so we'll understand and be prepared for the ramifications of being out of attainment. It's good to be proactive
36 as the burden of non-attainment is so great. We're not trying to draw attention to ourselves but non-attainment
37 will inevitably occur whether we do everything or nothing. Paul asked how this would all happen and Michele
38 replied that the state would hear that we are out of attainment and there would be a direct discussion almost
39 immediately.

40
41 Returning to the topic of what would happen in regards to funding sources if the County went out of
42 attainment, Matt Langham responded we would lose flexibility with CMAQ funding, as right now we can
43 spend it anywhere we want within the transportation system. We fund park and rides and we transfer the rest
44 of our CMAQ funds over to FTA for new starts and preventative maintenance, because it's really STP funds at
45 that point and we can even buy new buses with it. If we go out of attainment then CMAQ funding has to be
46 spent on new starts. We can still spend it on park and rides if you show that you're taking vehicles off the road
47 or on an intersection project if you reduce congestion It would leave us with a hole in funding parts of the
48 transit system, so it would have initially a negative impact on transit. Ultimately, there would be no additional
49 funding if we were to go into non-attainment and it would divert money from scoping and other activities that
50 we can currently do now. Amy stated that the issue is not unique to Chittenden County, as Bennington County
51 is the worst in particulate matter and they could go out of attainment before we do. However, as it does not
52 have an MPO, the implications would not be the same.

1 Dennis requested that staff rework portions of the draft report and return with a final draft that the TAC could
2 approve and forward to the Board. Michele stated that a motion would not be necessary, as the minutes would
3 reflect the TAC's discussion. She would recommend that the Executive Board take the item off of the January
4 Board agenda and, as there is no February meeting, it could go to the Board in March. George asked about
5 evaluating strategies by their impact and Julie stated that there was a table that made it clear that the strategies
6 that had to do with transportation would have the greatest impact.
7

8 **5. Colchester Avenue Corridor Consultant Selection**

9 Eleni Churchill reported that the Colchester Avenue RFP went out in mid-November and that four consultants
10 responded: RSG, Smart Mobility, Tetra Tech Rizzo, and PB. The consultant selection committee met before
11 Christmas and recommended RSG. She requested the TAC's approval of their selection. She clarified that the
12 project covers the area between the Winooski Bridge and the South Prospect/Pearl St./Colchester Ave
13 intersection and that it would be a holistic approach: all modes of transportation will be studied as well as
14 access issues, and safety as the corridor includes three high crash locations.
15

16 A MOTION WAS MADE BY MEREDITH BIRKETT TO APPROVE RSG AS THE CONSULTANT FOR
17 THE COLCHESTER AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY AND SECONDED BY ROBIN PIERCE.
18

19 In response to a question by Amy, Eleni clarified that the CCMPO will manage this project.
20

21 THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
22

23 **6. Enhancement Application Priorities** This item was tabled until the February meeting
24

25 **7. Exit 12B Creative Financing Update**

26 Michele distributed this report's Executive Summary and explained that over the past four months the
27 CCMPO had been working with an advisory committee made up of municipal officials, Federal Highway,
28 VTrans, and the private sector to understand the options for private sector funding for the construction of a
29 possible new interchange at Exit 12B. The CCMPO coordinated with State and the city and looked at the
30 feasibility of putting in an interchange. They determined that projects costs for two feasible solutions were
31 projected at \$33-\$47 million. This type of interchange would bring 90% federal funding for the direct
32 interchange activities and associated upgrades along the periphery would be potentially an 80 federal/20 local
33 match. While the state has been supportive, they've said the availability of federal funds is limited and, in
34 order for the project to advance and be a ranked project, they would want to see some additional contributions
35 from the local level. The purpose of the study was to understand what private sector contributions would be
36 feasible for this project, hopefully more in the 70/30 percent range, hence making the project more palatable
37 for the state. She referenced the chart and table found in E-2 of the report that indicated a proposed assessment
38 district that primarily encompassed commercial lots in Williston and South Burlington. The analysis of the
39 traffic demand indicated that these would be the primary beneficiaries of the interchange. It also identified a
40 benefit to Exit 12 in Williston that is currently a congested interchange, and likely to get worse – by
41 redirecting some of the traffic away from Exit 12 to 12B. In developing the idea of how Exit 12B might be
42 funded, it was assumed that there could be a Williston contribution. Many of the major developers at the
43 intersection of 12B and those in the Williston quadrant were approached and Williston and South Burlington
44 officials participated in the discussion looking at which of these potential financing mechanisms might be
45 appropriate for their community and taxpayers. After looking at several mechanisms, they found that very little
46 money could be raised from the private sector at a tolerable level. Williston still has some transportation
47 improvements that they want to make in the Tafts Corner area such as Bridge Street. As a result they would be
48 less likely to want to contribute when they might want to use special assessment districts to implement their
49 own projects. TIF district financing was another option that was looked at but it had limited palatability. South
50 Burlington is already looking at a TIF elsewhere and only one is permitted per municipality. Williston was not
51 interested in the TIF idea either. Developers were not interested in impact fees. When surcharges for parking
52 at the airport were discussed, as the airport would be a major beneficiary, or a surcharge on rental cars at the
53 airport was considered, they found that it was very difficult to obtain data on the volume of rental activity from

1 the rental car companies. They are still pursuing this data. The bottom line is that this is the first exhaustive
2 study of what could be done with private sector investment and different approaches that could be taken.
3 Unfortunately, the results and possibilities were not all that exciting. It would raise a portion of money but not
4 a significant amount.

5
6 Concluding, Michele stated that even with all the analysis done through the Blue Ribbon Commission, we find
7 ourselves in the position of having the Fed/State/local share as the primary mechanism for funding. The full
8 report is on line and she would be happy to supply a paper copy upon request.

9
10 There was some discussion about the undeveloped land to the south of the airport but it was concluded that
11 South Burlington wanted any TIF funds directed to their city center. Bryan Osborne discussed some innovative
12 ways that Colchester is using TIF monies, which did not give him more money but did provide a little more
13 flexibility.

14 15 **8. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

16 Peter reported that the Park and Ride inventory and travel characteristics draft report has been completed and
17 distributed to the Advisory Committee, with project completion scheduled for September. As far as the MTP,
18 the current plan expires in January and there is an amendment process in place to buy time to finish the 2060
19 MTP. Staff has continued meeting with VEIC about taking over Way to Go Week. The Enhancement Grants
20 recommendations, as reported earlier, are delayed due to the Milton application mix-up.

21
22 Daryl Benoit reported that he had finished the Main Road speed limit studies for Huntington. He has been
23 looking at border crossing freight data which looks at crossing data at all Vermont ports back to 1995,
24 annually and monthly. He also is continuing to work on a pavement study for Shelburne and Charlotte. He
25 submitted summary ferry crossing data to Charlotte for the Charlotte to Essex, NY ferry.

26 There has been an average of 900 boardings a day on both sides during the Crown Point Bridge closure.

27
28 Eleni stated that the comment period for the Western Corridor Study ends on January 6th and that she has
29 received a few comments. All comments must be submitted by that date.

30
31 Christine Forde said that alternatives meeting for the bridges in Huntington had been rescheduled. She also
32 updated the status of the Shelburne Bay Road and Essex Gentes Road bridges.

33
34 Dave Roberts reported that the CCMPO is working on the mid-year budget adjustments. Part of that includes
35 moving some money out of the Technical assistance consultant budget. Some money will be left in the account
36 for a month or two but he asked that TAC members let him know as soon as possible if they had any ideas.
37 Monies were going to be transferred to scoping, the MTP update and the board organizational development
38 process etc. He said that the latest Circ newsletter was on the website, and that the final EIS may be available
39 this month. The Board has warned for Public Hearing to extend time to finish MTP 2060. He is working with
40 RPCs in adjacent counties regarding traffic flow into and out of Chittenden County. He's also been meeting
41 with Chris Jolly and Amy about using a portion of our \$125,000 in the FY09 TIP funding for the optimization
42 program on equipment such as new controllers. He would like input from the TAC.

43
44 Jason Charest said that there had been resident concerns reported in Charlotte about increased ferry traffic so
45 he's looking at stop sign warrant analysis at the intersection of Ferry and Lake Road. As part of the Highway
46 Safety Improvement Program, he received the draft report from VTrans about the Winooski Circulator and
47 will discuss the report with the City and VTrans in order to remedy any issues.

48
49 Bryan Davis announced that the CCMPO would be hosting a traffic impact webinar on Friday, January 8th
50 from 12-1:30 with ASCE. He spoke of an upcoming joint press conference touting the positive changes in
51 Chittenden County, based on census trends, regarding the fewer number of single occupancy vehicles, more
52 pedestrian traffic and bus use. The next road managers meeting will be on February 9. CarShare Vermont
53 will be celebrating its one-year anniversary in December and will be having a "Share the Love" event on

1 February 12th to commemorate the Valentines Day storm that occurred at one of their kickoff meetings in
2 2007. They are looking at expanding to Winooski.

3
4 Michele stated that the CCMPO Board had a four-hour retreat in December resulting in Board members
5 agreeing that it would be important to continue our process to improve board organization, administrative and
6 policy development processes. The next steps will include survey, telephone interviews, look at structure,
7 process etc so we can continue to recruit and retain Board members. As information becomes available TAC
8 members will be updated. She also mentioned that the 2011 UPWP process will be starting up and she looking
9 for volunteers from the TAC to serve on UPWP committee.

10

11 **9. CCMPO December Board Meeting Report**

12 George Gerecke reported that the Board had conducted a short business meeting prior to the Board retreat. A
13 minor TIP amendment had been approved; the 2009 Audit had been accepted, and the Board had warned for a
14 public hearing for the MTP amendment.

15

16 The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

17

18 Respectfully submitted,

19

20 Janet Botula

21