

APPENDIX I

Public Involvement

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The purpose of the Route 15 Corridor Study is to develop a multi-modal transportation improvement plan that accounts for the changes anticipated within the corridor and addresses specific deficiencies. The outcome will be a comprehensive and coordinated list of highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and streetscape and land use recommendations that satisfy an overall corridor vision.

The intent of the public involvement effort was to foster a spirit of inclusiveness and ownership of the Corridor Study. To that end, key stakeholders developed a scope of work and hired a consulting firm to undertake the technical aspects of the plan. Public involvement activities were undertaken with the assistance of Third Sector Associates of Burlington.

1. Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The committee met frequently throughout the study period to provide guidance to the consultant team and CCMPO staff. They reviewed public input and helped to design the formats for the three public workshops. Agendas and meeting notes for these committees are archived on the CCMPO website (www.ccmppo.org).

2. Individual Municipal Meetings

The first series of public meetings began in January 2006 to introduce the study, discuss current conditions, and solicit comments, concerns, and questions from the public. The meetings

were primarily listening sessions, where the consultants introduced the study objectives and work program and hear the thoughts of municipal representatives and the public. The main goal of these sessions was to hear the concerns and issues of the elected/appointed officials of the municipalities.

When possible, the meetings were held at regular Planning Commission meeting times:

- Colchester, September 19, 2006
- Winooski, September 26, 2006
- Essex/Essex Junction, September 28, 2006

3. Public Workshop #1 (Goals, Objectives, Issues, Vision)

The first public workshop, on February 7, 2007 was held at the Elley-Long Music Center at St. Michael's College. The consultant team presented the results of the existing and future conditions analyses. They discussed the nature and character of the corridor in general terms (strip commercial development, versus more walking activity, cross linkages, mixed uses, etc). The aim was to obtain public input regarding goals, objectives, and issues.

The audience of twenty-eight people was divided into four roundtable groups, each with maps and drawing material, and asked to address the following questions:

- What should be the overall goal of the VT 15 Corridor Study?
- What are the most positive characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?

- What are the most negative characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?
- What types of improvements would you like to see in the corridor in terms of the following:
 - Roadway and intersection improvements
 - Transit improvements (bus and/or other)
 - Bicycle improvements (on-road and/or off-road)
 - Pedestrian improvements
 - Streetscape improvements
 - Land use changes
- What should be the priorities?

A member of each group reported back to the full audience after the roundtable session.

4. Public Workshop #2 (Alternatives Evaluation and Rankings)

The second workshop was held on June 27, 2007 at the Hoehl Welcome Center at St. Michael’s College. The consultant team made a presentation and discussed the vision and goals that were created as a result of the first public workshop and input by a variety of stakeholders:

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- Develop a flexible roadway network with varying functions reflecting the diverse needs and characteristics of its segments;
- Enhance corridor safety for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle

traffic;

- Provide attractive and efficient travel options to serve the diverse needs of residents and businesses within the corridor and travelers from municipalities east of the study area; and
- Provide transportation and land use strategies that support the community character and balance growth and economic development with livable communities and land preservation.

The audience of seventeen was divided into two groups and asked to address the following questions:

- Do you agree with the goals for the VT 15 Corridor Study? Would you recommend any changes?
- Rank the desirability of the improvement strategies from 1 to 5 (1 being the least desirable and 5 being the most desirable)

The aim of the meeting was to determine if the study was moving in the right direction. Overall, those in attendance agreed with the vision and goals as presented.

5. Public Workshop #3 (Draft Implementation Plan)

The third and final public workshop was held on October 10, 2007 at St. Edmund’s Hall at St. Michael’s College. Thirty-six people attended the session. The purpose was to review the draft recommendations and implementation plan, and to obtain feedback from a broader group of stakeholders. The audience broke into small groups and then prioritized a list of strategies as individuals (“dotmocracy”). The top five priorities are summarized in a table on the on the next page.

Table 1: Summary of Corridor Priorities—Public Workshop #3

| Priority | Location | Description | Category | Number of Votes |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | VT 15 between East and Spring Streets | Reduce lanes to 11' and add 5' shoulder on north side, relocate centerline (south side has bike lane) | Multimodal | 15 |
| 2 | Spring Street / VT 15 | Permanent implementation of split (EB) lane designation and splitter island on west approach | Congestion & Safety | 10 |
| 3 | Corridor Wide | Provide consistent lane widths (11') & use remaining for shoulders | Multimodal | 8 |
| 4 | Route 15 - Essex Jct. to Burlington | 15-minute peak period service on CCTA's Essex Junction route | Transit | 7 |
| 5 | Corridor Wide | Widen roadway, add 5 ft shoulders on both sides | Multimodal | 6 |
| | Route 15 - Essex Jct. to Burlington | Evening and weekend service on CCTA's Essex Junction Route | Transit | |
| | St. Michael's W. Entrance/VT15 | Right-turn lane on VT15 WB (No Circ Alternative) | Congestion & Safety | |
| | Ft. Ethan Allen E. Entrance/ | Study signal installation to allow left turning exits, and | Transit | |

6. Additional Meetings

BFJ met with individual municipalities along the corridor, the Hill Institutions in Burlington, and local planners throughout the study period.

7. Public Comment

Public comments were compiled throughout the study period and addressed as they were received. Comments on the final draft plan are available from the CCMPO and are addressed in Appendix A of this Study.