



Vermont Route 15 Stakeholder Group
*Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Winooski
Champlain Valley Exposition, Fanny Allen, St. Michaels College,
University of Vermont, Vermont National Guard*

Route 15 Corridor Study: Plan Advisory Committee

DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2006
TIME: 8:30 am
PLACE: CCMPO Offices, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, South Burlington, VT
PRESENT: Jeff Arango, Village of Essex Junction
Eleni Churchhill, VTrans
David Cutler, St. Michael's College
Aaron Frank, CCTA
Jim Gometz, Champlain Valley Exposition
Scott Johnstone, CCMPO
Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates
Gerry Myers, City of Winooski
Todd Odit, Town of Essex
Bryan Osborne, Town of Colchester
John Patry, Vermont Army National Guard
Bob Penniman, CATMA
Susan Smichenko, CCMPO

Meeting Purpose: To discuss issues and concerns and reach a common understanding of the purpose of the Route 15 Corridor Study.

1) Welcome and Introductions

The group made introductions. Susan introduced Diane Meyerhoff, who will be the public involvement consultant for the CCMPO and will be helping with the study.

2) Review VTrans Vermont Corridor Management Handbook (a guidance document for the study): The document was distributed. Available at:
<http://www.aot.state.vt.us/planning/vtcorridor.htm>

3) Key Concerns and Issues

Town of Essex

- Keep Route 15 two lanes through our town
- Concentrate development at the growth center (Town Center)
- Increase in AM and PM peak traffic flows
- Increase transit; especially in the Town Center (shuttles and longer distance service?)

CCTA

- Increase transit service - 15-minute headways at peak hours (CMAQ request pending)
- Add traffic signal at the east entrance of Fort Ethan Allen
- Install signal priority/preemption for transit and emergency vehicles
- There is existing service to the Town Center, but it's not provided on a half hour basis like most of our other routes.

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- There is an opportunity to combine CCTA Essex Junction Route service with shuttle service offered by CATMA/Fletcher Allen to serve park & rides
- Fanny Allen pedestrian crossing

(There are discussions of giving control of Chittenden County CMAQ funding to the CCMPO. CMAQ can be used for new starts and new services for three years only.)

CATMA/Institutions

- For the institutions, CCTA has the most direct route and has high ridership.
- We are moving toward remote auto intercept/Park & Ride served by common shuttle service, like CCTA.
- CATMA provides UVM affiliates free unlimited access to CCTA. Other organizations can join this program.
- Route 15 CMA from Hardwick to Essex Town resulted in significant and important earmark projects for access management, consistent streetscape, and traffic calming.
- Fanny Allen is a very active campus and will increase its activity. They are linked with Camp Johnson's Bioterrorism and disaster planning.
- UVM owns land at both ends of the Fort. It is asking "what is the best and highest use for the older buildings?" Discussions are underway with Essex especially about access and the Susie Wilson Road Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plans.

St. Michael's College

- Aesthetics are very important.
- Concerned about the Lime Kiln Bridge truck traffic and how to integrate all users.
- We are the largest landowner at the Fort. We have housing with shuttles to campus. We have a 15-20 acre parcel with long term leases to other entities, especially arts organizations with evening uses.
- Our campus is "grown out." Our Master Plan provides for crossing Route 15. We've filled in one quarry (for athletic fields) and will fill another.
- There will be no new growth, but we expect to build a new library, 120 bed student center, and a tech building. We are seeing an increase in our summer activities.
- We expect a new intersection at our biorescue facility.
- We are concerned that a new north/south entrance to I89 will increase truck traffic.

(The third priority for an auto intercept facility in the county is at Barnes Road. Potentially, this could be funded with an earmark)

Champlain Valley Exposition

- We have 125 events in addition to the Fair - an increase in events and attendance.
- The road portion of our Master Plan is complete.
- We are interested in improving the aesthetics of Route 15 and have a "Pearl Street Vision" plan done by Saratoga Associates. We'd be happy to make a presentation.
- We want to alleviate problems with east-west traffic during the Fair.

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City of Winooski

- Access control issues
- Public transit with 15-minute headways
- Elimination of congestion during peak hours
- Improving streetscape and connectivity. We have an earmark for bike/ped. We need to decide about crossing the Winooski-Burlington Bridge and the Lime Kiln Bridge.
- Southbound AM traffic is a problem due to lack of signal capacity in Burlington.
- There is a Colchester Ave. committee and an upcoming Burlington Transp. Study.
- The larger issue for Winooski is Route 7 traffic, not Route 15. Should we bring Burlington into this process? There is a conflict between philosophies of providing access to all side roads versus keeping pass-through traffic flowing.
- Many of our problems are outside the corridor - like the Exit 14 spillover.
- Railroad crossing has improved flows. Must be part of this study.

Camp Johnson

- We have compatible uses around us - industrial/commercial.
- We contributed land for the campus connector.
- We support bikepaths
- We don't expect growth in our traffic loads. We are experiencing "modularity conversion" from heavy armored tank battalion to light infantry rapid response.
- We are able to move efficiently for rapid response.
- We are looking at a vehicle maintenance facility in Morrisville/Johnson.
- The Hercules Drive connection is off the table due to security issues.

(The "old" route through the Fort - Colchester, Winooski, and St. Mike's own the Gilbrook property. Is there an alternative connector available on owned land?)

Colchester

- Institutions are critical.
- There are no plans to dramatically change land use.
- VTrans District 5 will move and part of the property will become a stormwater pond.
- Concerned about access management and increase in accidents.
- Bike/ped connections (old Lime Kiln Bridge will not be restored).
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Streetscape improvements
- Add traffic signal at the east entrance of Fort Ethan Allen
- Don't forget that part of this corridor lies in the impaired Sunderland watershed. Stormwater is important in this discussion.

Passenger Rail Improvements

- New England Central (NEC) will discuss a bike/ped path in the railroad right-of-way.
- The focus of the study should be to move people and pedestrians/bicyclists.
- Bikepaths are a security risk on the St. Michael's campus.

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3) Boundaries of the Study

- We should bring Burlington into the study later - likely as part of the Stakeholder or Steering Committee.
- Primary vs. secondary boundaries (Susie Wilson, Kellogg, Park & Ride at Circ). Existing problems in the corridor also affects the “secondary” impact area.
- TOD: the impacts of increasing congestion (increasing density and traffic) to justify increasing public transportation affect other neighboring communities by worsening conditions.
- Changed results if Circ is complete/connector roads. Need to analyze existing conditions with and without the Circ.
- The consultant must be part of this discussion.

Generally, the corridor is Route 15 from the Jericho line to Riverside Avenue.

4) The Corridor Management Plan Process

- Involvement of the stakeholder and steering committees, consultant, and CCMPO.
- Who else should be involved? Railroad, MPO board members and/or elected officials. VSCA is now a minor player.
- Steering Committee meeting notes should be copied to the Stakeholder Committee.
- The municipalities are responsible for assisting with outreach.

5) Next Steps

- Todd will draft Consultant RFP for review at the next meeting.
- Next Meeting Purpose: To complete a draft RFP for stakeholder approval and release.

The Steering Committee will meet Wednesday, March 8, 2006
at 8:30AM at the CCMPO Office.