



**Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

TransActions

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE CCMPO

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SPOTLIGHT

CCMPO and CCRPC to Consider Consolidation

The Boards of the CCMPO and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) have voted to consider consolidating the two organizations. Each would continue to have its own Board, but functions such as accounting and staffing could be combined. Completion of the process is expected to take about one year.

The proposed consolidation plan builds on efficiencies the two planning agencies realized through last fall's co-location. Because they work closely together, consolidation is expected to streamline their collaboration and benefit local governments, the public, and other clients in Chittenden County.

"Our missions can overlap," said William Keogh, chair of the CCMPO. "We used to be one organization, but we separated in 1997. We think that our experience has shown us how to work together in a way that will make the most sense, create efficiencies, provide better services, and allow each organization to accomplish its specific mission."

Mark Lords from Essex Junction, Chair of the CCRPC, concurred: "Transportation planning

and land use planning must be closely integrated. We share many of the same constituencies, such as Chittenden County municipalities, business groups, and environmental groups. In addition, we'll see greater efficiencies in our day-to-day operations." Lords also noted that the combined organizations would have about 16 employees and an annual budget of more than \$2 million.

The CCRPC was founded by an act of the Vermont legislature in 1972, mandated to develop and periodically update a regional plan that addresses development and resource issues in Chittenden County. The CCRPC board has a representative from each county municipality, as well as five at-large members who represent specific issue or policy areas. It focuses on land use policy issues that have an impact on economic development, housing, transportation, and quality of life. In addition, it provides technical assistance to regional communities on topics such as land use regulation, disaster mitigation, open space, and tourism planning. Executive Director Greg Brown heads the CCRPC staff. □



It's Construction Season!

Check the latest Chittenden County Traffic Alerts at www.ccmppo.org/cta

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NEW CCMPO OFFICERS ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING:

Chair:

Jim Condos
(S. Burlington)



Vice-Chair:

Jeff McDonald
(Charlotte)



Secretary-Treasurer:

Mike O'Brien
(Winooski)



Executive Committee At Large:

Virginia Clarke
(Richmond)



Chris Conant
(Colchester)



Visit the CCMPO at www.ccmppo.org

A Look at Jericho, VT



Recent years have brought a growing population and increased traffic volume to Jericho. With over 5,000 residents, Jericho is now considered an urban municipality. Its convenient location for commuters traveling to and from Chittenden County's major employment areas has also attracted significant traffic from surrounding communities.

Highway Maintenance Issues

Jericho's highways are primarily gravel roads. These challenge the town's small maintenance crew to keep up with transportation demand. As vehicles pass through the town, they typically travel at speeds above the posted limits. The combination of excessive traffic volume and excessive speed contributes to road surface damage and potholes. These roadway

problems, in turn, can damage the vehicles themselves.

Alternative Transportation Plans

A major transportation improvement project now in development is a multi-use path extending from the Riverside section of Jericho to Underhill. The path will connect schools, libraries, small businesses, and residences in the two towns. Eventually, it will also connect with the planned, countywide bike/ped network.

Easements have been completed and bid documents sent to the state. Construction should be finished within the current fiscal year, which ends in October, 2003. □

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

Walkable Community Workshops

Over the first week of June, the CCMPO, funded by a grant from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, held seven Walkable Community Workshops around the region. National walkability experts Cara Seiderman of Cambridge, MA and Peter Lagerwey of Seattle, WA made a strong case for the need to improve pedestrian facilities and provided the project ideas to make them happen.

Cara mentioned that she winces when hearing many refer to walking as an alternative mode of transportation — it is, she strongly emphasized, THE mode and all others are alternatives. All trips, in cars or otherwise, include a pedestrian component at the start and end. When we focus on that perspective it should become clear that we need to invest in more and safer walking facilities.

The first workshop of the week took place in the Village of Essex Junction where local elected officials, police, school administrators, and others examined ways to improve walking routes to the Summit Street and Fleming Schools, and new design ideas for Railroad Street in the Village center. At a similar workshop on Tuesday, a diverse group gathered in South Burlington to find ways to encourage safer walking routes to the Chamberlin School on White Street.

In Colchester the focus was on improving walking facilities within Fort Ethan Allen and to the adjacent areas, while in Shelburne and Hinesburg street crossing safety and extending pedestrian facilities further from the Village centers were of primary concern.

The largest workshop took place on Thursday morning in Burlington, where over fifty people, inspired by the instructors' presentation, devised plans to improve Waterfront Park access by providing better Battery Street crossings, direct routes over the steep bank to the Park and changes to the Battery/Pearl intersection. The week ended with a workshop in Jericho, where local residents considered ways to improve pedestrian safety around the green in historic Jericho Center Village.

The many new ideas shared with committed audiences produced a high level of enthusiasm at each of the workshops. As a result, both instructors left the region feeling confident that a variety of pedestrian related improvements would soon be evident in many of these municipalities. □



Interested citizens map pedestrian improvements in Hinesburg Village.

Commemorating 20 Years of Planning



Speaker Frank Bryan delivers an entertaining talk on Vermont's transportation history.



Legislators, Board members, and the public gathered at Burlington's historic Union Station to attend this year's annual meeting and mark the 20th anniversary of the CCMPO. Following UVM Professor Frank Bryan's presentation, "You Can't Get There From Here: Thoughts on Transportation in Vermont," a lighthearted awards ceremony recognized the contributions of numerous Board members and transportation officials.

Discussing the past fiscal year, Bill Knight noted the Board's re-endorsement of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan's vision and goals, and its approval of transportation

improvements related to TDM, TSM, bike/ped, transit, and the Circ. Additional MTP developments include an updated land use scenario, recommendations based on revised housing and job growth forecasts, and a Board recommendation to develop a comprehensive bike/ped network investment strategy. The MTP is now slated for discussions with selectboards, village and city councils, and members of the public.

Other accomplishments in the past year include development (with the CCTA, SSTA, and VTA) of a "Transit Funding Task Force Report" for the state legislature; planning assistance and coordination for local communities; completion of traffic signal optimization on Dorset Street in South Burlington; new scoping studies for Burlington, Charlotte, Shelburne, and South Burlington; and co-location of the CCMPO and CCRPC offices at 30 Kimball Avenue, South Burlington.

The CCMPO's public outreach program continued to involve county residents in transportation discussions and decision-making. Over 100 participants attended seven local workshops on improving the pedestrian infrastructure. In addition, the CCMPO's draft Public Involvement Plan recommended forming a Citizen Participation Committee to review public involvement efforts and provide feedback to the Board.

Knight concluded his remarks with a look toward the future (see online article: www.ccmpto.org/annualmeeting). In FY 2004, he noted, the CCMPO will explore greater operational efficiencies as it considers consolidation with the CCRPC, and will continue to work with local officials, legislators, and members of the public to define and implement transportation improvements throughout the county.

Robert Penniman, CCMPO Board Member



What is your background in transportation planning?

I've worked professionally in transportation and land use planning for over 30 years. I currently provide these services to CATMA members, as well as to clients of my consulting firm, RHP

Associates. On a voluntary basis, I've served as a resource to the town of Jericho, worked on the town's first road capital plan, served on the Planning Commission, and I'm currently a member of the Jericho Selectboard. In 1997, when the MPO and RPO merged, I became a CCMPO Board member and served as Vice Chair.

What transportation issues are particularly important to you?

First, the disproportionate impact of population growth on small towns like Jericho. On Route 15, we've seen a tremendous increase in commuter volume from surrounding counties. This strains our road maintenance budget and causes congestion during peak hours. Unlike the larger municipalities, however, we don't have the financial resources to deal with these problems effectively.

Another concern is adequate transportation funding for Chittenden County. We are Vermont's primary economic engine, yet we don't always get a fair discussion by state government. We should be getting our share of state and federal funds, but in the past ten years, we've never come close to getting the \$30 million per year allocated to us.

Finally, I'd like to see a more widespread understanding of the link between transportation and development. I've always said that land use has as big an impact on transportation as transportation has on land use.

What are your thoughts about the CCMPO today?

I approve the co-location of the CCMPO and CCRPC, but I'm concerned that consolidation may be a much greater challenge. The two organizations are different legal entities with different legal responsibilities, so I feel we still need a clear understanding of what "consolidation" will mean. □

Signal Timing Workshop

CCMPO held a Traffic Signal Operation and Management Training Workshop on April 8, 2003 to provide training for municipal employees responsible for the operation and maintenance of traffic signals. The workshop included presentations by Emiliano Lopez from the Federal Highway Administration's Resource Center in Baltimore, Maryland and Fred Chamberlin of C.E.A., Inc., a local traffic signal consultant. More than 30 municipal and state employees attended, representing Burlington, South Burlington, Essex, Williston, Rutland and the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

In a survey taken after the workshop, most attendees rated the instructors and content as "excellent" and felt the course was "informative, interesting and educational." CCMPO plans to hold future training workshops as part of its initiative to improve traffic operations in Chittenden County.

CCMPO appreciated the efforts of Hank Lambert of the Vermont Local Roads Program in coordinating the logistics of the event.

Transit Oriented Development Planned for Route 15

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) brings a mix of land uses, such as residential, office, shopping, civic, and entertainment facilities, within easy walking distance of a transit station. When combined with plazas, parks, or other community spaces, the result is a centralized, village-like neighborhood.

Stakeholders who live or work along the Route 15 corridor have expressed strong interest in TOD. In recent discussions, they have explored ways to incorporate TOD into each community's local planning process.

Responding to public interest from local municipalities, the CCMPO drafted a TOD strategy for the corridor. In addition, the CCMPO completed an alternatives analysis and an environmental assessment. Now planners must study specific land use and station connectivity issues, and further discussions must be held at the local, regional, and state levels.

The FHWA is now considering Route 15 for Transportation and Community System Preservation (TCSP) and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) grants. Other local and federal funds have already been used to study efficiency and safety improvements such as signal optimization, ITS, and express bus service.

The preparation of this document was financed jointly by the eighteen municipalities in Chittenden County and the Chittenden County Transportation Authority; the Vermont Agency of Transportation; and the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

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Communities working together
to meet Chittenden County's
transportation needs

Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization

