



**Chittenden County  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization**

# TransActions

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE CCMPO

JUL/AUG '04

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## SPOTLIGHT

### **The Circ, the Vermont Legislature, the CCMPO and Our TIP**

Monday, May 10, CCMPO was stunned by the decision of the federal court to stop construction of Sections A & B of the Circ. This decision is a major blow to the transportation system of Chittenden County and Vermont. It left \$33 million available for other projects in Federal FY 2004 and 2005. Nine days later, at a regular CCMPO Board meeting we were surprised and disappointed when the Vermont Legislature decided to divvy up the money throughout the State of Vermont over our protests.

The CCMPO issue is that we wanted to participate in the decision on the fund distribution; we knew that our current list of projects could not utilize all of these funds. CCMPO has two major concerns:

1. Protecting our legal authority as a federally designated transportation planning organization.
2. Protecting our ability to prioritize the transportation projects in Chittenden County.

The Transportation Bill deals only with \$22 million for the Circ for State FY 2005. The allocation of Circ funds is:

1. Up to \$3.7 million for the Circ (\$1.3 million to cover completed work and \$2 million for environmental studies).
2. Up to \$6.6 million for the Winooski downtown redevelopment.
3. Up to \$3 million for projects in Chittenden County "as selected by the secretary in cooperation with the CCMPO".

4. All remaining funds – at least \$8.6 million – were to go to shelf projects or to accelerate projects in the state's fiscal year 2005 outside of Chittenden County.

This decision by the legislature potentially violates the MPO planning process and collaborative partnership we have with VTrans. CCMPO supported legislation that would have provided the Secretary of VTrans to use her discretion in consultation with CCMPO to determine the distribution of the Circ funds. Under federal law, the transportation planning process must be a "cooperative" planning process between CCMPO and the State Administration and Legislature. Without cooperation, the federal government could determine that CCMPO and the State are not working cooperatively and the whole process could jeopardize timely utilization of Federal Highway monies to the great detriment of Vermont, the MPO, and all of our communities, citizens and the traveling public.

The CCMPO will now make its decisions through the amendment of the FY 2004-2006 TIP and the adoption of the FY 2005-2007 TIP with public hearings over the next 2-3 months.

For the FY 2004 TIP under federal regulations, if CCMPO and the State do not agree on transferring funds out of Chittenden County by September 30, 2004, the funds will not be available for use elsewhere in the state, and the state could potentially lose them.

*continued on Page 2*



**Starting with the September-October '04 issue, Transactions will be published electronically on the CCMPO web site. For those who prefer paper copies, we will mail black & white laser prints of each issue. If you have questions or would like to receive the newsletter by mail, please contact Bernie Ferenc at 660-4071 ext. 10.**

## IN THIS ISSUE

The Circ.....	1
A Look at Westford, VT.....	2
Funding the RTD.....	2
Park & Ride Study.....	3
A Conversation with CCMPO Board Member Tom Buckley....	3
Traffic Count Data.....	4
MTP Update.....	4

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**[www.ccmpto.org](http://www.ccmpto.org)**

## THE CIRC: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For the FY 2005 TIP, per the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the State and CCMPO, if there is not agreement on the TIP, the State TIP would be in jeopardy because

there would be no cooperative planning process. It might then be difficult for USDOT to approve the FY 2005 State TIP that could have an effect on transportation funding to Vermont. □

## COMMUNITY FEATURE

### A Look at Westford, VT

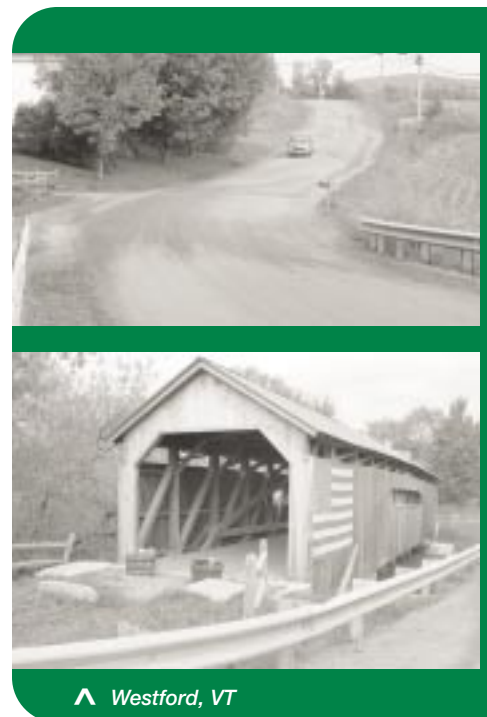
Eight miles north of Essex Center is the picturesque rural community of Westford, where 37 of the 39 miles of roads maintained by the town are dirt. Here the most significant transportation issues are high traffic volumes and mud season.

In addition to Westford's 2,000 residents, many commuters rely on the town's dirt roads for trips to and from Franklin and Lamoille Counties and employment sites in Chittenden County. These roads are used as shortcuts, and they attract drivers away from the paved Route 128 that goes through the center of town.

Due to the high traffic volume, the dirt roads require constant maintenance and are often hazardous for walking, biking, and horseback riding.

An additional infrastructure issue in Westford is the need for repair or replacement of two bridges. A temporary repair that should last for several years is planned for the Cambridge Road bridge. Replacement of the Woods Hollow Road bridge, along with redesign of the adjacent, dangerous intersection at Maple Tree Lane, should be completed by 2005.

For more information on Westford roadways go to [www.ccmpto.org/gettingstarted/pdfs/newsletterFY03\\_no2.pdf](http://www.ccmpto.org/gettingstarted/pdfs/newsletterFY03_no2.pdf) □



▲ Westford, VT

## INSIDE CCMPO

### Funding the Regional Transportation District

In April 2003, the CCMPO Board made a commitment to establish and determine the funding for a new Regional Public Transportation District (RTD). To undertake this work, the CCMPO Board established the Public Transportation Task Force which is working collaboratively with the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA). The Task Force has been meeting monthly since February, 2004.

The CCMPO Public Transportation Task Force created a sub-committee to look at options for funding a new RTD and has made a preliminary recommendation, in the form of a broad outline, to the CCMPO Board.

The recommendation is preliminary and will evolve based on feedback from the two boards and from the public through a series of community visits taking place over the next few months. Over 25 of these visits have already been scheduled. Information on meetings in your town can be accessed through the Public Transportation Project link on the CCMPO web site.

The funding sub-committee started its work by reviewing the recommendations of all the recent studies commissioned by the MPO, CCTA and the State regarding funding for public transportation.

Crucial to the success of this effort is to assure that the final recommendation (now scheduled to be completed in October, 2004) works not only for Chittenden County but that it can be

replicated around the state. It is anticipated that the final recommendation will require legislative approval.

Since the CCMPO is a planning organization, planning for an RTD and assuring compliance and synergy with existing local, regional and state planning efforts were considered. Sound planning documents are required by both the state and federal government as a condition of receiving funds for public transportation. The proposed framework incorporates this existing planning into the structure of a new RTD.

Voters in the district will have the final say on all financing decisions. Whatever funding options are eventually selected by voters, and it is anticipated that one package of taxes would be presented to voters, they would be uniform across the district.

The big change in this recommendation is the granting of taxation authority to an RTD. The actual levying of any taxes would require voter approval. The recommendation grants the authority to the RTD to levy taxes, with voter approval, for the purpose of funding an RTD, on a potential menu of revenue sources.

Municipalities that join an RTD will receive financial and service benefits. Fifty percent of funds raised within a municipality for the purpose of supporting an RTD will be returned to the municipality for its use on other municipal transportation needs.

*Please give us your feedback.* □

## CCMPO Completes Update of Park and Ride Study

In their update of a 1993 consultant’s report and a 1999 study, CCMPO planners have selected, prioritized, and recommended action steps for 14 new Park & Ride facilities in Chittenden County. Applying criteria based on demand, readiness, and location, two types of facilities have been identified for the locations:

- Intercept/Satellite Facilities which serve as alternatives to on-site parking locations within activity centers such as large employers, commercial areas, and town centers. They are generally high-capacity parking garages developed in fringe areas of the activity centers and feature high-frequency shuttle or transit service. In most cases,

implementation funding is likely to come from Congressional earmarks and/or public-private ventures.

- Suburban/Rural Park & Ride Lots are smaller than satellite facilities and serve private vehicles, carpools, and vanpools with low-frequency shuttle or transit service. Implementation funding generally comes from government sources.

In addition to the 14 recommended facilities shown in the table below, the CCMPO also encourages the development and expansion of facilities in areas outside the region such as Grand Isle, St. Albans, Waterbury, Bristol, Ferrisburgh, and Middlebury. □

Facility	Type	Recommendation
Burlington Lakeside	Intercept	Assist as needed city/private developer-led effort to construct parking structure.
South Burlington I-89 Exit 14	Intercept	Scope interchange improvements that will include a park and ride facility. Partner with VTrans, two cities, and UVM on possible solutions.
Williston I-89 Exit 12	Park & Ride	Advocate to VTrans for expedited construction.
Colchester I-89 Exit 16	Intercept	CCMPO scoping priority.
Colchester VT RT 15/Barnes Rd	Intercept	Seek earmarked funds for all recommended VT RT 15 improvements as identified in the RT 15 Corridor Study.
Essex VT RT 15/289	Park & Ride	CCMPO scoping priority.
Essex VT RT 2A/289	Park & Ride	Work with VTrans to include this facility with construction of Circ segment G.
Jericho VT RT 15 Underhill Flats	Park & Ride	CCMPO scoping priority.
Colchester Heineberg Bridge/289	Park & Ride	CCMPO scoping priority.
Colchester US7/Severance Rd	Park & Ride	Work with VTrans to include this facility with construction of Circ segment H.
Hinesburg Village	Park & Ride	CCMPO scoping priority.
So. Burlington I-89/Hinesburg Rd	Intercept	Partner with VTrans on EIS for new interchange to assure inclusion of a park and ride.
So. Burlington/Shelburne – US RT 7	TBD	Use CCMPO technical assistance program to analyze and screen potential sites in the corridor.
Richmond, I-89 Exit 11	Park & Ride	CCMPO scoping priority to expand existing facility.

## A CONVERSATION WITH...

### Tom Buckley, Westford’s CCMPO Board Member

#### How did you get involved in transportation planning?

I served as the Westford representative to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) from 1993 to 2003. During most of that time, I was also a representative from the RPC to CCMPO. For the past year I’ve been on the CCMPO Board.

#### What transportation issues are of particular interest to you?

Traffic congestion causes problems such as noise, air pollution, and travel delays. We can best address those problems by implementing cost-effective, widely-used alternatives to the Single Occupancy Vehicle.

#### How would you like to see the future of our transportation system evolve?

I’d like to find ways to adequately finance infrastructure repair and maintenance needs, as well as affordable improvements such as highway widening and roundabouts. Also, I’d like to see more interconnected bike/ped routes, and I strongly support the move to a regional transit system. □

### Traffic Count Data on Our Web Site

Traffic counts for Chittenden County intersections, collected in the morning (7-9am) and afternoon (4-6pm) peak periods, are now available on the CCMPO website. (<http://www.ccmpto.org/data/counts.html>). These counts of cars, trucks, buses, and pedestrians are used in measuring intersection performance and capacity.

Additionally, the website now includes a special section for bike and pedestrian counts at shared use paths and some crossings. Additional counts will be posted in the coming months. □

### MTP Update

CCMPO staff have assumed responsibility for completing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, based on a consultant's draft. The staff are revising chapters on background information, financial analysis, and transportation alternatives, and substantially rewriting chapters on the 2025 Plan and implementation. They anticipate a complete draft for steering committee review by the end of July. □



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.

Communities working together  
to meet Chittenden County's  
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