

CCMPO-CCRPC Merger - Frequently Asked Questions Spring 2011

1. Why are the CCMPO and CCRPC merging, and what is the plan of action for this merger?

After several months of study, the Boards of Directors of the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) reached the conclusion that by unifying the membership of the Boards of the CCMPO and CCRPC into a consolidated organization they could most effectively serve the communities of Chittenden County. The advantages to this merger are clear; with the functions of the CCMPO and CCRPC more closely aligned, the organizations will improve land use and transportation planning functions, communicate more effectively with communities and strategic partners, streamline processes, and eliminate wasteful redundancies.

2. Under the recommendations, how will the organizations' general structure change?

The new organization will include a single Board of Directors with one primary and one alternate representative from each municipality, a single system for human resources management, integrated policies, and a unified finance and project management system. The Board will also benefit from a streamlined committee structure to focus operational, policy, and technical input.

3. Who gets to vote on the new board and will there still be weighted voting for MPO activities?

Voting rights will be retained in the same manner that exists in the current structure of the CCMPO and CCRPC. For MPO business, 18 municipalities (excluding Buel's Gore) and the VT Agency of Transportation (VTrans) are voting members of the Board; weighted voting is retained as it is currently structured. For all other business, each municipality (including Buel's Gore) and the current At-Large voting members will have one vote (note that At-Large voting members do not vote on municipal plan and planning process approvals per statute). Except as noted above, VTrans, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA), the Railroad Industry and the Burlington International Airport Commission are non-voting Board members for all matters.

4. How will the merged workload be handled among the committees?

Following the merger there will be seven committees: Executive, Board Development, Finance, Unified Planning/Work Plan, Long Range Planning, Planning Advisory Committee, and Transportation Advisory Committee. Each committee will meet as needed to fulfill their mission. Each committee has a clear purpose and focus in order to manage members' and technical partners' time and expertise most effectively.

5. When will the merger recommendations be put into place?

The recommendations are slated for consideration and action by the municipalities between late March through early May, 2011. The CCRPC and CCMPO Boards are scheduled to vote on the merger on May 18, 2011 based upon the municipal direction provided through Resolutions considered by each municipal elected body. With the approval of municipalities, the Vermont Secretary of the Agency of Transportation, and with input from the Vermont Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, the new bylaws would become effective for Fiscal Year 2012 beginning July 1, 2011.

6. Under the recommendations, will there be any positions transferred or eliminated?

Through the merger of the two Boards, the current CCRPC Executive Director will become the overall organizational Executive Director and the CCMPO Executive Director will become the new organization's Assistant/MPO Director continuing to oversee the functioning of the MPO program. Consolidation of administrative functions will be achieved over the next 1-3 years through the collapsing of job functions from two Business Managers to one, and other administrative staff efficiencies, combined with pending staff retirements.

7. What are the projected savings?

By working out of one office the CCMPO and CCRPC have already reduced office rental cost by \$40,000 annually since 2009. The CCRPC has also reduced expenses by more than \$64,000, or 8% of their total budget in last two years. After the merger the first year direct cost savings include \$12,000 from combining audit and CCTV Board meeting recording expenses, as well as reduced administrative and postage costs. Longer-term savings include an estimated \$10,000 through reducing overhead and increasing direct program services.

8. Can you explain the funding mechanisms; will this change our state/local budget?

The CCMPO is primarily funded through FHWA and FTA Planning funds which pass through VTrans. Additionally VTrans provides a 10% match for FHWA funds and CCTA matches FTA funds. CCMPO's municipal assessment of \$116,000 is used to assist in meeting the 10% local match requirement for the federally funded transportation planning program. CCRPC's funding comes primarily from a variety of federal and state programs including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (through VT Emergency Management), the US Environmental Protection Agency, the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development and other federal and state programs. Likewise, the CCRPC municipal assessment of \$124,000 leverages the implementation of the planning programs outlined above.

The Boards of the CCMPO and CCRPC have made a commitment to not increase the municipal dues for at least the next three years for the new organization with dues assessment held at the combined total of \$240,000. Combining municipal match/assessments will provide more opportunities for leveraging federal and state grants in all program areas of the new organization.

9. Have other states tried this?

Though the CCMPO and CCRPC have taken the time to research and develop recommendations that are unique to Vermont's needs, many other states and counties have successfully used a similar merger strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of complementary regional and metropolitan planning organizations. Nationwide 165 of 382 MPOs are linked to a regional planning governance structure.

10. How can I get more involved?

The public is encouraged to attend Board and committee meetings and/or contact their representatives with their comments and concerns. A public comment period is included in all Board, TAC, and other committee meetings. Board meeting agendas and minutes can be accessed online at www.ccmppo.org/agendas/ and <http://www.ccrpcvt.org> and meetings can be viewed on CCTV Channel 17 or online at www.cctv.org/watch-tv/chittenden-county. For more information contact Michele Boomhower at 802-660-4071 ext. 15 or mboomhower@ccmpo.org or Charlie Baker at 802-846-4490 ext. 23 or cbaker@ccrpcvt.org.