

Public Involvement Plan

*Adopted by the CCMPO Board of Directors
September 17, 2003*



***Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization***

*Communities working
together to meet
Chittenden County's
transportation needs*



**Chittenden County
Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206
South Burlington, Vermont 05403
T 802-660-4071
F 802-660-4079
www.ccmpto.org
info@ccmpo.org

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Submitted by: Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates,
Burlington, Vermont 802.865.1794

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Paul Craven, Project Manager
Darryl Benoit, Transportation Planner
Bernadette Ferenc, Administrative Assistant
Christine Forde, Sr. Transportation Planner
Peter Keating, Sr. Transportation Planner

William Knight, Executive Director
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Lorene Shepard, Receptionist
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Public Participation Committee

Christine Forde, CCMPO
Melanie Grubman
Phil Hammerslough
Amy Jestes, VTrans

Richard Kemp
Jane Marvin
Jeff McDonald, CCMPO
Debbie Safran, CCTA

Public Participation Committee Bios

Christine Forde, AICP is a Senior Transportation Planner with the Chittenden County Metropolitan Organization (CCMPO), responsible for managing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and for managing the MPO's project development program. Christine has been with the MPO for four years. Prior to that time she spent ten years preparing Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments for transportation projects for an engineering consulting firm. Christine has a Masters in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers University and a Bachelors degree in Botany/Environmental Studies from the University of Vermont.

Melanie Grubman is a hebrew school teacher and youth group leader. As a bicycle advocate and supporter of public transportation, she is the Program Director for Local Motion's new Valet Bike Parking Program. She represents the twenty-year-old population of the Burlington community.

Phil Hammerslough is a long time bicycle advocate and works for Vermont Association for Business and Industry Rehabilitation, (VABIR) as a job developer for people with visual disabilities. He is a board member for Local Motion in Burlington, Vice Pres. elect for Vermont Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired, board member Human Resources Investment Council, and a board member of the Social Rehabilitation Council (SRC). He is a constant user of public transportation!

Amy Jestes is the VTrans coordinator responsible for liaison and grants administrative duties between VTrans and the CCMPO.

Richard Kemp is a Former Burlington City Councilor, Senior citizen, CCTA Bus rider Vermont Community Loan Fund member, CCTV Board Member, Burlington resident, and former IBM manager.

Jane Marvin has served on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization for three years. She represents the senior community of the county. Jane is a retired occupational therapist and educator.

Jeffrey McDonald is the Charlotte Representative to the CCMPO and currently serves on the Executive committee as well. Jeff is also a member and Chair of the Charlotte Planning Commission.

Debbie Safran is the Rideshare and Marketing Coordinator for the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA). She currently administers several CCTA programs, including the Corporate Carpool program, the VAN-GO! vanpool program, Commuter Benefits, and the Downtown PARC Shuttle. She also administers the bus advertising program.

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1. Introduction

In this 20th Anniversary Year, the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) is taking a look at its work and looking forward to the next 20 years. As such, we have embarked on a significant revision of our Public Involvement Plan.

This Public Involvement Plan has had the input of a variety of stakeholders, most especially the Public Participation Committee. This small committee was integral in keeping the plan moving forward and offering insight into better engaging the public in our work.

We have learned a lot about public involvement during the period following the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA) passage in 1991. This legislation was landmark in its focus on public engagement in transportation decisionmaking. From that starting point, we have institutionalized many aspects of public involvement – like the videotaping of Board Meetings.

This is not to say that we are done. Rather, this plans sets out ambitious goals for better communicating with, and engaging, our citizens. We approach this effort with great hope for success.

2. Executive Summary

The Public Participation Committee respectfully submits the following recommendations for public outreach and communications:

- 1 **Citizen Participation Committee:** Form a group that would report to the CCMPO Board and be responsible for reviewing public involvement efforts and providing a feedback loop to staff and consultants.
- 2 **Create a Public Involvement Plan for All Projects:** Institutionalize public involvement into all of the CCMPO's activities. A suggested form can be found in the Appendix.
- 3 **Improve Outreach Through the Following:**
 - ◆ **Information Center:** Create a central repository for documents, publications, and other information for public inspection. Where possible, make information available on the website and on CD-ROM.
 - ◆ **Utilize Local Newspapers, Newsletters, Radio, and Television:** Create regular informational columns and radio spots with a call to citizen action. Identify advocates who have successfully impacted projects to write articles and appear on television programs.
 - ◆ **Reach Out to Schools:** Identify math, science, and design teachers to integrate transportation into their curriculum.
 - ◆ **Participate in Transportation-Related Events:** Provide general information about the CCMPO to a broad audience.
 - ◆ **Provide Full Board Packages:** Make Board Packages available for downloading from the website.

3. Response to Public Input

Public input was received during a 45-day comment period, from June 21 – September 4, 2003 (see Appendix G for details). As a result of this input, the following activities were undertaken and changes were made to the May 2, 2003 Draft Plan:

- 1) That staff and chairs of all committees participate in a meeting planning and facilitation training, and that this is repeated periodically and/or as needed. The goal is to assist committee leaders to insure that meetings are well planned and that everyone is heard.
- 2) That protocols for public meetings and committee meetings are established to insure that people are clear about the committee purpose, have opportunity to be heard, and that they are adequately thanked for their participation.
- 3) That CCMPO should find better ways to work with all planners in the County, including integrating them in to the transportation planning process. For example, currently the CCRPC is responsible for holding regular “Brown Bag Lunches” of all of the planners in the County. Perhaps, this could be part of the process. The TAC has some planners, but not all on its membership.
- 4) The committee structure (especially the Technical Advisory Committee) be reviewed to determine eligibility requirements, nomination processes, and installment procedures. Additionally, training should be in place to introduce new members to the CCMPO and clarify their roles and responsibilities.
- 5) The CCMPO website be reviewed and a procedure put in place to post current materials and archive older materials. Staff must be integrally involved in the maintenance of the site. Also, information should be posted on relevant listservs and websites (like the BurlingtonBikes listserv).
- 6) Bill Knight, CCMPO Executive Director, will be meeting with John Barbour, Champlain Valley Agency on Aging Executive Director on September 10, 2003 to discuss how best to outreach to seniors, and that he contact and meet with representatives of other organizations representing the disabled and disadvantaged to discuss how best to outreach to their constituency.

4. The CCMPO – Authority, Composition, and Structure

A. Authority of the CCMPO

The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) plans transportation activity in Chittenden County. Under federal law requiring the formation of a “metropolitan planning organization” (MPO) for any urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000, local communities and the Governor created the CCMPO in 1983 to plan and budget the use of federal transportation funds in the urban part of the County. In 1998, the CCMPO was expanded to include all eighteen communities in Chittenden County.

All transportation projects funded by federal dollars must be included in the CCMPO's *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, a three-year schedule of projects. The project must also be in compliance with the CCMPO's *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*, the County's twenty-five year blueprint for transportation programs and projects. The CCMPO staff assists communities in identifying transportation needs, solutions, and financing.

B. Composition of the CCMPO

The CCMPO is made up of eighteen municipal representatives (appointed by the communities' legislative bodies) and one member of the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans). Ex-officio, or non-voting members, include: Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA), Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), Burlington International Airport, the Railroad Industry, and affected federal agencies (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration).

C. Structure of the CCMPO

Most CCMPO representatives are local elected officials and serve two year terms with re-appointment in June. The CCMPO has two standing committees that assist the Board of Directors:

The **Executive Committee**, composed of the officers of the Board (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer) and two at-large members, meet monthly to facilitate the administration of the CCMPO, ensure that policy and planning recommendations are brought before the Board, and confirm that the decisions of the CCMPO are implemented. The VTrans CCMPO Coordinator is a non-voting member of the Committee.

The **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** is responsible for recommendations to the CCMPO Board on all transportation plans and programs in Chittenden County. The TAC develops and reviews documents, amendments, and reports. The TAC is made up of a representative from each of the eighteen municipalities in the County, and: Burlington International Airport, Campus Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA), Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA), Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA), and VTrans. In addition, representatives are appointed by the CCMPO Chair from the following interest groups: Business Community, Disabled Community, Senior Community, Environmental Community, Freight Shippers and Receivers, Pedestrian/Biking Community, Private and Inter-City Bus Providers, Rail Industry, and Trucking Industry.

The TAC has subcommittees that are arranged by topic area and meet on both a regular schedule and on an as-needed basis. Key subcommittees include: bicycle and pedestrian, freight, transit, park and ride, and travel demand forecasting.

At the time of this writing, the CCMPO is beginning a process of consolidation with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). This may substantially change the committee structure as the new organization is formed.

5. State and Federal Regulations and Requirements

The following regulatory acts govern the CCMPO's public involvement efforts.

A. State of Vermont Public Records & Open Meeting Laws

The Vermont Public Records Law is rooted in the Vermont Constitution, Article 6, Chapter 1. The details of the law are available at Title 1, Sections 316-320 of Vermont Statutes Annotated. The law provides for inspection of public records in a timely way, a process for denying a records request, and a process for appealing that denial. The CCMPO Board and Staff are committed to both the spirit and letter of this law.

The Vermont Open Meeting Law, Title 1, Sections 310-316 of Vermont Statutes Annotated, defines open meetings, public notice requirements, right of the public to speak, executive sessions, meeting minutes, and enforcement provisions. Again, the CCMPO Board and Staff are committed to both the spirit and letter of this law.

B. Public Law: The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)¹

TEA-21 is the successor legislation to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). TEA-21 authorizes Federal highway, highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs and requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations establish, periodically review, and update public involvement processes to assure early and continued public awareness of, and access to, the transportation decision-making process.

TEA-21 mandates that the metropolitan transportation planning process contain the following public involvement elements:²

- 1 Include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs and meets the requirements and criteria specified as follows:
 - ◆ Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised;
 - ◆ Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to central city and other local jurisdiction concerns);

¹ This material excerpted heavily from the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments' *Public Participation Plan*, March 2002.

² Public Law 105-178 Section 450.316.

- ◆ Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;
 - ◆ Require adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs;
 - ◆ Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;
 - ◆ Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households;
 - ◆ When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the US EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP;
 - ◆ If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available;
 - ◆ Public involvement processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all;
 - ◆ These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision-making processes; and
 - ◆ Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.
- 2** Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794, which ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation;
 - 3** Identify actions necessary to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990³ and US DOT regulations “Transportation for Individuals With Disabilities.”⁴;
 - 4** Provide for the involvement of traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies; commuter rail operators; airport and port authorities; toll authorities; appropriate private transportation providers, and where appropriate city officials; and

³ Public Law 101-336, 104 Stat. 327, as amended.

⁴ 49 CFR parts 27, 37, 38.

- 5 Provide for the involvement of local, State, and Federal environment resource and permit agencies as appropriate.

C. Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of public services and capital facilities. Meetings and hearings must be held in ADA-compliant buildings. Special accommodations must be made to assist those with disabilities to participate in meetings, planning, and programming activities.

D. Environmental Justice

Presidential Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, mandates non-discrimination. The Environmental Protection Agency defines Environmental Justice as the “fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, programs and policies.” Fair treatment means that no racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from the operation of industrial, municipal, and commercial enterprises and from the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.

The Federal Highway Administration articulates three fundamental environmental justice principles:

- ◆ To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- ◆ To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- ◆ To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

E. CCMPO Certification Review

The Federal government requires MPOs to annual certify that they are in conformance with federal rules and regulations. Further, environmental justice principles require that MPOs make efforts to engage low-income and minority populations in the certification review. Due to the small size of the CCMPO, we are a self-certifying agency. As such, the Board adopts a resolution annually certifying the agency.

6. *Public Involvement Principles*

Public participation is a dynamic activity that requires commitment at all levels of the agency.

1. **Promote Respect**

- ◆ All citizens and the views they promote are respected by the CCMPO.

2. **Provide Opportunities for Involvement**

- ◆ Avenues for involvement will be open, meaningful, and organized to allow people to participate comfortably. Needs for accessibility, scheduling, location, information material formats, and language will be addressed.
- ◆ Meetings will be structured to allow informed, constructive exchanges.
- ◆ The direction and effectiveness of the public involvement effort will be constantly reviewed to ensure active public participation.

3. **Be Responsive to Participants**

- ◆ CCMPO meetings and events will facilitate discussion that corresponds to participants' level of interest and available time.
- ◆ The CCMPO will fully consider the results of all public involvement activities during decision making and document public responses.

4. **Offer Substantive Work**

- ◆ Public processes will provide participants purposeful involvement, allowing useful feedback and guidance. Effective public participation is a two-way street – public input must come from informed opinions and ideas.
- ◆ A clearly defined purpose and set of objectives are needed for initiating a public dialogue on transportation plans, programs, and projects.
- ◆ Participants will be encouraged to grapple with the many competing transportation interests, issues, and needs in the region.

5. **Provide a Predictable Transportation Planning Process**

- ◆ The transportation planning process will be understandable and known well in advance, in order to make the process coherent and comprehensible.

6. **Outreach & Communication**

- ◆ Effective outreach strategies must be tailored to fit the identified audience and the issue at hand. Notification procedures must effectively target the identified audience.
- ◆ Outreach and education will be continuous and repetitive in order to increase public knowledge and involvement.
- ◆ Efforts to reach new constituencies will include outreach to low-income, senior, youth, minority, refugee, and accessibility-issue communities. These efforts must be tailored to ensure meaningful participation of these constituents.
- ◆ The CCMPO will be mindful of the evolution of communications tools and continue to evaluate new tools to expand outreach methods.
- ◆ Informational materials will be clear, concise, and address participants' questions.

7. Community Profile

A. Overview⁵

Chittenden County, in northwestern Vermont, is the engine of the state's economy and provides nearly one-third of Vermont's jobs. Chittenden County contains almost one-quarter of Vermont's residents, and in 2000, had the fourth highest population growth rate among the state's fourteen counties. Population radiated out from the core of the Burlington metropolitan area during the 1990s, significantly increasing the population of the towns surrounding the City's core.

Chittenden County has experienced above average private sector job growth as its well-diversified economy keeps unemployment from fluctuating significantly. Many of the state's highest paying jobs are in Chittenden County, and it is the only county where the average wage of \$34,000 exceeds the state average of \$28,920 (2000 data). As in many parts of the country, the service industry leads job growth, with an increase of over 40 percent from 1990 to 1999. One-third of the state's income tax revenue comes from Chittenden County.

Although housing units grew by 13 percent in the County between 1990 and 2000, and population grew by 11 percent during this same period, the County is experiencing a housing shortage.

Chittenden County has the highest proportion of nonwhite residents of any county in the state, however nonwhite residents represent less than 4 percent of the County's population.

B. Population

The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) encompasses the eighteen communities of Chittenden County: Bolton, Burlington, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex Junction, Essex Town, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, Milton, Richmond, St. George, Shelburne, South Burlington, Underhill, Westford, Williston, and Winooski. The population of the CCMPO region is approximately 140,000⁶ and the number of people employed is approximately 100,000.⁷

Chittenden County Demographics

Indicator	1990	2000	% Change
Median Household Income	\$ 48,112	\$ 47,673	-.01
Poverty Rate (%)	8.8	8.7	.1
Employment	78,650	91,165	14
Commute Time (minutes)	16.4	19.7	17
High School Graduates (%)	86.7	90.6	4
Attainment of Bachelor's Degrees (percent)	34.0	41.2	17

Source: US Census and Vermont Department of Employment & Training.

Figure 1: Chittenden County Demographics

⁵ Vermont: An Economic-Demographic Profile Series, VT Dept. of Employment & Training, 2002 and Vermont: An Economic-Demographic Profile Series: Northwestern Vermont, VT Dept. of Employment & Training, 2001.

⁶ US Census 2000.

⁷ VT Department of Employment and Training, Vermont Labor Market Bulletin – Statewide and Labor Market Area, 10/99. Represents the Burlington Labor Market Area for July 1999.

C. Possible Transit Dependent Populations

The 2000 median age in Vermont is 37.7, up from 33 in 1990. In Chittenden County, the median age is 34.2.⁸ The chart below shows that 27 percent of the County’s population is either under 15 years of age or over 65 years of age, indicating the number of possible transit users. According to a study by the Special Service Transportation Agency (SSTA), the youth population, defined as 12-17 years old, increased 19 percent in the past 10 years (an addition of 2,200 new youths in 2000). The senior population grew 23 percent, with an increase of over 3,000 new seniors living in the County.⁹

Chittenden County Age Distribution¹⁰

Age Group (In Years)	2000 (Number)	Distribution (percent)
0-4	8,487	5.5
5-14	20,205	12.4
15-19	11,861	8.0
20-34	34,396	25.1
35-54	46,499	32.4
55-64	11,343	7.5
65+	13,780	9.1
Total	146,571	100.0

Figure 2: Chittenden County Age Distribution

The SSTA study analyzes transit dependent populations in the county, and draws the following conclusions:

- ◆ The transit dependent population is increasing throughout the County – especially in the lower density areas not served by Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) fixed routes.
- ◆ The need for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services is increasing in the CCTA service area.
- ◆ Agency programs are expanding and have a growing need for transportation – the number of clients is increasing and agencies are opening new sites.
- ◆ Paratransit service gaps exist for seniors and the disabled in the outlying areas not participating in the Section 5310 program.¹¹

D. Locations of Socio-Economic Groups

The CCMPO is charged with determining the location and traveling patterns of those residents traditionally excluded from transportation decision-making. We have identified these groups as people of low income, minorities, and refugees. For purposes of this plan, we will focus on low income people and refugees, with a commitment to further study of minority communities as data becomes available.

⁸ US Census 2000.
⁹ *Need for Paratransit Services in Chittenden County*, KFH Group, Inc., August 14, 2002.
¹⁰ *Vermont: An Economic-Demographic Profile Series*, VT Dept. of Employment & Training, 2002. From Census of Population & Housing, Bureau of the Census.
¹¹ *Need for Paratransit Services in Chittenden County*, KFH Group, Inc., August 14, 2002.

E. Low Income Population

According to the 2000 Census, the median household income in Chittenden County was \$47,673, a drop of \$400 from inflation adjusted income for 1990. The poverty rate in Chittenden County rose from 8.7 percent in 1990 to 8.8 percent in 2000. Pockets of poverty include the Old North End of Burlington (Wards 2 and 3), areas of Winooski, and other small areas scattered throughout the region.

Public participation efforts will need to reach into these low income neighborhoods to insure participation by those traditionally left out of community planning efforts.

Demographic – Economic Comparison of Chittenden County Towns¹² Sorted by Annual Average Wage (Lowest to Highest)

	Population 2000	% Share County	2002 Average Annual	
			Employment	Wage
Vermont	608,827	N/A	296,349	\$ 28,920
Chittenden County	146,571	100	95,284	34,301
Buels Gore	12	0	0	0
Bolton	971	.7	211	16,616
St. George	698	0.5	42	18,960
Westford	2,086	1.4	192	21,469
Richmond	4,090	2.8	998	23,200
Hinesburg	4,340	3.0	852	24,393
Shelburne	6,944	4.7	3,354	25,205
Jericho	5,015	3.4	698	26,080
Underhill	2,980	2.0	290	26,489
Huntington	1,861	1.3	189	27,223
Winooski	6,561	4.5	2,654	27,516
Charlotte	3,569	2.4	565	29,483
Milton	9,479	6.5	2,366	30,296
Colchester	16,986	11.6	8,587	31,299
S. Burlington	15,814	10.8	17,450	32,188
Williston	7,650	5.2	9,724	33,281
Burlington	38,889	26.5	31,447	33,764
Essex	18,626	12.7	15,665	46,169

Population – US Census, Employment/Wage VT DET, UI Covered Employment

Figure 3: Demographic – Economic Comparison of Chittenden County Towns

¹² Vermont: An Economic-Demographic Profile Series, VT Dept. of Employment & Training, 2002.

F. Refugee Population¹³

The Vermont Refugee Coordinator estimates that since 1980, 4,249 refugees have settled in the State. Vermont's refugees represent 24 countries, but most belong to one of three groups – Bosnians, Vietnamese, and French-speaking Africans (see breakdown below). The vast majority of these refugees reside in three adjacent Vermont counties – Addison, Chittenden, and Washington.

Characteristics of Vermont's refugee population:

- ◆ Over 48 percent Bosnian (1,629)
- ◆ 31 percent Southeast Asian (1,059)
- ◆ 21 percent African (708)
- ◆ 6 percent of Vermont's refugees have been in the state less than two years
- ◆ 30 percent of Vermont's refugees have been in the state for less than five years
- ◆ At least 70 percent is 18 years old or older¹⁴

Vermont's refugees face a huge barrier in the language issue.¹⁵ The Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP) reports that only about 20 percent of Vermont's incoming refugees have English proficiency in the intermediate to advanced range upon arrival.¹⁶

Refugees inevitably arrive with few or no financial resources. In fiscal year 2003, the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program's third quarter employment report finds that the average starting wage for men is \$11.66 and for women is \$8.38. Seventy two percent of these positions included health benefits.

In order to reach out to the refugee population, the CCMPO will need to consider differences in cultural norms and language barriers. In addition, many refugees are focused on meeting daily living requirements and do not have significant time to devote to volunteer efforts.

¹³ Excerpted from the *Vermont Refugee Microenterprise Program Proposal* by Jim White of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity.

¹⁴ VRRP

¹⁵ See the assessment of Vermont's refugees by Jeff Smith, Chief Operations Officer, Vermont Development Credit Union, June 2002 (hereafter Smith).

¹⁶ See the assessment of Vermont's refugees by the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, June 2002 (hereafter VRRP).

8. Major CCMPO Activities and Public Involvement

The CCMPO’s major activities include: Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Public Involvement Plan, Traffic Alert Program, and Special Studies: Scoping, Technical Assistance, Corridor Studies. Each major project has certain minimum public involvement requirements that are detailed below. A Public Involvement Project Form is included in the Appendix to better institutionalize the public outreach and participation for all CCMPO activities.

A few procedures are worth describing here. “Notification to municipalities” includes the full text of the document to be adopted or amended and a public hearing notice. The published notice (in the *Burlington Free Press*) must include the locations where documents are available for public review. At a minimum, the locations include the CCMPO office and municipal offices of CCMPO member communities.

Public comment procedures are similar for all projects. Comments submitted to CCMPO are considered part of the public record. Summaries of comments received, and the CCMPO’s response, will be made available to the public and policy makers. Summaries will be available via web and in printed format (when requested).

A. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)* is one of the most important documents produced by the CCMPO. This long-range plan looks ahead twenty-five years into the future. It identifies the major transportation projects needed, and establishes the vision, goals, and policies that will guide all public decisions affecting transportation facilities and services in the County.

The CCMPO is required by Federal law to develop a long-range transportation plan every five years. Even if Federal law did not require a plan, we would be wise to develop a comprehensive and long-term analysis. Transportation decisions are often made incrementally. By developing a set of goals, policies, and strategies, the MTP will ensure that these incremental investments work effectively to move the County toward the overall vision.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan	
Participation Element	Method and Timing
Document Availability	Via website, mail, CCMPO office, municipal offices, local libraries
Comment Opportunities	Series of public meetings, website
Public Hearings	One hearing prior to adoption by CCMPO Board
Initial Notice Period/Type	30 days prior to hearing, published in <i>Burlington Free Press</i> legal notices and to every town clerk
Amendment Notice Period	30 days prior to hearing, published in <i>Burlington Free Press</i> legal notices and to every town clerk
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

Figure 4: Metropolitan Transportation Plan

B. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a prioritized, fiscally-constrained, multi-year list of federally funded, multimodal transportation projects and operations in Chittenden County.

Under Federal law, the TIP must include three years of projects and be updated annually. Projects are prioritized at the regional level and must have clearly identified funding sources. All Chittenden County transportation projects, programs, and operations receiving Federal funds must be authorized through the TIP process. The only exception is federal airport funds for Burlington International Airport, which are not subject to the CCMPO's prioritization process, but are listed in the TIP for information and coordination purposes.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	
Participation Element	Vehicle
Document Availability	Via website, mail, CCMPO office, municipal offices, local libraries
Comment Opportunities	Public hearings, local municipal meetings
Public Hearings	One hearing prior to adoption by CCMPO Board
Initial Notice Period/Type	30 days prior to hearing, published in <i>Burlington Free Press</i> legal notices and to every town clerk
Amendment Notice Period/Type	Depending on the project cost and type of amendment, different processes are required. See policy adopted February 19, 2003 in the Appendix
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

Figure 5: Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

C. Public Involvement Plan

Public Involvement Plan	
Participation Element	Vehicle
Document Availability	Via website, mail, CCMPO office
Comment Opportunities	Minimum public comment period of 45 days for initial adoption and revisions
Public Hearings	One at initial adoption
Initial Notice Period/Type	Minimum public comment period of 45 days
Amendment Notice Period/Type	Minimum public comment period of 45 days
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received, level of involvement of Citizen Participation Committee

Figure 6: Public Involvement Plan

D. Traffic Alert Program

The Traffic Alert Program provides weekly emails to area media outlets in order to alert the public to summer construction efforts. Information is also available via the CCMPO's website.

E. Special Studies: Scoping, Technical Assistance, Corridor Studies

These studies and plans are specialized and require individualized public involvement plans. The following is provided as a means of guiding CCMPO and municipal staff in structuring a Public Involvement Plan at the project or study level:

- 1** Identify and assess stakeholders and their issues: A stakeholder is any person or group that is affected by a planning project, issue, or long-range plan, including those who are not aware that they are affected. Stakeholders may also be any person or group that think they are affected even if in reality they are not. Stakeholders often include non-governmental organizations such as environmental, health, citizen, neighborhood and civic organizations; traditionally underserved such as the low-income, racial and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities; residents of affected areas; transportation service providers; and government agencies.
- 2** Define the objectives of your involvement effort: Establish objectives that broadly address stakeholder concerns as well as planning and project development goals. The objectives will guide the outreach activities. Objectives can be established as part of the initial phase of public participation activities and usually don't change over the course of the effort.
- 3** Identify pertinent public participation activities: See "Outreach Techniques" as a starting point for consideration. Consider who you are trying to reach; what the message is that you are trying to convey; what your budget constraints might be; what combination of techniques seem appropriate; and how implementable your activities are.
- 4** Evaluate your effort based on the achievement of your objectives: Design milestones during the public participation process. As issues and concerns change over time, your public participation plan should reflect those changes. Remember to document your efforts.

See the Appendix for a sample Public Involvement Project Form.

9. Outreach Techniques

Current Outreach Techniques

Technique	Description	Promotion	Evaluation
Videotaping & Airing of CCMPO Board Meetings	Aired multiple times on Channel 17	Board Meetings	Frequency of program availability
Website	Provides general information about the CCMPO	Public Meetings, Planning Studies, Publications, Work Products	Number of hits and downloads
<i>TransActions</i> Newsletter	Bimonthly publication	Public Meetings, Planning Studies, Publications, Work Products, Calendar	Number distributed
Special Project Informational Publications	Corridor and Special Study summaries	Available for public meetings and hearings	Number distributed
Brochures	General CCMPO Information	Available for public meetings and hearings. Can be distributed at town halls and community centers.	Number distributed
CCMPO Database	Mailing list of interested citizens and stakeholders	Used to enhance public involvement activities	Number of entries
Direct Mail	Used to announce special meetings or activities for a targeted group of people	Specific issue or geographical area	Attendance at public meetings
Legal Notices	Classified advertisements in the Burlington Free Press	Public hearings	Attendance at public hearings
Public Hearings	To solicit public comment on final products/projects and plan amendments	Final comment	Participation at public hearings
Comment Forms	To solicit public input on specific issues at a public meeting	Offer one more way for people to be heard	Number of comment forms received
Posters and Flyers	To announce meetings and events	To broaden participation	Number of people attending event

Figure 7: Current Outreach Techniques

Although these efforts have been moderately successful, there is a feeling that more could be done to increase public participation. The Public Participation Committee suggests the following:

- ◆ Issues have to be important to people’s lives, “What’s in it for me?” People are busy and need to understand the benefits of their participation.
- ◆ People may think their input won’t make a difference; the CCMPO has to show them otherwise.
- ◆ How does the CCMPO directly impact citizens?
- ◆ Planning feels nebulous.
- ◆ People have to be involved and complete tasks to maintain interest.

Along with these thoughts, the following are concrete suggestions to enhance the CCMPO’s public involvement efforts:

Recommendations for Improving Outreach

Technique	Description	Promotion	Evaluation
Information Center	Central repository for documents, publications, and other information for public inspection. Where possible, available on website and CD-ROM	Provides a central place to find CCMPO information	Visits, calls, emails, downloads from website
Local Newspapers	Create regular informational columns with a call to citizen action.	Brings information to people where they live and can be tailored to their area	Feedback from readers
Local radio and television	Create regular updates on transportation issues	Brings information to a broad spectrum of people	Feedback from listeners/viewers
Citizen Advocates	Identify advocates who have successfully impacted projects	Have them write articles and speak at meetings	
Schools	Identify math, science, design teachers to integrate transportation into their curriculum	Involve elementary, high schools, and colleges	Number of students participating
Participate in Transportation-related Events	Provide general information about the CCMPO	Events like UVM’s Alternative Fuels Conference, Curb Your Car Day, etc.	Number people stopping at CCMPO booth
Full Board packages	Packages should be available for downloading from the website	Provides timely information to citizens	Number of downloads from website

Figure 8: Recommendations for Improving Outreach

The CCMPO has been less successful in past years in engaging minority and low-income communities. To improve our efforts in the environmental justice arena, we identify the following strategy to engage minority and low-income communities in transportation decisionmaking:¹⁷

- ◆ Targeted Avenues for Outreach: Burlington Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPA) in the Old North End, cable television & radio shows, articles/advertisements in the Old North End RAG newspaper; flyers in community meeting areas (like the McClure Multigenerational Center); holding meetings and outreach events in low-income communities (especially piggy-backing with existing events, like Neighborhood Improvement Night), and targeting Burlington and Winooski Housing Authorities and other subsidized properties.
- ◆ Federal legislation allows the MPOs to “make funds available to local organizations that represent low-income and minority populations to enable their participation in planning processes.” It is recommended that the CCMPO look to partner with existing minority and low-income groups to improve their outreach and participation on CCMPO boards and committees.
- ◆ The public involvement strategy should be tailored to use adaptive or innovative approaches that overcome linguistic, institutional, cultural, economic, historical, or other potential barriers to effective participation in the decisionmaking process.
- ◆ Periodically updating the database to maintain and initiate contact with interested parties, targeting those that are underserved. Identify community leaders in underserved populations and add them to the mailing list.
- ◆ Outreach to schools in low-income neighborhoods.
- ◆ Work with community and neighborhood groups to publicize events and activities.

¹⁷ Some of this material adapted from: *Environmental Justice Guidelines for MD State Highway Administration's Projects*, 8/29/01.

10. Meeting & Privacy Policy

A. Public Meetings

In order to maximize participation, public involvement meetings should be held at a variety of times and at a variety of venues. For topic or geographically specific meetings, meetings should be held at locations convenient to the group targeted for involvement.

The CCMPO encourages municipalities and state agencies to coordinate their outreach plans, when possible, with the CCMPO workshops and meetings to consolidate public involvement activities.

For monthly Board meetings, Board members and alternates are sent meeting notification, agendas, and appropriate documents at least one week prior to the actual meeting date, except in the case of special meetings. Board agendas and meeting minutes are mailed to all city managers/administrators, legislators, and others as requested. Information should be available ahead of the meeting and should include: agendas, meeting background information, previous meeting minutes, public notices, public comment period information, and a contact person. **Full packages should be available for downloading via the CCMPO website.**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of public services and capital facilities. Meetings and hearings must be held in ADA compliant buildings. Special accommodations must be made to assist those with disabilities to participate in meetings, planning, and programming activities:

- ◆ Where possible, meetings will be held in places that are convenient to alternative transportation modes.
- ◆ Sign language interpretation will be available, upon request at least one week prior to event. All public meeting notices should state the following: “For information on accessibility or alternative forms of the agenda, please contact (name, number, email).”
- ◆ Identify alternative meeting sites, such as churches, schools, and senior centers to reach to traditionally underserved populations.

B. Privacy Policy

With the launch of the CCMPO’s new website, a privacy policy should be developed to protect any information gathered by website cookies or downloads.

In terms of public meetings, all public sign-in sheets must print the following disclaimer: “If personal information is requested and volunteered by the user, state law and the federal Privacy Act of 1974 may protect it. However, this information is a public record once you provide it, and may be subject to public inspection and copying if not protected by federal or state law.”

11. Evaluation Procedures for Public Involvement

The Public Participation Committee proposes the creation of a Citizen Participation Committee to review and evaluate public involvement efforts in order **to provide a feedback loop to staff and consultants**. The Committee will review projects to determine which efforts were successful and how to incorporate them into future efforts while also examining failures and how to correct them in the future. The Committee would also propose and design revisions of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) on an annual basis.

The Committee would report to the CCMPO Board. The committee's role is an advisory one, to help the CCMPO to explore the multitude of ways that the public can best be served by its work

The formulation and implementation of this committee needs additional thought and discussion. It will be an evolutionary process to develop a committee that will add value to the work of the CCMPO. If approved by the CCMPO Board, the Committee would begin its work in January 2004.

Possible membership could include: academics, advocacy groups (Local Motion, VT Bike/Pedestrian Coalition, Disability community, youth), MPO Board Member, TAC Member, Government (local, state, federal), Downtown Development Group, Business/GBIC/Chamber. Membership on the Committee will need to be further explored, since it is important that the Committee not be too large and cumbersome.

How to Get Involved

Want to get involved in the CCMPO's activities? We periodically arrange public forums, public hearings, and special presentations to selectboards and interested civic groups. We maintain a transportation mailing list for our newsletters and project updates. Our meetings are notified via the *Burlington Free Press* and many local newspapers. CCMPO meetings are videotaped and aired on Channel 17. Copies of videotapes may be viewed at Channel 17 by appointment (862.3966).

The CCMPO currently meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7PM, at the CCMPO office (30 Kimball Avenue, S. Burlington). The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) currently meets the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00 AM at the CCMPO offices. We recommend confirming all meetings with CCMPO staff or via the website (www.ccmpto.org). All meetings are open to the public and a public comment period is available at all meetings.

Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO)
30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, S. Burlington, VT 05403
802.660.4071 (phone) 802.660.4079 (fax)
TDD Relay Only: 1.800.253.0191
www.ccmpto.org info@ccmpto.org

Office hours are 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Our offices can be reached via the Williston busline or the University Mall/Airport busline (a short walk).
For details: 864.CCTA or www.cctaride.org.

Our offices are handicapped accessible. This document, as well as all others by our agency, is available in alternative media formats for people with disabilities.