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Williston
Winooski

CIRC Task Force Meeting #1 Notes - Accepted by the Task Force 08-11-11

DATE: Thursday, July 28, 2011
TIME: 8:00 AM
PLACE: CCRPC, 110 West Canal Street, Winooski, VT
PRESENT: Please see last page

1) Welcome/Introductions

Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

2) Review of CIRC Related Meetings to Date

Michele explained the reason this group has assembled. Governor Shumlin announced that the CIRC, as originally conceived, would not be constructed. Michele and VTrans representatives met with CIRC communities, key legislators, and primary stakeholders to discuss a strategy to move forward with alternative projects. It was decided to create a list of alternative CIRC projects that would achieve similar goals to the original CIRC. The charge of the Task Force is to identify and prioritize these projects for consideration by the CCRPC Board, Administration, and the Legislature.

3) Circ A/B Updates

Vermont Transportation Secretary Brian Searles reviewed the history of the CIRC. Briefly, over \$9 million has been spent on CIRC A/B alone (for planning, engineering, permitting, and mitigation). A "Record of Decision" (ROD) has been issued by the Federal Highway Administration, although no state or federal water quality permits have been issued. CIRC construction is not moving forward because it lacks not only permits and funding, but "critical mass." As stated by the Governor, CIRC A/B will not move forward as originally conceived. Brian would like the Task Force to provide a list of cost effective projects that can achieve similar goals to the original CIRC. Brian would like the Task Force to provide a list of cost effective projects that can achieve CIRC-like benefits. These projects will have priority status at VTrans.

Ken Belliveau of Williston noted that most of the right-of-way for CIRC A/B has been purchased and is now in limbo. The town would like clarity on the status of this property. Brian Searles responded that the only thing not being considered is A/B as a single project. The property won't be given up until VTrans is sure it cannot serve a transportation purpose. Dennis Lutz of Essex asked if elements of A/B could still be built. Brian Searles responded that the Task Force can make that recommendation. Michele added that Segments G-J, however, are now off the table. Dave Crawford of Essex Junction asked if CIRC A was still a possibility and Michele responded that the Task Force will discuss it further.

1 **4) Review of Task Force Purpose**

2 Michele explained that the Task Force would identify short-term projects (that could be added to the
3 upcoming Legislative session and Capital Program) and medium/long-term projects (those that are not
4 yet ready for implementation). She provided a handout of possible projects. Projects will flow through
5 the usual CCRPC channels – Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and CCRPC Board, as well as
6 inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program
7 (TIP).
8

9 **5) Task Force Process**

10 The Task Force will meet every two weeks. She suggested we add a facilitator to help keep the group on
11 track. The group agreed; Michele asked for suggestions via email. Dennis asked if the facilitator would
12 move the meetings along or be a point person for the process. Michele responded that they would not be
13 a point of contact.
14

15 Bruce Hoar of Williston asked if VTrans would expedite the Task Force’s projects. Brian Searles could
16 only commit to prioritizing the projects within the Agency. The Agency will find the resources to move
17 these projects forward.
18

19 Dennis noted that when the CIRC was first conceived, it was to be fully funded through federal dollars;
20 now some of the cost will fall to the communities. Brian Searles responded that the Agency wants to do
21 this work in an affordable way and hopes the Task Force will keep that in mind. Paul Bruhn of the
22 Preservation Trust would like to come to consensus and have something positive emerge from this
23 effort.
24

25 **6) Review of Task Force Membership**

26 Michele noted that Chris Jolly of FHWA couldn’t attend but is interested in helping on a technical, not
27 decision-making, level. She asked the group if there is adequate representation on the Task Force,
28 recognizing there will be other opportunities for those with interest to contribute ideas and concerns.
29

30 There was discussion of the CCRPC Board and their involvement in the CIRC process. Michele
31 explained that there are RPC board members on the Task Force, but projects will still be brought to the
32 full RPC Board. Marc Landry of Colchester suggested that RPC Representatives solicit feedback from
33 their communities; the onus is on board members to bring issues to the Task Force through their
34 representatives.
35

36 **7) Stakeholder and Public Engagement Processes**

37 Michele explained that the project website (<http://www.circtaskforce.org/>) will go live tomorrow with
38 links to studies and project history. There was discussion about when information from the Task Force
39 should “go public.”
40

41 There was discussion about how to best reach consensus and Michele asked that we discuss this at our
42 next meeting.
43

44 Jason Van Driesche of Local motion asked about overall project impacts and Michele responded that we
45 are always interested in looking holistically. Dennis noted that the transportation model is a tool to
46 identify impacts.
47
48

1 **8) Task Force Schedule**

2 The following schedule was agreed upon (O'Brien Community Center, Winooski):
3 Thursday, August 11, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
4 Thursday, August 25, 8:00-10:00 a.m.
5 Thursday, September 8, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
6 Thursday, September 22, 8:00-10:00 a.m.
7 Thursday, October 6, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
8 Thursday, October 20, 8:00-10:00 a.m.
9

10 **9) Presentation of Draft CIRC Community Planning & Implementation Lists**

11 Michele compiled a list of short (1-3 years), medium (3-7 years), and long-term (7+ years) projects from
12 each municipality and provided a handout. Brian Searles noted that the Governor would like to have the
13 “shovel in the ground” on some project(s) in spring 2012. Dave Crawford asked for project type
14 definitions; Michele agreed to do so.
15

16 There was discussion about the amount of funding available. Brian Searles responded that there is
17 money, but future federal funding levels are uncertain. When pressed, Brian said between \$30-50
18 million is what VTrans is hoping to secure. A 10-year, \$60-80 million appropriation for the CIRC is not
19 attainable. Dennis mentioned that there are projects underway outside of the RPC process that staff
20 should be made aware of. He would like background material about the constraints to the CIRC
21 Williston segment.
22

23 Each municipality was given an opportunity to comment:
24

25 **Colchester (Bryan Osborne):** Not building the CIRC has consequences for Colchester’s east to
26 west corridors. Thus far, town planning has been predicated upon the CIRC being built. We
27 need to determine the consequences in terms of the land use planning, jobs, grand list, etc.
28

29 **Williston (Ken Belliveau):** Almost the entire A/B corridor is in Williston and the bridge over
30 the river is important. The CIRC provides a way around Essex Junction and the congested 2A
31 corridor. Building only Segment A as a standalone project isn’t currently supported by the
32 Selectboard. In addition, the future location of a regional landfill must be considered.
33

34 **Essex (Dennis Lutz):** Although the handout shows projects associated with a community, the
35 CIRC provided interconnectivity among the municipalities. Some options are going to be
36 expensive, but they may be appropriate and worth fighting to implement. Transit is important to
37 Essex.
38

39 **Essex Junction (Dave Crawford):** IBM ships \$2 billion worth of product annually – a reason
40 to look seriously look at building CIRC A. Secondly, the Crescent Connector is not an
41 alternative to the CIRC, but is an economic development and congestions mitigation opportunity.
42

43 **10) Discussion of Draft Prioritization Process**

44 Christine Forde of the CCRPC presented an overview of the preliminary prioritization process that will
45 be used to rank the projects. The development of the process included three parts: 1) CCRPC-established
46 methodology; 2) Add a CIRC-specific factor; and 3) Add a project readiness factor.
47

48 The CCRPC methodology uses six planning factors: economic vitality; safety and security; accessibility,
49 mobility and connectivity; environment, energy, and quality of life; preservation the existing system;
50 and efficient system management.
51

1 The CIRC Purpose and Need Methodology scores projects on five factors identified in the 1986 CIRC
2 Purpose and Need Statement: road system hierarchy; capacity and Level of Service (LOS),
3 transportation demand; social demands and economic development; and existing and potential safety
4 hazards.

5
6 John Lajza of Essex Junction believes the most important thing is regional safety and how to efficiently
7 move safety equipment. Jason VanDriesche asked about including transit in the “road system hierarchy.”
8 Christine responded affirmatively. Sandy Levine from the Conservation Law Foundation is concerned
9 about using the 1986 study because it is 25 years old.

10
11 There was discussion of the readiness methodology. Christine explained that funding is not considered
12 under readiness; Bryan Osborne believes that funding should be considered. He’s concerned that this
13 approach will not result in a comprehensive list, but rather small projects. There was discussion of the
14 RPC and VTrans prioritization processes. Dennis wants to be sure we are consistent among the different
15 CIRC objectives in our rating factors. Jeff Nick of JL Davis Realty asked about growth potential in
16 growth centers. He’s also concerned about the reality of promoting alternative modes of transportation.
17 Michele will provide information at the next meeting about alternatives from the CCRPC’s scenario
18 planning exercises.

19
20 The meeting was adjourned at 10:06AM.

21
22 **The next meeting will be Thursday, August 11, 2011, 5:30-7:30PM, at the O'Brien Community**
23 **Center in Winooski.**
24

ATTENDEES

Members Present

Last	First	Title	Organization
Baechle	Tim	Manager of Energy, Environment	IBM Burlington
Birkett	Meredith	Manager	CCTA
Bruhn	Paul	Director	Preservation Trust of VT
Crawford	Dave	Village Manager	Village of Essex Junction
Francis	Dawn	Director, Government Affairs	Lake Champlain Regional C of C
Lajza	John	RPC Representative	Essex Junction
Macaig	Terry	Selectboard Chair	Town of Williston
Landry	Marc	RPC Representative	Town of Colchester
Myers	Linda	Selectboard Chair	Town of Essex
Nick	Jeff		JL Davis Realty
Searles	Brian	Secretary	VTrans
Shupe	Brian	Deputy Director	VNRC
Tyler	George	Village President	Village of Essex Junction
Voegele	Al	Town Manager	Town of Colchester

Staff Present

Bell	Amy	CCMPO Planning Coordinator	VTrans
Belliveau	Ken	Planning Director and Zoning Admin.	Town of Williston
Besse	Joss	Director, Community Planning	Agency of Commerce & CD
Borg	Mary		VT DEC
Hoar	Bruce	DPW Director	Town of Williston
Levine	Sandy	Senior Attorney	Conservation Law Foundation
Lutz	Dennis	DPW Director	Town of Essex
Murray	Kimberly	Director of Community & ED	Town of Colchester
Osborne	Bryan	Director of Public Works	Town of Colchester
Pierce	Robin	Development Director	Village of Essex Junction
VanDriesche	Jason	Education & Safety Mgr.	Local Motion

Others Present

Ingram	Debbie	Selectboard	Town of Williston
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CCRPC Staff Present

Boomhower	Michele	Assistant/MPO Director	CCRPC
Charest	Jason	Transportation Planning Eng.	CCRPC
Churchill	Eleni	Sr. Transportation Planning Eng.	CCRPC
Forde	Christine	Sr. Transportation Planner	CCRPC
Keating	Peter	Sr. Transportation Planner	CCRPC
Roberts	Dave	Sr. Transportation Planning Eng.	CCRPC