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## **CIRC Task Force Meeting #2 Notes – Approved October 20, 2011**

DATE: Thursday, August 11, 2011  
TIME: 5:30 PM  
PLACE: O'Brien Community Center, Winooski, VT  
PRESENT: Please see last page

### **1) Welcome/Introductions**

Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC welcomed everyone and explained that today's agenda will provide additional background information regarding the role of the CCRPC as the Federal Highway Administration's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Chittenden County. We will discuss MPO policies and activities that are required in order to undertake transportation projects using federal funding in the region.

There are long standing goals for the regional transportation network that are implemented through the MPO's most important documents – the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the short range capital program: the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In order to advance our local and regional transportation system goals, we depend upon our relationships with the County's municipalities, VTrans, the Legislature, and FHWA.

She distributed an MPO brochure which is about five years old. While the name has changed (due to the recent merger with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, CCRPC) the responsibilities as the region's MPO remain the same. A glossary is included in this brochure and a more extensive glossary is available at: [www.ccmpto.us/library/glossary\\_list.php](http://www.ccmpto.us/library/glossary_list.php).

There is one addition to the agenda, Review and Approve the Meeting Notes of 7/28/2011.

Introductions were made.

### **2) Introduction of CIRC Task Force Facilitator Cindy Cook and Discussion of CIRC Task Force Group Protocols and Decision-Making**

Cindy Cook of Adamant Accord introduced herself and discussed her role as facilitator. She will help everyone to advance their interests and will try to make the Task Force's process efficient as possible. She understands the hope is that the group will reach full consensus on both implementation and planning projects; if that's not possible, all opinions, majority and minority, will be articulated. In order to provide a framework for the Task Force's work, Cindy drafted a draft set of group protocols for consideration. The group agreed to the protocols and also agreed to designate Michele Boomhower as the media contact.

## **Circ Alternative Task Force Group Protocols DRAFT For Task Force's Consideration - 8/11/11**

1. Plan on starting promptly at the scheduled time and adjourning on schedule.
2. Respect others in the group by attending all scheduled meetings. If you must miss a meeting, do your homework so that the group doesn't need to go back over material and issues that were covered in previous meetings.
3. Turn cell phones to "privacy mode", or, better yet, "off".
4. Answer calls and conduct side conversations outside the group meeting space.
5. Wait to speak until the previous speaker has finished.
6. Keep your remarks on-topic and concise; share "airtime".
7. Listen respectfully.
8. Speak for yourself; let others speak for themselves.
9. Focus on issues, not personalities.
10. Task Force members may speak to the media regarding their personal and organizational interests, but will not comment on the interests and actions of other members, and will refer questions from the media regarding the Task Force's work to Michele Boomhower.

Cindy noted that it is important to start with a common understanding of the group's purpose. She asked if the Task Force understood its task to be to determine a short list of implementation and planning projects for advancement beginning in the fall of 2011. The group agreed.

### **3) Review and Approval of Meeting Notes of July 28, 2011**

Dennis Lutz of Essex sought clarification regarding statements made by him and Transportation Secretary Brian Searles at the July meeting. Brian agreed to change his comments on page 1, line 41: "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.*" (*new material in italics*). Dennis asked, and Brian Searles agreed, to revise page 1, line 49 to change "decision" to "recommendation" to read: Brian Searles responded that the Task Force can make that *recommendation.*" (*new material in italics*)

Brian Searles and Dennis also agreed to add "appropriation" to page 3, line 18 to read: "A 10-year, \$60-80 million *appropriation* for the CIRC is not attainable." (*new material in italics*). Jason VanDriesche of Local Motion asked that his last name be added to his comment on page 4, line 7, to read "Jason *VanDriesche of Local Motion* asked about including transit in the 'road system hierarchy.'" (*new material in italics*). The meeting notes were accepted with these corrections and Michele will post the corrected notes at <http://www.circtaskforce.org/>.

### **4) Inter-relationship of CIRC Task Force, CCRPC Board, and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Shumlin Administration, Legislature, and FHWA**

Michele provided a flowchart to explain these relationships (please see attached). She explained that the CIRC Task Force is an atypical process merged into an established system. She described the many points of entry for the public to provide feedback to the CIRC process. In addition to two anticipated special public meetings, the website (<http://www.circtaskforce.org/>) offers information and an opportunity to comment. Comments are also welcome through the CCRPC Board of Directors and the public hearings provided by the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the Legislative process. Michele explained that new projects can be added to the TIP via the amendment process. A current TIP flyer outlines the 2011-2014 program; a new flyer for the recently approved 2012-2015 TIP will be ready in about two months.

## **5) CIRC Task Force Phase I Schedule**

Michele provided a draft schedule (due to its size, it will be posted on the website). She explained that Phase I (August – November 2011) will focus first on the Short List of Implementation Projects then on the Short List of Planning Projects. Phase II will focus on:

- Tracking the status of the Short List of Implementation Projects
- Analysis of the results of Short List Planning Project outcomes
- Prioritization of mid- and long-range planning projects
- Prioritization of mid- and long-range implementation projects as planning concludes
- Discussion of the intersection of the mid- and long-range planning and implementation processes with the normal MTP process.

Michele suggested an October 4<sup>th</sup> Public Information Meeting and asked to confirm that date at our next meeting (August 25<sup>th</sup>). She also asked that the group plan for the evening meetings (September 8<sup>th</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup>) to run from 5:30-8:30PM to give us an additional hour. Linda Myers of Essex noted a potential conflict on October 6<sup>th</sup> with a VCLT event. Michele will query the group via email.

## **6) CIRC Task Force Prioritization**

### **6A) Overview of Proposed CIRC Alternatives Prioritization Process**

Michele explained that the CIRC Task Force process will proceed outside of the normal VTrans Prioritization Process as established by the Legislature. In order to maintain as much consistency as possible with the usual process, the MPO has devised a Draft Prioritization Process that was mailed last week. This process mirrors the current MPO and State Prioritization factors and adds additional considerations. Today we will focus on the overall framework as presented by Christine Forde of the CCRPC and try to agree to it in principle. At our next meeting, we will focus on the details of the framework – the descriptions and the points system.

Christine Forde of the CCRPC explained that she has made changes to the methodology after discussion at the last meeting. She presented the following:

### **Why Prioritize Projects?**

- Advance projects consistent with long-range goals and objectives
- Ensure consistency in the programming of transportation projects
- Accountability and transparency
- Efficient use of transportation dollars

### **CCRPC Methodology**

Projects are scored on six planning factors identified to be important by the MTP, Federal law, and VT Legislature: Economic Vitality, Safety and Security, Accessibility, Mobility and Connectivity, Environment, Energy and Quality of Life, Preservation of Existing System, and Efficient System Management

### **Changes to Methodology**

- Circ factors are incorporated by scoring projects located in, or serving, the Circ study area
- Specificity regarding Designated Growth Centers, Downtown, Village Centers and New Town Centers added
- Include additional criteria for regional connectivity for pedestrian/bike and transit
- Still includes a readiness factor

## CCRPC Methodology

- *Condition of existing system- Highest Points to:*
  - Projects that improve a documented safety problem – roads, bridges, pedestrian/bike facilities, transit facilities
  - Projects improve deteriorated roads, bridges, pedestrian/bike facilities, transit facilities
- *Access and Connectivity - Highest Points to:*
  - Projects that facilitate regional connectivity for roads, bridges, pedestrian /bike, transit
  - Projects that provide access to access to Vermont designated Growth Centers, Downtowns, New Town Centers and Village Centers
  - Projects that expand transit and pedestrian/bike facilities making regional connections
- *Environmental factors – Highest Points to:*
  - Projects that reduce VMT through: new or expanded transit; regional pedestrian/bike facilities; park and ride lots; TDM
  - Traffic calming and streetscape in Vermont designated Growth Centers, Downtowns, New Town Centers and Village Centers
  - Project that encourage compact land use

## **6B: Preliminary Feedback from Task Force Members re: General Approach of the Proposed Prioritization Process**

Dennis is concerned that planning area is broad; the Circ was designed to solve specific problems in the corridor from Interstate to Interstate and beyond to Colchester. The further we move away from the original footprint of the Circ the lesser the impacts. Cindy Cook asked if the corridor has been defined. Ken Robie of VTrans responded that there is a corridor delineated in the Environmental Impact Statement (1986 EIS). Cindy asked that the map of the corridor be distributed. Bryan Osborne questioned why we are including projects from non-Circ communities for consideration. Michele responded that these may be justified; Milton has suggested three projects and Richmond has suggested Interstate 89 Exit 11 improvements. She suggested that we include the additional projects; with the caveat that those that are less relevant to the Circ Purpose & Needs would rank lower than those in the impact area. Dennis suggested that we narrow our focus to the CIRC communities involved (with transit potentially having a larger impact) and delineate the corridor on a map that we can all agree to. Bryan agreed.

Sandy Levine of CLF wants to look at impacts and what projects could facilitate the greatest change. The Richmond Park & Ride results in reduced traffic in Circ towns, and she thinks it makes sense to include it on the list.

Linda Myers of Essex noted that Circ towns were under the impression that the Governor was offering to prioritize projects because these towns would not be getting the traffic alleviation benefits of the Circ. Brian Shupe of VNRC suggested that all projects should be on the table and most of them will be in the four Circ towns. Brian Searles noted that he was surprised that projects outside of the four towns were on the list; however, we should leave the door open because there may be projects that impact the four towns but are located outside of them.

Jason VanDriesche of Local Motion asked about regional connectivity for pedestrian/bike and transit. Christine responded that she will send Jason the language for him to review.

Ken Belliveau of Williston asked if the criteria are weighted the same for all four communities and for all the different growth center-type designations. Christine responded in the affirmative. Michele suggested that we defer the details of the scoring for the next meeting. She asked that everyone review

the factors and we'll talk in detail at the next meeting.

Meredith Birkett of CCTA asked about the weight of transit in the scoring and Christine offered to work with her individually to review the language.

Dennis is concerned about the inconsistency of the measurement language. In some cases, it is very specific, like a bridge ranking. In others, the measure is "very important." This makes it impossible to measure projects consistently. The methodology is mixed and is loose. There needs to be work on the wording and definitions. Michele discussed the challenge of blending VTrans' more quantitative scoring methodology with the MPO's more qualitative scoring methodology. The MPO is faced with trying to make the most of two different systems to achieve the best outcomes. This is a challenge and we'll spend the next meeting trying to do this.

Bryan asked who would do the scoring and would it include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Michele responded that we will not use the traditional prioritization tools of either the MPO or VTrans; rather we will develop a new prioritization tool to first assist the Task Force in agreeing on a short list of implementation projects and later to address the planning projects. Likely Christine will score the short list and provide it to the Task Force for feedback and discussion. Dennis suggested that the MPO has tools to evaluate connectivity, like corridor and intersection studies, and the estimates of reduced delay or congestion. Jason is concerned that the criteria of "new and expanded access including bike/pedestrian" inherently sets up a conflict because projects are scored that may result in improved access for cars, but may deteriorate access for bike/pedestrian/transit. The ranking system should score car access and bike/pedestrian/transit access separately.

Bryan noted that for "access to growth centers" it should include getting through and around them, not just getting to them. Christine responded that this is the case.

Dennis supports traffic calming, but the concept of the original Circ did not include traffic calming. The original intent is to reduce congestion, not slow traffic. He doesn't think they are on the same playing field. Christine responded that this can be removed. Dennis suggested that some types of traffic calming are important, but others are not appropriate.

Cindy suggested that a prioritization matrix be distributed to members for mark-up and circulate prior to the next meeting, in an effort to use time efficiently. Christine will email the prioritization Word file for Task Force members to write comments. She will collate and distribute the comments prior to the next meeting. Michele asked that everyone review the project list to determine how many projects are short-term ones. There aren't many; but it's still important to establish a strong methodology for prioritization, but there may be limitations we can't overcome. Christine noted that the projects were not screened by the MPO; rather all projects submitted by the municipalities were included.

Brian Searles suggested that the longer-term projects need to make sense together with the shorter-term projects. They need to be logical not just on their own merits, but in how they are connected to others. Michele responded that schedule makes it difficult to achieve this, but hopefully a more comprehensive package can be created. It is dependent on the short term planning projects that are chosen because they will inform the medium/long-range implementation package.

## **7) Current and Projected Growth Patterns for the Region and Recent Scenario Planning Efforts for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan - Questions & Discussion**

Dave Roberts of the CCRPC discussed regional growth patterns. Census data between 1990 and 2010 for housing shows significant growth in the region. Employment data shows the CIRC towns are

increasing employment, except for Essex (due to changes at IBM). County population forecasts through 2035 show growth of 50,000 new people in the County (a 30 percent increase, or less than 1 percent annually). Housing units are growing at a faster rate because household size is getting smaller. The rate of change for households is estimated at 36 percent from 2010-2035 (less than 1.25 percent annually). Employment will grow by 38 percent, or 1.3 percent annually. Ken Belliveau is concerned about the data in terms of the ageing population and its impact on population projections.

Peter Keating of the CCRPC discussed “Vision 2060: Scenario Planning for Chittenden County.” The process of creating a new long range transportation plan began about two years ago. The CCMPO undertook scenario planning to help predict how land use and development might change over the next 50 years. They held community workshops and asked participants to plan the land use/transportation future for the county. Scenarios were reviewed and refined by staff and the MTP Advisory Committee and analyzed with the Transportation Demand Model.

There were three scenarios developed: Trend (development continues as it has historically), Workshop (higher density development in various growth centers dispersed throughout County), Core (highest density development and employment in Burlington/Winooski). The scenarios were compared using indicators representing the transportation system and the environment. An online survey allowed participants to choose preferred scenarios.

### **Online Survey Conclusions**

- 1) Trend Development Patterns (low density) was resoundingly rejected in workshops and survey.
- 2) The most important factors in selecting scenario preference were:
  - environmental impacts;
  - energy consumption;
  - transportation alternatives of walking, biking, and transit; and
  - minimizing land consumption
- 3) There was support for higher fuel taxes or higher vehicle registration fees to implement transportation improvements that would be needed to realize the future vision.
- 4) The respondents showed a high degree of support for increased residential or mixed use density in their communities.

The next phase of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update will look at transportation alternatives and how the transportation system can be changed to increase performance. The CCRPC will also look at projects both locally and regionally.

Jeff Nick of JL Davis Realty asked if the Trend scenario would indeed be implemented. Michele responded that all decisions on land use patterns are local decisions. Peter noted that all the Chittenden County municipalities have regulations that support growth center development; but it may or may not happen. Jason noted that for the first time in 50 years, Census data showed a break in single occupancy vehicle trips and more utilization of alternate trips. This might spur compact development. Dennis noted that one of the outside factors affecting land use is the limitation of the Lake to handle the wastewater/phosphorus loads (stormwater runoff). This limitation makes land outside the County more affordable for developers.

### **8) Updates, Next Meeting & Next Steps**

Michele offered a number of updates:

- The Town of Milton requested that US 7/Middle Road/Railroad Street (in Scoping) and Upper Main Street Streetscape Improvements be added to the Project List.
- The Town of Williston Planning Commission, via Town Planning Director Ken Belliveau, requested that consideration of CIRC B as a stand-alone project be added to the Project List for planning consideration. The updated list will be posted on CIRC Task Force website:  
<http://www.circtaskforce.org/>
- At the last meeting, Dave Crawford of Essex Junction requested that better project definitions be added to the Project List, and staff is working on that.
- At the last meeting Dennis Lutz of Essex requested additional information regarding the constraints which currently exist for the CIRC A/B alignment. This will be discussed at the September 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- The focus of the next meeting will be detailing the goals of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and an in-depth discussion (and hopefully agreement) on the Prioritization Process.
- Finally, Michele will distribute follow-up information promised at this meeting, along with an agenda and minutes in advance of the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

**The Next Meeting will be held August 25, 2011 from 8-10AM at the WILLISTON TOWN HALL.**

## ATTENDEES

### Members Present

Last	First	Title	Organization
Birkett	Meredith	Manager	CCTA
Bruhn	Paul	Director	Preservation Trust of VT
Crawford	Dave	Village Manager	Village of Essex Junction
Jagielski	Thomas	Site Operations Manager	IBM
Lajza	John	RPC Representative	Essex Junction
Macaig	Terry	Selectboard Chair	Town of Williston
McGuire	Rick	Town Manager	Town of Williston
Myers	Linda	Selectboard Chair	Town of Essex
Nick	Jeff		JL Davis Realty
Roy	Chris	RPC Representative	Town of Williston
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
Borg	Mary		VT DEC
Langham	Matthew		VTrans
Lashua	Trevor	Ass't Town Manager	Town of Essex
Levine	Sandy	Senior Attorney	Conservation Law Foundation
Lutz	Dennis	DPW Director	Town of Essex
Osborne	Bryan	Director of Public Works	Town of Colchester
Pierce	Robin	Development Director	Village of Essex Junction
Robie	Ken	CIRC Project Manager	VTrans
VanDriesche	Jason	Education & Safety Mgr.	Local Motion

### CCRPC Staff Present

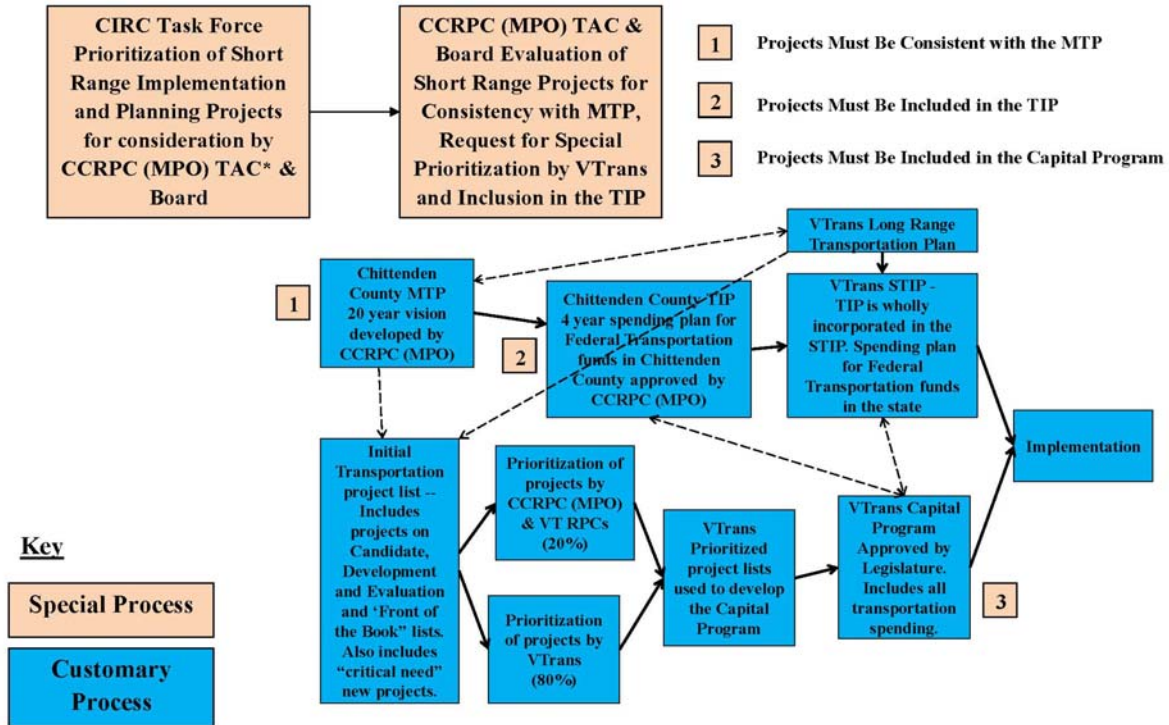
Boomhower	Michele	Assistant/MPO Director	CCRPC
Churchill	Eleni	Sr. Transportation Planning Eng.	CCRPC
Forde	Christine	Sr. Transportation Planner	CCRPC
Keating	Peter	Sr. Transportation Planner	CCRPC
Roberts	Dave	Sr. Transportation Planning Eng.	CCRPC

### Others Present

Bailey	Misha	Process Assistant	Adamant Accord
Cook	Cindy	Process Facilitator	Adamant Accord
Meyerhoff	Diane	Process Coordinator	Third Sector Associates



**Summary of Relationship between the CIRC Task Force, CCRPC (MPO), VTrans, and Legislature related to the Task Force Prioritized List of Short Range Implementation Projects, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the State TIP, and the Capital Program**



\*TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee