

CIRC Task Force Meeting #4 Notes

*SERVING THE
MUNICIPALITIES OF*

*Bolton
Buels Gore
Burlington
Charlotte
Colchester
Essex Junction
Essex Town
Hinesburg
Huntington
Jericho
Milton
Richmond
St. George
Shelburne
South Burlington
Underhill
Westford
Williston
Winooski*

DATE: Thursday, October 20, 2011
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: Williston Town Hall
PRESENT: Please see last page

1) Welcome & Introductions

Cindy Cook of Adamant Accord welcomed everyone and added Item 1A) Review and Approval of Meeting Notes to the agenda.

Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC welcomed everyone. She expressed her appreciation to the Task Force for their flexibility in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene. The Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) from around the state were called to service by VTrans Secretary Brian Searles to assist devastated local governments after the storm. Michele recognized all the CCMPO and VTrans staff for their dedication to the recovery effort.

1A) Review & Approval of Meeting Notes

The Task Force approved the meeting notes, without revisions, from August 11, 2011 and August 25, 2011.

2) VTrans Update

VTrans Secretary Brian Searles made a presentation about the agency's response to Tropical Storm Irene. Brian's presentation will be posted on the CIRC website (<http://www.circtaskforce.org/>).

Brian showed photos of storm damage, concentrated in the four southern counties, to show the level of effort VTrans required for cleanup, recovery, and rebuilding. About 3,600 people were deployed for the effort, with half of those employed by the private sector. Brian discussed the success of the Incident Command System (ICS) in allowing the agency to deploy quickly during the crisis. Michele discussed the Herculean effort of RPC staff to map the damage; the mapping effort was the backbone for tracking storm damage and identifying hot spots for immediate action.

VTrans is looking to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief Fund to pay for storm cleanup. This fund is limited to \$100 million per event during the first 180 days after the event. In the past, the federal government has removed the cap and extended the period. The US Senate is currently reviewing these changes; however the US House bill does not include these provisions. The best case scenario is that storm expenditures will be covered by the federal government and VTrans will continue with its "regular" agenda of projects. The worst case scenario is partial federal funding of storm damage and the

“regular” agenda is put on hold, likely for five to ten years. Vermont doesn’t have the financial capacity to cover the storm damage, estimated to be \$500 million. Our annual construction program is only \$200 million.

Brian thanked the Task Force for their patience through the recovery effort and asked that the group renew its effort to put forward a list of short-term implementation projects to submit to the Legislature this session. Brian finished his presentation and left the meeting at 7:30PM.

3) Proposed Schedule and Process for the Task Force

Michele reviewed the draft Task Force schedule (see attachment). Diane Meyerhoff will poll members to determine a date and location for an early December public meeting.

Michele explained that the purpose of Phase 1 is to determine the short list of implementation projects for consideration in the FY13 Capital Program. In keeping with that charge, the group will finalize the short list for submission to VTrans at the November 9th meeting and also begin to look at the planning projects. On November 30th, the group will discuss the planning projects and finalize the planning project scoring on December 14th. The planning projects will be grouped by funding year; for FY12, there is about \$350,000 available. Michele hopes to have the CIRC planning process and the MPO programming process integrated at the end of calendar year 2012.

Michele will prepare a Phase 1 Task Force Report for review prior to the December 14th meeting. This report will be taken to the Legislature in January.

Jeff Carr of Essex explained that the Task Force’s work will develop a list of capital projects that become part of the CCMPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which then, when approved, becomes part of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In order to receive federal funding, projects must be included on the STIP.

4) CIRC Study Area Analysis and Findings

Dave Roberts of the CCRPC presented his analysis of the Transportation Model as it relates to the study area map. His draft map shows the change in traffic volumes if the full CIRC was built right now.

Dave’s handout shows PM Peak hour volumes for I-89 interchanges 11 through 17. Dave recommended that Exits 11 and 17 be included in the study area because of the significant decrease in congestion associated with the CIRC (that will not be realized without the CIRC). Based on modeling results, Dave estimated that if the CIRC had been built, it would have resulted in a 20 percent decrease in traffic at Exit 17, and a 14 percent decrease in traffic at Exit 11. These are the two highest decreases in all the Interstate exits analyzed.

There was discussion about the changes in traffic volume versus traffic congestion. Dave explained different types of facilities have different levels of capacity, but traffic volumes were directly related to the level of congestion.

Ken Belliveau of Williston is concerned about the prioritization process when the final Circ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had Segments A and B as the starting point. Whether or not A and B are built significantly impacts Williston (especially N. Williston Road), Essex Junction, and the Route 2A corridor.

Jason Van Driesche of Local Motion noted that the relationship between changes in traffic

volume and changes in congestion is not linear. He suggested it may be useful from a prioritization perspective to look at both changes in volume and changes in Level of Service (LOS). If the purpose of the CIRC was to mitigate congestion, then the appropriate yardstick for reducing congestion should focus on LOS.

Dennis Lutz of Essex posed the question: if one accepts the logic that the network to and from intersections, like Route 7 and Route 117, are part of the study area, then should you add the road network near them? If the CIRC was built, it could increase intersection congestion in Burlington. Should those intersections be included in the study area? Jeff responded that if we follow Dennis' lead, we'll have projects way beyond our financial threshold. He supports the MPO staff recommendation to add the "pink" areas to the study map, but not add the feeder networks to Exits 11 and 17.

Linda Myers of Essex made a motion to exclude Exits 17 and 11 from the study area map and it was seconded by Dennis Lutz of Essex. During discussion, Task Force members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of adding to the project area. Jeff suggested that Dave's analysis is illustrative only. Tim Baechle of IBM noted the limited number of Winooski River crossings between Richmond and Route 2A and therefore supported including Exit 11 in the study area. Sandy Levine of the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) suggested that the analysis is rudimentary and more work is needed. She would exclude Exits 11 and 17 because development there does not support downtown areas and smart growth. Meredith Birkett of CCTA noted that these interchanges are served by significant transit service and park and ride lots, so including them can improve transit's mode share.

The question was called. The motion is to "exclude Interstate 89 Exits 11 and 17 from the CIRC Project Area Map." The motion carried, with 10 voting in support, 6 voting against, and 5 abstentions.

Jason asked that the committee consider adding "bike and pedestrian development" under "Additional corridors for Transit & Signal Improvement Projects" on the DRAFT CIRC Project Area Map, dated 10/18/11. This would expand the definition of eligible projects to include bike and pedestrian projects; something that may allow more users to choose alternative transportation modes during peak times. The same scoring system would apply; projects have to significantly improve congestion in order to rise to the top. Christine Forde of the CCRPC noted that the intent of adding signal projects to the list was to include low cost solutions; separated bike paths could be expensive. John Lajza of Essex Junction was concerned that inadequate density beyond the center of the corridor makes bike/ped spending on Route 7 to the north or Route 15 to the north unwise.

The group agreed to the addition of bike and pedestrian projects, although there was concern about what the change would mean to the final prioritization. Since the planning projects have yet to be considered and ranked, the results weren't clear. The group agreed to take this issue up at a future meeting when more information is available.

Michele explained that the prioritization process for the planning projects will likely be different than the one used for the capital projects.

5) Presentation of CCMPO Scoring of Short Term Implementation Projects

Michele and her staff met and analyzed all projects as a group and met with three of the four

municipalities prior to sending the prioritized list to the full Task Force. Individual project scoring sheets will be posted on the website. Additional information will include: links to planning studies (where available), right-of-way issues that might affect implementation, permitting issues, and cost estimates.

Dave Crawford of Essex Junction commended the staff for their work. When the Task Force started, we set forth criteria noting that we may need to revise them as we moved forward. He suggested that we further reflect on the scoring system. Michele responded that we have a finite amount of time to move projects forward toward the Capital Program. If the Task Force wants to revise the scoring system, it will have to be done via email prior to our next meeting.

There was discussion about project costs and how best to allocate funds to achieve the most benefit. In terms of project timing, Michele explained that the Task Force's suite of project recommendations will likely be phased by VTrans, depending on implementation issues. Michele will try to get a read from VTrans about the phasing of the projects prior to the next meeting.

Chris Roy of Williston is concerned that the CIRC EIS recommended Segments A and B. The Governor took those segments off the table with a promise to support alternatives. However, the scoring system doesn't include an implementation project in Williston among the top five. The Williston community isn't happy with these results. He commented that if we need buy in from all the communities, Williston needs something in the first phase of projects. Michele responded that the projects under consideration are "shovel ready" or one-to-two-year projects. Unfortunately, Williston has limited projects in this category, but does have planning projects. The Task Force will be developing prioritized lists of both implementation and planning projects to submit to the legislature this year.

There was discussion about projects that are not ranked sequentially but may be complementary. Michele will provide additional information for complementary projects. Michele will also provide more detail on the projects, likely with the help of a form sent to each municipality. She would like to submit the draft list to VTrans on November 10th, receive input from VTrans, and finalize the list on November 30th.

Jeff Nick of the business community asked if the projects alleviate traffic congestion. Michele responded that staff will provide whatever information is readily available. Sandy would like clarification of "n/a" in the scoring. Jason is interested in understanding the most useful methods for mitigating congestion; what are the relative benefits of different congestion reduction strategies? Michele will provide what she can; however, we likely do not have the time for that level of detail.

6) Next Meeting & Next Steps

CCRPC staff will provide more detailed project information, including a logical project grouping. Staff will summarize feedback received on the prioritization at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.

The Next Meeting will be held November 9, 2011 from 6:30-9:00 PM at a location To Be Announced.

ATTENDEES

Members Present

Last	First	Title	Organization
Baechle	Tim	Manager of Energy, Environmental	IBM Burlington
Birkett	Meredith	Manager	CCTA
Carr	Jeff	RPC Representative	Town of Essex
Crawford	Dave	Village Manager	Village of Essex Junction
Carter	Curt		Lake Champlain Regional Chamber
Lajza	John	RPC Representative	Essex Junction
Landry	Marc	RPC Representative	Town of Colchester
Macaig	Terry	Selectboard Chair	Town of Williston
Mackay	Noelle	Commissioner	Housing & Community Affairs
Myers	Linda	Selectboard Chair	Town of Essex
Nick	Jeff		JL Davis Realty
Paquette	Richard	Selectboard Chair	Town of Colchester
Roy	Chris	RPC Representative	Town of Williston
Scheidel	Pat	Town Manager	Town of Essex
Searles	Brian	Secretary	VTrans
Tyler	George	Village President	Village of Essex Junction
Voegelé	Al	Town Manager	Town of Colchester

Staff Present

Bell	Amy	CCMPO Planning Coord.	VTrans
Belliveau	Ken	Planning Director and Zoning Admin.	Town of Williston
Borg	Mary		VT Agency of Natural Resources
Hoar	Bruce	DPW Director	Town of Williston
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

Others Present

Bailey	Misha		Adamant Accord
Beaudin	Marcel		S. Burlington Planning Comm.
Condit	Hillary		Adamant Accord
Cook	Cindy	Process Facilitator	Adamant Accord
Ingram	Debbie	Selectboard	Town of Williston
Luke	Baynes	Reporter	Williston Observer
Meyerhoff	Diane	Process Coordinator	Third Sector Associates

CCRPC Staff Present: Michele Boomhower, Eleni Churchill, Christine Forde, Peter Keating, Dave Roberts

3) Proposed Schedule and Process for the Task Force - As of October 20, 2011

CIRC Alternatives Task Force DRAFT Schedule 2011-2012

Phase 1: Determination of Short List of Implementation Projects for FY13 Capital Program

Phase 2: Determination of Short List of Implementation Projects for FY14 Capital Program and List of Planning Projects for Implementation in the CCRPC FY12 and FY13 Work Program Years and Planning Projects for Inclusion in the CCRPC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Consideration in Work Program Years FY14 and Beyond

Date and Time	Topic
November 9, 2011 6:30-9:00 pm	Develop Task Force Phase 1 Recommendations re: Short Term Implementation Projects for FY13 Capital Program Begin Phase 2 - Review CCMPO Scoring of Planning Projects
November 30, 2011 6:30-9:00 pm	Phase 2 - Begin Developing Task Force Recommendations re: Planning Projects
December	Public Meeting
December 14, 2011 6:30-9:00 pm	Phase 1 - Review and Approve Phase 1 Task Force Report Phase 2 – Finalize Planning Project Scoring and Schedule
May 17, 2012 6:30-9:00 pm	Phase 2 - Planning Project Status Update
Oct 11, 2012 6:30-9:00 pm	Phase 2 - Begin Project Prioritization for FY14 Capital Program Phase 2 - Planning Project Status Update
October 25, 2012 6:30-9:00 pm	Phase 2 - Continue Project Prioritization for FY14 Capital Program Phase 2 - Planning Project Status Update
November 8, 2012 6:30-9:00 pm	Phase 2 - Continue Project Prioritization for FY14 Capital Program Phase 2 - Planning Project Status Update Phase 2 – Integration of Remaining Planning Projects into CCRPC Long Range MTP Planning Process
November 29, 2012 6:30-9:00 pm	Complete work on Phase 2 - Review and Approve Phase 2 Task Force Report
December	Public Meeting