

**Williston-Essex Network Transportation Study (WENTS)**  
**Public Meeting #2 (Hosted by the Williston Planning Commission)**  
<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/corridors/williston-essex-network-transportation-study/>

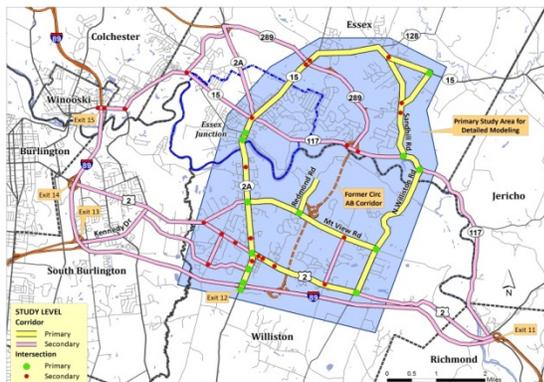
**DATE:** Tuesday, February 5, 2013  
**TIME:** 7:30 – 9:00 PM  
**PLACE:** Williston Town Hall, 7900 Williston Road  
**PRESENT:** Please see page 5

**1) Welcome & Introductions**

The meeting of the Williston Planning Commission was called to order at 7:30PM by the Chair, Jake Mathon. Jake introduced Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC who explained that her organization oversaw the development of the Williston-Essex Transportation Study (WENTS). Michele explained that WENTS is the result of Governor Shumlin’s announcement that the Circumferential Highway (CIRC) - as originally conceived - would not be built. CCRPC was charged to study the area’s transportation issues without the benefit of the CIRC Highway. The study looked at a large geographic area and created “strategy packages” to provide congestion relief. The process has been guided by a Steering Committee which includes municipal representatives, VTrans, resource and economic development organizations, and “modal” partners (CCTA, Local Motion). The Steering Committee made a recommendation to the CIRC Alternatives Task Force to advance a package of recommendations for detailed study. Michele introduced Bob Chamberlin of RSG to present the study results.

**2) WENTS Presentation**

Bob Chamberlin outlined the study area:



**A. Study Need and Goals**

Bob explained that the study’s goals were to create an integrated transportation plan to address multimodal mobility and safety issues within the former CIRC area, and to produce a comprehensive and coordinated list of highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and land use recommendations that satisfy an overall vision for the area. The study was also mindful of the Complete Streets bill (requiring the consideration of all users). The study followed a “Corridor Management” planning process.

## B. The Study Process

In Phase 1, which is complete, two major network strategies were evaluated. In Phases 2-5, the consultant team worked with the Steering Committee to develop a series of recommended strategies. The study is in the last phase of developing a Transportation Management Plan.

WENTS took a slight departure from the normal Corridor Management Plan process in Phase 1. The CIRC Alternatives Task Force asked that two strategies be studied at the beginning of WENTS - essentially the Circ A alignment (Major Network Strategy #1) and a strategy similar to the Circ B alignment to include a bridge across the Winooski River (Major Network Strategy #2). These strategies were analyzed (using existing Circ Environmental Impact Statement data) for travel implications, environmental impacts, and cost. The legislative bodies of Williston and Essex voted to move Major Network Strategy #2 forward. This strategy was studied along with other strategies that were developed.

## C. Initial Strategies Considered

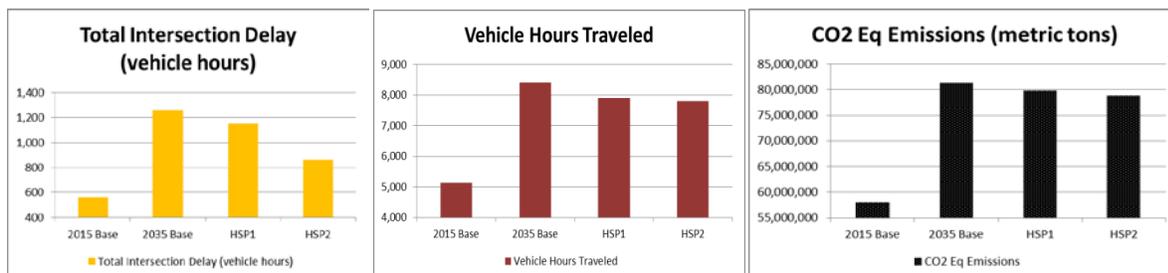
The “Core Improvements,” those that will be incorporated into the final strategy package, with an estimated cost of approximately \$15-17 million, include:

- Williston Grid Streets
- Essex Town Center Connections
- CIRC Alternatives Phase 1 Implementation Projects in WENTS area: Crescent Connector in Essex Junction; VT2A/James Brown Drive improvements in Williston; and Transportation Demand/System Management programs.
- CIRC Alternatives Phase 2 Implementation Projects: VT15/Sand Hill Road intersection improvements; US2/Trader Lane signal, VT15 Improvements (Post Office Square to Five Corners); VT15 Multiuse Path; and Transportation Demand/System Management programs.
- Addressing discontinuities and deficiencies to sidewalks, paths, and shoulders, and adding transit services including a weekday, mid-day trip on the Williston Route and a weekday, peak hour Jeffersonville-Burlington commuter route.

The other strategies included: Major Network Strategy 2 (new bridge); Spot Intersection Improvements in the study area; New local street connections; Vermont 2A mainline capacity expansion; and North Williston Road capacity expansion.

## D. Final Strategy Packages for the WENTS Area

Two “hybrid” strategy packages (HSP1 & HSP2) were developed by combining strategies from previously evaluated packages. The “hybrid” packages were evaluated for 2035 future planning year and compared to the 2015 and 2035 Base Scenarios. The following charts show the relative performance of each strategy package:



Bob described the network-wide measures of performance, environmental and resource impacts, and costs of each strategy package.

### **Preliminary Cost of Strategy Packages**

WENTS Core Improvements	\$17 million
Hybrid Strategy Package 1 (HSP1)	\$47-66 million
Hybrid Strategy Package 2 (HSP2)	\$30-49 million

### ***E. Strategy Package and Scoping Study Recommendations (endorsed by the Steering Committee and CIRC Alternatives Task Force)***

The WENTS Steering Committee endorsed Hybrid Strategy Package 2 (HSP2) because it was more effective at addressing congestion in the overall study area, less costly and more environmentally sound. HSP2 includes a reconfigured Exit 12, new local streets, and capacity improvements (intersections and VT 2A corridor). The Steering Committee also endorsed a new Congestion Policy that redefines the allowable congestion and mitigation measures for Areas Targeted for Growth as identified in the Regional Plan. The CIRC Alternatives Task Force, at their January 31, 2013 meeting approved the following series of scoping studies that support HSP2:

- Exit 12/New Local Streets
- Vermont 2A/Mountain View/Industrial Ave. and Vermont 2A mainline north to James Brown Dr.
- Vermont 117/North Williston Road Intersection and flooding issues
- US 2 – Taft Corners to Williston Village Multimodal Improvements
- Bike and Pedestrian Scoping Studies: Industrial Avenue to Blair Park (including a crossing of Allen Brook), Vermont 15 (Old Stage Road to Essex Way), and Mountain View Road from Old Stage Road to Vermont 2A.

### ***F. Next Steps***

The next steps include development of the Network Implementation Plan (February 2013), additional investigations into permitting, refinement of costs estimates and timeline, definition of scoping study elements, and a draft and final report (February/March 2013).

### ***G. Q&A***

Mike Alvanos (Planning Commission): When you looked at the strategy packages, is there something that weighs on them more than anything else? Bob: The biggest lever for congestion is intersection delay. Mike: Is there anything the Planning Commission can do in the next twenty years to address traffic congestion? Bob: The best thing you could do is to concentrate land use in the growth center, even beyond the 70 percent goal you have set. The more households/people you put in your growth center, where there is more walking, biking and transit opportunities, the better it is for transportation.

Ken Belliveau, Williston Town Planner: The study did not model alternative land use scenarios; rather it was assumed that we would continue to encourage intensive growth in the growth centers. It is appropriate for the Planning Commission to take up the question of increasing the growth target.

Jake Mathon (Planning Commission): How do we deal with traffic from Hinesburg, Jericho, and beyond? It's this commuter traffic that impacts us. Bob: The traffic comes from everywhere, including

internally. IBM growth was also assumed in our analyses and this is considered internally-generated traffic. Michele Boomhower: Some impacts are unavoidable; there are only so many routes. If we make routes more attractive for travelers, they will use them. Additionally, we need to provide new tools for commuters, such as the commuter bus service to Jeffersonville and programs to encourage carpooling and other travel modes. We recognize that N. Williston Road will experience ongoing impacts due to its connectivity. Bob noted that capacity analyses of N. Williston Road indicated that road segments have adequate capacity but intersections have some significant capacity problems.

Kevin Batson (Planning Commission): The Bridge on N. Williston Road is very low and therefore floods. Can we deal with that? Bob: The scoping study will look at the intersections and the bridge to see what mitigation could be done.

John Fitzgerald: I'm been watching this Circ highway ever since Mr. Pinkham was the engineer. The Governor comes in and closes it down in one day and everyone rolls over and plays dead. I don't understand that. Then they brought up the engineers and said that there are wetlands that can't be taken care of. I would like to walk all of the Circ Highway. Vermont Gas gets to put pipes down the Circ Highway. The State owns the land. I'd like to see it marked and used for a trail or bikeway. We need to remember that this is a Circ Highway around Burlington. I don't want you to forget that everyone can use this. My bike is in the garage the batteries are plugged in and I'll use it in the spring. If I need to be out after 4PM trying to get home for the last two months and not get run off the road. The flashing lights scare me to death when they are right on the side of the road and it's terrible. If we did what we really wanted to do in the beginning it would be done. I hope that you will plan to underground utilities.

Eleanor Hood: One of the slides showed Industrial Avenue to James Brown Drive and what about improvements between James Brown and Five Corners? Bob: Vermont 2A and James Brown Drive are slated for a new signal and VT 2A turning lanes in 2015 (Ken Belliveau has detailed drawings at his office). Further improvements to VT 2A will be considered in a scoping study that will examine a series of alternatives. It's too early to know what the preferred alignment will be. If you would like to be on the mailing list for this study, please let Diane Meyerhoff know and you'll be added to the list.

Jim McCullough: The James Brown Drive signal was conceived when the Town Garage was located there. Since the garage is moving, is it still necessary? Ken explained that relocating the garage will open the site for other development that will likely generate similar levels of (truck) traffic and therefore require the signal.

Jim McCullough: Is there discussion about wider shoulders and traffic calming on N. Williston Road? Bob: We've looked at places to widen shoulders; bike accommodations must also be considered. Traffic calming has not been considered because it is not consistent with the road's function. Michele: The Williston representatives to the CIRC Alternatives Task Force made it clear to VTrans Secretary Searles that they are interested in ongoing coordination in regards to N. Williston Road and Mountain View to better understand the impacts of commuter traffic and congestion. Jim is concerned that the North Williston hamlet is being destroyed by traffic.

Jake Mathon: What is the suggested improvement for Williston Road/Oak Hill/ North Williston Road? Bob: We recommend a roundabout, although we understand that the town does not embrace that solution.

Kevin Batson: I'm not an advocate of changing River Cover Road, but was it considered? Michele: It was considered as a network linkage, but it's not a viable option due to environmental constraints.

Q: Are the strategy packages mutually exclusive? Michele: There is a funding constraint; we have to choose only one.

Roderick Hood: If the remaining Circ Highway segments costs \$75 million, and the recommended improvements cost \$45-67 million, I think the Governor should be convinced that that the Circ should be built. Michele: There were environmental permitting issues that likely would have precluded building the last segments of the Circ. It was decided that we needed to do something to move forward.

Michele asked that everyone sign in to receive information on the scoping studies. Questions should be forwarded to Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC staff who is the project manager for WENTS.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM.

**Participants**

Last	First	Affiliation	Town
Alvanos	Mike	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Batson	Kevin	Williston Planning Commission	
Botula	Janet	CATMA	
Bryant	Rich	Stantec	
Choate	Stephanie		Richmond
Cope	Meghan	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Edwards	Greg	Stantec	
FitzGerald	John		Essex
Goulette	Doug		Williston
Hiltner	Shannon	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
Hood	Eleanora		Williston
Hood	Roderic		Williston
Joslin	Tom		Jericho
Mathon	Jake	Williston Planning Commission	Williston
McCullough	Jim	Legislator	Williston
Morin	Guy		Essex Junction
Smith	Edgar		Williston

**Williston Planning Department Staff Present:** Ken Belliveau, Matt Boulanger

**CCRPC Staff Present:** Michele Boomhower, Eleni Churchill

**WENTS Steering Committee Members Present:** Meredith Birkett (CCTA); Ken Robie (VTrans)

**Consultants:** Bob Chamberlin, Resource Systems Group (RSG); Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates