

## **Williston-Essex Transportation Network Study Steering Committee Meeting #6**

**DATE:** Thursday, December 13, 2012  
**TIME:** 1:00-3:00 PM  
**PLACE:** CCRPC Offices, 110 West Canal Street, Winooski  
**PRESENT:**

Tim Baechle, IBM (1:15)	David Libby, IBM
Amy Bell, VTrans	Dennis Lutz, Town of Essex
Ken Belliveau, Town of Williston	Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates
Meredith Birkett, CCTA	Jeff Nick, JL Davis Realty
Michele Boomhower, CCRPC	Bruce Nyquist, VTrans
Bob Chamberlin, RSG	Robin Pierce, Village of Essex Junction
Jason Charest, CCRPC	Ken Robie, VTrans
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC	Sai Sarepalli, CCRPC
Christine Forde, CCRPC	Mark Smith, RSG
Dawn Francis, GBIC/LCCC	Jason VanDriesche, Local Motion
Bruce Hoar, Town of Williston	Brian Wright, Chittenden Solid Waste District
Sandy Levine, Conservation Law Foundation	

### **1) Welcome**

Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC welcomed everyone and introductions were made. The agenda is to review the modeling results for the various corridor-wide scenarios.

### **2) Network-wide Goals & Objectives**

Sandy Levine of CLF is concerned about the most recent version of the Goals & Objectives. As far as CLF is concerned, Sandy respectfully dissents from the part of the statement that says "A primary focus of WENTS is to address vehicle congestion..."

Jeff Nick of the business community shared his concerns that the Goals and Objectives do not go far enough to address congestion issues in the WENTS area. Jeff will provide the study team with written comments on these issues.

### **3) Project Status Update**

Bob Chamberlin of RSG reviewed the project status, explaining that we are now in Phase 3, the development and evaluation of strategies. Phases 4 and 5 will develop the implementation and transportation management plans for the corridor.

### **4) Review of the Modeling Process**

Bob explained the modeling process includes the CCRPC Regional Travel Demand Model and the newly-created WENTS Study Area Microsimulation Model.

## 5) Review of Performance Measures

Bob explained that the multimodal performance measures are the same across all strategy packages. The measures that address both system-wide and vehicle mobility performance are:

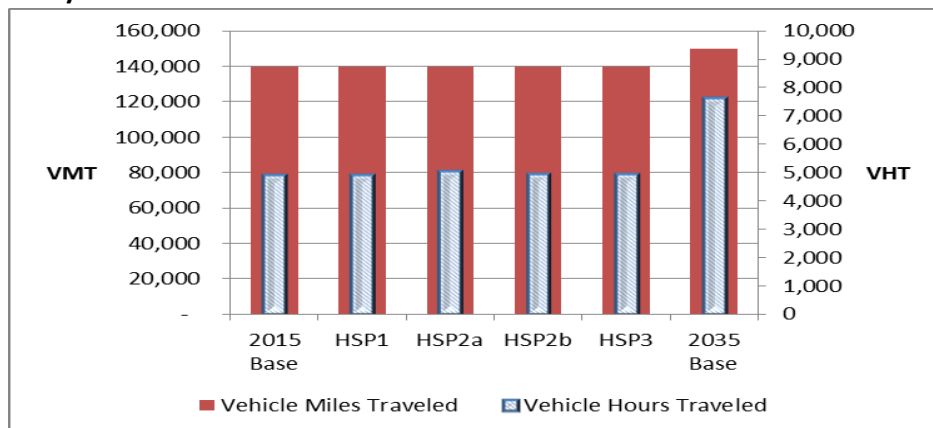
- System-Wide
  - Cumulative Intersection Stop Delay (intersection congestion) for Primary & Secondary Intersections
  - Vehicle Hours Traveled (indicator of congestion)
  - Total Vehicle GHG Emissions (CCRPC policy to look at emissions)
- Vehicle Mobility Performance Measures
  - Corridor Travel Times
  - Intersection Metrics (Primary & Secondary Intersections): Including Delay & LOS; V/C Ratios; Queues

Bob explained that at this stage of the strategy analyses, the comparison among strategies packages is more important than the actual numbers. He also reminded the group that when a network improvement is made, it often brings more traffic to the area and thereby could create problems further downstream. This phenomenon will be seen in some of the analyses.

## 5) Summary of Area-wide Modeling Results

Bob gave an overview of each strategy package that will be discussed during today's meeting. These packages include: 2015 base case; three 2015 hybrid strategy packages (HSP) as discussed and agreed to during the October 25<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting; and 2035 base case. He also discussed summary results for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT) for each strategy package:

### VMT/VHT for Each WENTS Scenario



VMT is the same across all strategy packages, because the same travel demand is included in the model and the origins and destinations haven't changed. There is a jump in 2035 of about 10 percent, also predicted in the regional model. VHT, a system-wide indicator of congestion, doesn't vary significantly for each scenario. However, in 2035, there is a huge increase in VHT, due to high congestion levels. The congestion is driven by projected additional households and jobs for 2035. Ken Belliveau of Williston questioned the 3,500 new households. [Follow up Note: The estimates are correct. They include the entire WENTS study area, not merely the Williston Growth Center.]

Bob showed a map of the study area and emphasized that we are looking at relatively small overall network improvements as compared to building the Circ Highway. These area-wide measures of congestion, not unexpectedly, don't show significant improvements in the corridor. Bob suggested that modeling results indicate that there are four improvements that are crucial to alleviate congestion. These are:

- Major Capacity Improvements on Route 2A at Exit 12
- Major Capacity Improvements at Mountain View/Route 2A/Industrial Ave intersection and Route 2A corridor
- Smart Corridor Applications/Traffic Operations Center
- Roundabout at N. Williston Road/Route 2

There was discussion about whether or not to include the N. Williston Road roundabout in future presentations. Ken B. felt it was reasonable to give the information to the Selectboard.

## **6) Definition of Each Strategy Package**

Bob described each strategy package in detail and provided modeling results for each one. *For simplicity of these notes, each scenario is defined with the committee's comments and some comparative modeling results are given under item 7. For more detail results please download the PowerPoint presentation posted at: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/transportation/corridors/williston-essex-network-transportation-study/wents-steering-committee/>.*

### **A. 2015 BASE CASE – CORE IMPROVEMENTS**

This strategy package is defined by the following improvements:

- Smart Corridor Applications/Traffic Operations Center
- Williston Grid Streets
- Essex Town Center Connections
- Addressing discontinuities and deficiencies to sidewalks, paths, and shoulders
- Transit Improvements: Add a mid-day trip on the Williston Route weekdays; weekday peak hour Jeffersonville-Burlington commuter route
- CIRC Alternatives Phase 1 implementation projects: Crescent Connector in Essex Junction; VT2A/James Brown Drive Signal (w/ VT2A left-turn lanes); VT117/ Sand Hill Rd. traffic signal
- CIRC Alternatives Phase 2 implementation projects: VT15/Sand Hill Road Intersection improvements, Essex; VT15 Improvements (Post Office Square to 5-Corners), Essex Junction; VT15 Multiuse Path, Winooski, Colchester, Essex, and Essex Junction

### **B. HYBRID STRATEGY PACKAGE 1**

This package is defined by the following improvements: Redmond Road Connector and new bridge over the Winooski; connect Allen Martin Parkway to VT289; capacity improvements at Industrial Ave/Mountain View/VT 2A intersection; and signalization of Redmond Road/Mountain View intersection.

### **C. HYBRID STRATEGY PACKAGE 2a: INTERSECTION AND CORRIDOR CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS**

This package is defined by the following improvements:

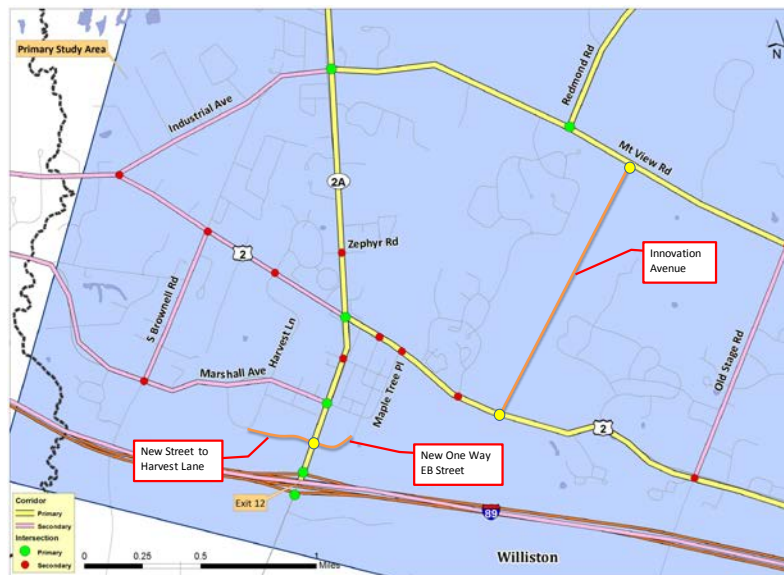
- Towers Rd / VT 128/ VT 15
- N. Williston Road/US 2/Oak Hill Road (roundabout suggested by RSG)
- N. Williston Road/VT117
- Industrial / Mountain View / VT2A
- VT2A/Marshall Avenue
- New northbound left-turn lane at Exit 12 (reconstruction of interchange)

Dawn Francis of GBIC/LCCC feels that upgrading all these intersections in all of these strategies destroys the experience for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists – and all because we are not building the Circ Highway.

**D. HYBRID STRATEGY PACKAGE 2b: NEW STREETS**

This package is defined by the following improvements:

- Add a new 2-way street connecting VT 2A to Harvest Lane (near the Fairfield Inn) - this improvement has a significant impact
- Add a new one-way eastbound street connecting VT 2A with the Maple Tree Place (behind Staples/Dick’s)
- Add Innovation Avenue connecting US 2 and Mountain View (utilizing the Circ ROW)



Dawn suggested that Innovation Avenue could be the new “hazardous materials route” for trucks. Michele doubted that the Town of Williston would be inclined to do so. Michele suggested that FHWA will not spend \$12-15 million on Innovation Avenue to serve 100 cars per hour especially considering the wetlands issues. Jeff noted that there will be growth at the IBM campus that will increase the number of vehicles using Innovation Avenue. Eleni responded that this will be accounted for in the 2035 modeling that will be completed soon.

**E. HYBRID STRATEGY PACKAGE 3**

This package includes rebuilding the VT2A Corridor from Exit 12 to the Winooski River Bridge, including the following capacity improvements:

- At VT 2A/Marshall Avenue/Maple Tree Place, add northbound through lane to Taft Corners (US2) and a second westbound through lane
- At Industrial Ave./Mountain View/VT2A, add second northbound through lane, eastbound second left-turn lane, and westbound left-turn lane
- At Exit 12, add a northbound left lane at northbound ramps
- From VT 2A/Industrial Avenue/Mountain View to the bridge, add left-turn lanes at all intersections
- Add the following new streets: connect Harvest Lane near Home Depot to VT 2A at the state police barracks; connect VT2A through state police barracks to the roundabout in Maple Tree Place

Amy Bell of VTrans asked for a clarification of the 2A improvements. Bob explained it includes a full reconstruction of Exit 12. Jeff asked if there are small tweaks that can be made to Exit 12 to improve it in the near-term. Michele explained that this study is a more high-level analysis; a scoping study will be much more detailed and include short-term fixes.

Dennis Lutz of Essex suggested the committee consider a “hybrid of hybrids” for a “new” strategy package. He’s concerned that we can fix individual intersections to improve capacity, but we’re not going to improve overall congestion in the area. If we are going to spend this much money and not improve congestion, are we back to the Circ being the best investment? Dawn agreed that we are significantly changing the character of the intersections, especially for pedestrians. Bob responded that Dennis is correct; we’ve been charged to design solutions that approach the Circ’s congestion impacts. Ken Robie of VTrans explained that this process will not do the same thing as the Circ; rather, he suggested we look for incremental system improvements.

Jeff suggested that if we do not improve congestion, people will move further out of the growth centers. Dawn suggested that moving forward with the bridge option doesn’t make sense. Michele explained that we committed to the towns, early in the process, to analyze the bridge.

Eleni suggested that we focus on the “hybrid of the hybrids” for further analysis. The group agreed that RSG and CCRPC staff should develop this new strategy package and complete the 2035 modeling. The HSP1 (Redmond Road Connector and new bridge) will also be modeled for 2035.

Michele suggested that RSG should also model Innovation Avenue for 2035 to ascertain how IBM growth impacts congestion. Dawn suggested Innovation Avenue should connect to the Interstate; Michele explained that the Selectboards did not agree to do that. Ken R. explained that the Circ EIS outlined the issues with the segment to the Interstate. This segment will not be built.

## **7) Summary of Modeling Results**

### ***A. Summary of Costs***

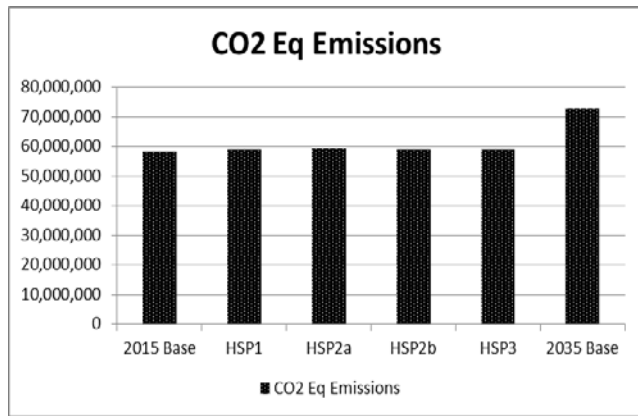
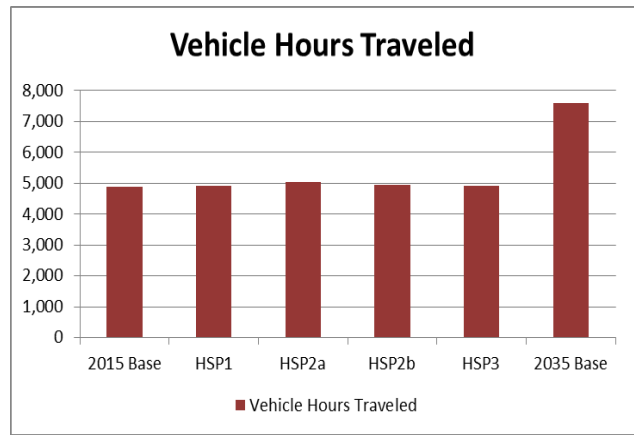
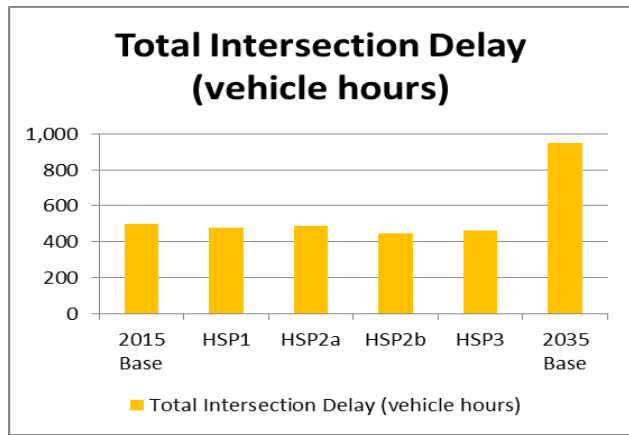
Hybrid Strategy Package 1: \$49-73 million

Hybrid Strategy Package 2a: \$24-39 million

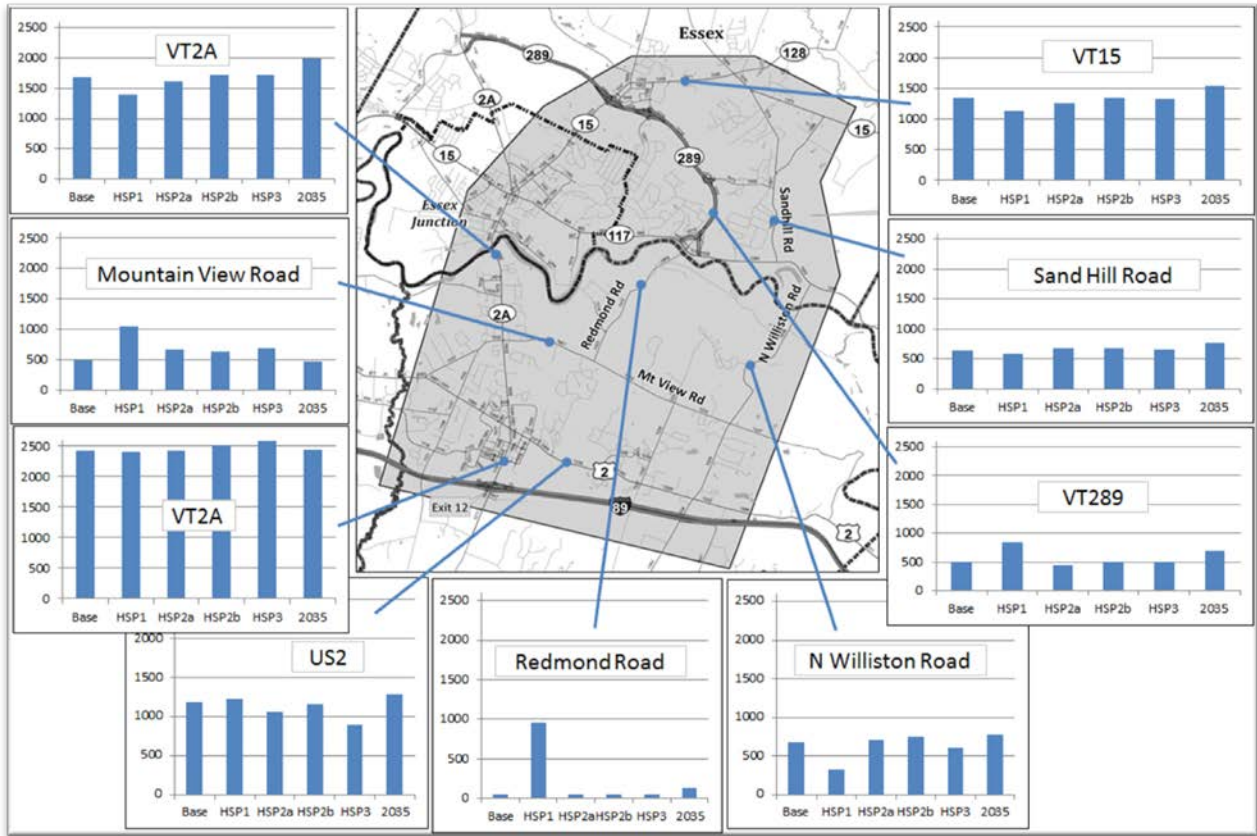
Hybrid Strategy Package 2a & 2b: \$49-63 million  
 Hybrid Strategy Package 3: \$32-43 million  
 Core Improvements: \$15-20 million (does not include grid streets cost)

Sandy asked how to evaluate the core improvements. Bob explained that they account for a 5 percent reduction in internal growth center trips; these improvements are not enough to meet our congestion goals. Jason asked if there was a metric for cost/benefit analysis across all the strategies.

**B. Summary of Performance Measures**



**Traffic Flows for 2035 Base Case**



## 8) Next Steps

- Based on capacity results to date, RSG and CCRPC staff will develop a New Hybrid Strategy Package for 2035 evaluation
- 2035 Evaluation for HSP1 (Redmond Road Connector and new bridge) and the New Hybrid Package
  - Iteration of 2035 modeling runs to provide more definition
  - Development of Performance Measures
  - Right-of-Way Impacts
  - Natural Resources Impacts and Permitting
  - Refinement of Cost Estimates and Timeline
- **Future Meetings**
  - Informational Presentation to Williston and Essex Selectboards scheduled for January 9, 2013 at 7:00PM
  - Public Meeting #2 scheduled for February 5, 2013 at 7:30PM
- **Development of Network Implementation Plan**
  - Development of the preferred strategy package which will include a comprehensive list of multimodal recommendations that support the Goals & Objectives

The committee will not meet prior to the January 9<sup>th</sup> Selectboard presentation. Bob and Eleni will send information out for committee review prior to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.