

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
2 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3 MINUTES
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5 DATE: Tuesday, December 1, 2020
6 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
7 PLACE: Meeting held remotely via Zoom
8

9 **Members Present**

10 Justin Rabidoux, South Burlington
11 Nicole Losch, Burlington
12 Amy Bell, VTrans
13 Matthew Langham, VTrans
14 James Marshal, VTrans District 5
15 Jonathon Weber, Local Motion
16 Josh Arneson, Richmond
17 Bob Henneberger, Seniors
18 Chris Damiani, GMT
19 Bruce Hoar, Williston
20 Jon Rauscher, Winooski
21 Barbara Elliott, Huntington
22 Dennis Lutz, Essex
23 Dean Pierce, Shelburne
24 Maria Rinaldi, People with Disabilities
25 Sandy Thibault, CATMA
26 Kirsten Jensen, Milton
27 Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg
28 Chris Jolly, FHWA
29 Seth Bowden, GBIC
30 Dean Block, Charlotte
31

Katherine Sonnicks, Jericho
Robin Pierce, Essex Junction
Mary Anne Michaels, Rail
Joss Besse, Bolton

32 **Staff**

Charlie Baker, Executive Director
Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager
Regina Mahony, Planning Program Manager
Bryan Davis, Senior Transportation Planner
Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner
Jason Charest, Senior Transportation Planning Engineer
Sai Sarepalli, Senior Transportation Planning Engineer
Marshall Distel, Transportation Planner

33 **Guests**

Chris Davis, Charlotte
Zoe Neaderland, VTrans
Dave Pelletier, VTrans
Chris Lamm, Cambridge Systematics
Brian Stewart, Cambridge Systematics
Andreas Aepli, Cambridge Systematics
Shawna Kitzman, FHI

34 1. Justin Rabidoux called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and Bryan Davis did a roll call for attendance.
35 A new agenda item requiring TAC action will be added to the agenda following the public comment
36 period.

37 **2. Consent Agenda**

38 BARBARA ELLIOTT MADE A MOTION THAT THE TAC APPROVE THE PROPOSED TIP
39 AMENDMENTS AS PRESENTED IN THE AGENDA ITEM MEMO, SECONDED BY NICOLE
40 LOSCH. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
41

42 **3. Approval of Minutes**

43 Justin asked for any changes, which there were none. BARBARA ELLIOTT MADE A MOTION TO
44 APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 2020, SECONDED BY BOB HENNEBERGER. THE
45 MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
46

47 **4. Public Comments**

48 None.
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50 **New Agenda Item: Proposed Functional Classification Change**

51 Jason Charest, CCRPC staff, reviewed the information provided to the TAC by email yesterday ([see](#)
52 [memo here](#)). At the request of VTrans, transportation planners statewide are reviewing proposed changes
53 to the roadway functional classification system. CCRPC staff updated Chittenden County roadway
54 classifications a few years ago with the TAC approving recommended changes. There is currently one

1 change being requested at this time: reclassify Vermont National Guard Road from VT 15 to the
2 Hegeman/Johnson Ave intersection from Local Road to Major Collector. It appears this was inadvertently
3 omitted when the Campus Connector (connecting Hegeman & Johnson Avenues) was constructed. The
4 Town of Colchester is in support of this change. It was asked if the change is needed because it is a
5 military facility or to receive more federal roadway funding. Bruce asked that if this is being changed
6 because it's a military facility, then should River Cover Road, which serves VT Air National Guard, also
7 be changed. Dennis noted that National Guard Road experiences more heavy truck traffic. Andrea asked
8 if federal funding is tied to the roadway classification. Chris Jolly, FHWA, said yes but since it is such a
9 short roadway section it won't bring in more federal funding, but it will be eligible for those federal
10 dollars. BRUCE HOAR MADE A MOTION THAT THE TAC APPROVE THE FUNCTIONAL
11 CLASSIFICATION CHANGE OF VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD ROAD FROM VT 15 TO
12 JOHNSON/HEGEMAN AVE FROM LOCAL ROAD TO MAJOR COLLECTOR. THE MOTION WAS
13 SECONDED BY AMY BELL AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.
14

15 **5. Statewide Rail and Freight Plans: Discussion of Draft Table of Rail Initiatives**

16 Zoe Neaderland and Dave Pelletier of VTrans were joined by Chris Lamm, Brian Stewart and Andreas
17 Aeppli from Cambridge Systematics, and Shawna Kitzman of FHI, to provide an update on the Statewide
18 Rail and Freight Plans. Zoe and Dave introduced the project, and Chris, Brian and Andreas shared a
19 presentation about the background, goals, process and update for these two separate but related plans.
20 Brian reviewed draft potential initiatives developed based on input from statewide regional planning
21 commissions, public outreach, online webmap tool, and data analysis. He also shared a screening tool
22 used in the process. This is one of the first opportunities to use this revised screening tool created through
23 the collaborative VPSP2 process (VTrans Project Selection & Prioritization Processes), and the team is
24 open to suggestions on how to improve the tool. Andrea asked at what point in the process input can be
25 provided on the environmental impacts of infrastructure maintenance. Brian noted that environmental
26 consideration was part of the process. Andrea noted that some local environmental guidance is stronger
27 than federal guidance, so how can we ensure there is oversight? Zoe responded that while this doesn't
28 directly answer the question, the planning team realizes that the movement and storage of hazardous
29 materials is a major concern, and the team is interested in how to strengthen partnerships and work
30 together to address all issues. She suggests an annual or other regular check in to work together, which the
31 group appreciated hearing. Andreas pointed out that some projects fall under categorical exclusion, but
32 others have more process and Vermont has more influence than the federal guidance. Charlie echoed
33 Andrea that the plan needs to include language about this aspect. Changes to rail bridges and other
34 infrastructure need to account for local needs. For example, when Bay Road bridge in Shelburne is
35 replaced it will ideally accommodate walkers and bikers on the roadway, who are currently forced to use
36 the narrow roadway. Similarly, the Railyard Enterprise Project recommended railway upgrades between
37 Burlington and Essex. Andreas commented that two issues with the line between Burlington and Essex is
38 that the rail needs to be upgraded to the 286,000 pound limit, and the bridge under North Avenue has low
39 clearance. It was pointed out that the Rail Advisory Council meets next week, and the screening will be
40 complete before then. Jonathon asked who does the screening and was informed that the consultant team
41 and VTrans staff will do it. Jonathon also asked why bike/ped/transit are in the same screening/scoring
42 category as freight, and the team screen-shared the VPSP2 screening tool and described how the eight
43 screening categories were created through that process. Zoe reiterated that the freight and rail plan
44 updates are an early trial of the VPSP2 tool, and suggestions to improve are welcome. Andreas described
45 the modeling approach that is looking 20 years ahead to 2040, and that resulted in 27 potential growth
46 scenarios. Andrea asked if the modeling accounted for potential impacts of electric vehicle on rail
47 demand. Andreas responded that there are two related questions to consider; one is the impact of fuel
48 switch to electrification which could have modest impact, and the other is the impact of autonomous
49 vehicles, which could be more significant. Maria asked about how the speed increase to 79 miles per hour
50 was decided, and if it could be the entire route length. Andreas responded that there are issues to address
51 in increasing the speed from 59 mph to 79 mph such as signaling needs, track geometry/curves, passage
52 through urban areas, grade crossings, etc. Track realignment could be possible in some areas but would
53 require funding and potentially easements. Zoe described that the health access screening as part of the

1 VPSP2 tool isn't a great fit for this project so all scenarios were given full point values. She reminded the
 2 TAC that the tool is used to support informed discussion rather than as a determinant of ranking. Charlie
 3 asked if there is anything in the plans that would prevent a commuter rail system concept, such as the one
 4 being pursued by AllEarth Rail. Zoe said nothing in the plan would prevent it, but it isn't a specific
 5 subject covered in the plan. Andrea asked if the modeling accounted for changes in freight demand due to
 6 increased e-commerce. Dave responded that it is being considered in the freight plan and more
 7 information will be available on the project website. The team noted there is a second virtual town hall on
 8 December 17 from 4:00 to 5:30 PM. More information about the plans is on these websites:

- 9 • Rail Plan: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/reports>
- 10 • Freight Plan: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/freight>

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 12 **6. TAC Roundtable: COVID-19 Impacts on This Construction Season**

13 Justin invited TAC members to share the impacts of COVID-19 on their construction season such as
 14 overall experience, critical challenges, found opportunities and more. Dennis said the state's grant
 15 program created some issues since many of Essex's projects were bid early with contracts ready for
 16 summer work using Class 2 funds. They ended up using local funds but it's still not clear how the state's
 17 project list might change since some of those projects were completed. He pointed out that budgeting for
 18 next year is underway but state funding levels are uncertain. Justin said South Burlington is budgeting
 19 conservatively so any grant funding would be extra. He also noted that the City is working on the \$20
 20 million City Hall project but the entire electrician team was lost due to personal choices outside of work
 21 hours, and a similar incident affected the fire department. He noted that there have been lower bid prices
 22 on projects. Andrea asked if any towns have contingency plans in case of COVID impacts to crews.
 23 Dennis replied that the Essex Town website posted their winter operations plan which uses a
 24 green/yellow/red color code system for the public to understand priorities and areas where there may be
 25 delays. They are separating staff to avoid contact, they issued guidance for hunting season, and updated
 26 their personnel policies. Nicole reported that Burlington will train interested people to get their
 27 commercial drivers license (CDL) to be snowplow operators, and will train people to operate sidewalk
 28 plows. Justin noted that South Burlington has more staff than equipment so they are able to call people
 29 into duty when needed. They've issued stricter guidance for personnel management in their shop, such as
 30 maintaining physical distance and staff separation, to keep the shop active and safe. Bruce said that
 31 Williston has split their crews with half being home and half at work to maintain physical distance, and
 32 they adapted Essex's winter operations plan to meet their needs. He noted that crews get low but they
 33 haven't experience COVID-like impacts. He's willing to help other communities but recognized that
 34 Williston is his first priority. He noted that mutual aid isn't a great option since plowing unfamiliar roads
 35 can have safety and infrastructure impacts. Sandy asked if there were any Green Mountain Transit
 36 updates, and Chris Damiani reported that 20-minute service will be returning to the Essex and Williston
 37 routes.

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 39 **7. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

40 See the project list on the back of the agenda. TAC members are encouraged to contact CCRPC staff with
 41 any questions.

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 43 **8. CCRPC Board Meeting Report**

44 In November the Board heard the FY20 Audit Report from Sullivan Powers, discussed Legislative
 45 Briefing alternatives, heard an update on CCRPC racial equity efforts, and were noticed that the FY22
 46 UPWP application would be released on November 20. Justin asked if there were any audit surprises,
 47 which there were none.

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 49 **9. Chairman's/Members' Items:**

- 50 • **FY22 UPWP program** materials posted at [https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/annual-work-plan-budget-finances/)
 51 [us/commission/annual-work-plan-budget-finances/](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/annual-work-plan-budget-finances/). UPWP requests are due on January 22 with
 52 adoption planned by the CCRPC Board in May 2021.
- 53 • December 2, 1-2:30 pm Vermont Local Roads Virtual Supervisory Roundtable on The Potential

- 1 Effects of COVID-19 on VT Municipal Operations. [Register here.](#)
2 • Eleni Churchill, CCRPC staff, reminded TAC members that the VTrans **Better Roads grant**
3 **program applications are due December 18, 2020.** CCRPC staff are available to help. For more
4 information visit <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/better-roads>.
5 • Eleni also noted that **Road Erosion Inventory (REI) data for non-MS4 towns** will be uploaded
6 to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation portal and asks that towns review the
7 data next week.

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9 The next TAC meeting is scheduled for January 5.

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11 The meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.

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13 Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis