

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
2 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
3 FINAL  
4  
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6 DATE: Wednesday, March 17, 2021

7 TIME: 6:00 PM

8 PLACE: REMOTE ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM MEETING VIDEO

9 PRESENT: Bolton: Sharon Murray Buel's Gore: Garret Mott  
10 Burlington: Andy Montroll Charlotte: Jim Donovan  
11 Colchester: Jacki Murphy Essex: Elaine Haney  
12 Essex: Jeff Carr (Alternate) Essex Junction: Dan Kerin  
13 Hinesburg: Michael Bissonette Huntington: Barbara Elliott  
14 Jericho: Catherine McMains Milton: Absent  
15 Richmond: Bard Hill St. George: Absent  
16 Shelburne: John Zicconi (6:32 PM) So. Burlington: Chris Shaw  
17 Underhill: Absent Westford: Absent  
18 Williston: Erik Wells Winooski: Michael O'Brien  
19 Cons/Env.: Absent VTrans: Amy Bell  
20 Bus/Ind: Absent GMT : Absent  
21 Agriculture: Absent Socio/Econ/Housing: Absent

22  
23 Others: Matthew Langham, VTrans Meghan O'Rourke, CCTV  
24 Kevin Marshia, VTrans Ben Mumma, University of Scranton  
25

26 Staff: Charlie Baker, Executive Director Regina Mahony, Planning Prgm Mgr.  
27 Eleni Churchill, Trans. Prgm Mgr. Amy Irvin Witham, Business Office Mgr.  
28 Marshall Distel, Trans. Planner Emma Vaughn, Communications Mgr.  
29 Bryan Davis, Senior Trans. Planner Jason Charest, Senior Trans. Planner  
30 Christine Forde, Senior Trans. Planer Sai Sarepalli, Senior Trans. Planner  
31 Dan Albrecht, Senior Planner  
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- 35 1. Call to order; Attendance; Changes to the Agenda. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by  
36 the Chair, Michael O'Brien.  
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38 2. Public Comment Period on Items NOT on the Agenda. There were none.  
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40 3. Action on Consent Agenda, MPO Business.  
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42 The consent agenda included the following requested TIP Amendments:

- 43 • Shelburne Street Roundabout, Burlington, Project HP085, Amendment FY21-18; Add \$1,094,354  
44 for preliminary engineering and \$3,112,613 for construction in FY21. The total project cost is  
45 \$12,426,967, a 51% increase. The reason for the increase is because the project requires large  
46 scale environmental investigations underground to locate, identify, and categorize,  
47 contaminated soils and groundwater.

- Champlain Parkway, Burlington, Project HC001A, Amendment FY21-19; Reduce the TIP amount in FY21 to \$4,206,967 to accommodate the Shelburne Roundabout amendment listed above; \$4,793,003 remains in this project for FY21, which is adequate to accommodate anticipated project expenses.

ANDY MONTROLL MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY DAN KERIN, TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY MPO MEMBERS.

4. Approve Minutes of the February 17, 2021 Board Meeting.

SHARON MURRAY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CATHERINE MCMAINS, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 17, 2021 BOARD MEETING MINUTES, WITH EDITS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Edit: pg 1 line 39: Update “*accepted*” to accept.
- Edit: pg 2 line 10: Update FY21 to FY22 in the reference to Federal Dollars.
- Edit: pg 3 line 26: Update the word ‘or’ to ‘in’ (“*in this phase of the I-89 Study*”).

5. Warn Public Hearing on FY22 UPWP and Budget for the May Meeting

Charlie noted the Executive Committee, the UPWP Committee, and CCRPC Staff recommends the Board warn for a Public Hearing at the May 2021 meeting for the draft FY22 UPWP and Budget.

JIM DONOVAN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GARRET MOTT, THAT THE BOARD WARN A PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE FY22 UPWP AND BUDGET AT THE MAY 2021 CCRPC BOARD MEETING. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Town of Westford Plan Approval and Confirmation

Regina said the Town of Westford has a fully updated town Plan for the next 8 years. She referred members to the memo included in the packet. The Town of Westford has requested that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (1) approve the 2021 Westford Town Plan, (2) confirm its planning process, and (3) grant a determination of energy compliance to the 2021 Westford Town Plan. The Plan was adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Westford on February 25, 2021. As described in the proposed resolution, the PAC has held the required hearing, reviewed the Plan requests, requested a few minor edits (which were incorporated into the Plan) and recommends Board approval at this time. Please note that municipal planning process confirmation, plan approval and determination of energy compliance decisions shall be made by majority vote of the commissioners representing municipalities, in accordance with the bylaws of the CCRPC and Title 24 V.S.A. § 4350(f).

GARRET MOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CATHERINE MCMAINS TO APPROVE THE 2021 WESTFORD TOWN PLAN, CONFIRM WESTFORD’S PLANNING PROCESS, AND GRANT AN AFFIRMATIVE DETERMINATION OF ENERGY COMPLIANCE TO THE 2021 WESTFORD TOWN PLAN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY MUNICIPAL MEMBERS.

7. Comments on Draft State Rail Plan

Charlie referred members to the Comments on Draft State Rail Plan memo included with the packet and introduced Marshall Distel. Marshall provided an overview of the Draft Vermont State Rail plan as released by VTTrans for public input. The Plan provides a framework for maintaining and enhancing the State’s freight and intercity passenger rail system. CCRPC staff reviewed the Plan and had a few comments on priority policy areas and requested clarifications on other areas of the Plan. In terms of priority, the CCRPC suggested moving the first three projects/initiatives listed below from the second to the first tier and the fourth project listed from the third to the second tier:

- Page #47: Burlington Railyard Enterprise Project (REP) should be elevated to the first priority set since this project was added to the proposed State Capital Program, FY22. Additionally, the note on table 6.1 should be updated to reflect the status of the REP and correct the statement that this project is seeking grant funding.
- Page #47: The Passenger Rail Station improvements should be broken out into individual projects, given the differing timeframes and priorities. Essex Junction improvements should be within the first priority set.
- Page #48: Publicize existing voluntary efforts of railroads and encouraging “freight as a good neighbor” should be moved from the second to the first priority set.
- Page #49: The Burlington to Essex track improvements and connecting the Ethan Allen Express with the Vermonter should be elevated to the second priority set. This connection is necessary to achieve the State’s Energy Plan goal of quadrupling Vermont-based passenger rail trips to 400,000 annual trips.

The requested clarifications include:

- Page #1: Even though we understand why commuter rail is not addressed in the State Rail Plan but included in the Public Transit Plan, it will be helpful to briefly describe the reasons for this.
- Page #21: More details are needed to explain Positive Train Control.
- Page #32: It will be important to reference training first responders with regard to hazardous materials being moved by rail.
- Page #34: For the performance measures listed, are there associated target years related to those not being met?
- Page #38: In table 6.1, connecting the *Ethan Allen Express* with the *Vermonter* should be assigned an ID#. Rather than highlighting this as a complicated issue, it would be beneficial to detail how this would connect Vermont’s eastern and western corridor intercity rail services that would help increase ridership.
- Page #40: In table 6.1, the initiative to explore transit-oriented development (TOD) could use more details. What does municipal support look like? RPCs should be added to as an involved party in these discussions.
- Page #50: The funding discussion could be more robust in terms of detailing opportunities to address the projected rail funding gap. There was a mention of innovative funding approaches in table 6.1, but no details were provided. It would be beneficial to reference the potential of public-private-partnerships.

Jim Donovan stated that the town of Charlotte also reviewed the Draft State Rail plan. They agree with the input from the CCRPC and have a few additional comments and edits to share regarding a concern for the storage of hazardous materials. Jim explained, since railyards are operating and governed under Federal Government regulations, the towns are limited in terms of what they can do about hazardous material storage. Although there is information detailing what to do if a disaster occurs, there is no information outlining disaster prevention measures. Given the extensive costs associated with a clean-up, there needs to be clear information provided on who is responsible for the associated costs; is it the State of Vermont or the Federal Government? Jim provided the following suggested edits:

- 1 • In relation to overall safety concerns, to initiate efforts to improve oversight and regulation of
- 2 hazardous material storage in rail cars outside of rail yards at federal and state levels.
- 3 • Page #32: Regarding first responders, clarify which entities are ultimately responsible for
- 4 bearing costs associated with a hazardous material spill or explosion response.

5  
6 Garret said he completely agrees with Jim, that it makes way more sense to set measures that will  
7 prevent a disaster from occurring. He feels rail service should be expanded and encouraged as it is  
8 more efficient than trucking. He would also like to see the State Rail Plan incorporate and work  
9 hand in hand with the Public Transit Rail plan in order that everything pertaining to rail is in the  
10 same place.

11  
12 JIM DONOVAN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JACKI MURPHY, TO APPROVE THE COMMENTS AND  
13 SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE DRAFT STATE RAIL PLAN. MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION  
14 FROM AMY BELL.

15  
16 Jeff said he feels the state is making tremendous strides in laying out the groundwork and creating  
17 opportunities for railways and we appreciate the advancements that have been made.

18  
19 **John Zicconi joined the meeting at 6:32 PM. He was not present previously, due to a potential**  
20 **conflict of interest regarding the State Rail Plan discussion.**

21  
22 8. VPSP2 Process and Initial Review of Potential FY23 Transportation Projects

23 Charlie introduced Kevin Marshia, Director of Asset Management at VTrans. Charlie said Christine  
24 Forde has been working with VTrans staff on the prioritization process. Kevin shared a PowerPoint  
25 presentation on project prioritization with members, VTrans Project Selection and Project  
26 Prioritization Process. He explained this process was designed to help create an organized, efficient,  
27 and streamlined system to improve on the partnerships and lines of communication between  
28 VTrans, Vermont Legislature and the Regional Planning Commissions. The vision statement reads,  
29 *“Develop a performance-based, data driven project selection and prioritization framework that*  
30 *maximizes the ‘transportation value’ delivered to Vermont taxpayers”*

31  
32 Project objectives include the following:

- 33 • Identify and utilize criteria that provide “transportation value” within potential and planned
- 34 VTrans projects.
- 35 • Develop a mechanism for RPC and communities to provide input in the selection and
- 36 prioritization of transportation projects.
- 37 • Provide a defined, consistent, and transparent process for selecting and prioritizing the projects
- 38 that ultimately make up VTrans Capital Program.

39  
40 Stakeholder workshops were held to assess the current process and develop evaluation criteria.  
41 Participants in the workshops included VTrans, RPC’s, state agencies (VDH, ANR, ACCD and VEM),  
42 special interest groups (VLCT, VCIL, AARP and AAA), and modal interest groups (Rail Council, Rail  
43 Operators, Bike/Ped Groups, Transit providers, and the Vermont Truck and Bus Association).

44  
45 The following five modes of transportation were factored into the process:

- 46 • Highway
- 47 • Rail

- 1 • Walking Trails and Paths
- 2 • Transit
- 3 • Aviation
- 4

5 The following eight criteria and corresponding maximum scores were developed:

- 6 • Safety = 20 points
- 7 • Asset Condition = 20 points
- 8 • Mobility/Connectivity = 15 points
- 9 • Community = 10 points
- 10 • Economic Access = 10 points
- 11 • Environment = 10 points
- 12 • Resiliency = 10 points
- 13 • Health Access = 5 points
- 14

15 The Highway Mode Project selection is set as a two-year pilot; in year one (2021) paving, roadway,  
16 traffic, and safety programs will be addressed. In year two (2022) bridge programs will be  
17 addressed. The process addresses asset driven and regionally driven projects. There is a nine-step  
18 process to identify potential projects. Grant programs, Rail, Aviation, Public Transit are under  
19 development. The outline for the project selection process steps and associated timeframes are as  
20 follows:

- 21
- 22 1. VTrans develops programmatic budgets, September 1, to October 31.
- 23 2. VTrans performs network level analysis to identify list of potential projects and develops  
24 preliminary transportation value for the five VPSP2 criteria, November 1, to February 28.
- 25 3. VTrans transmits list of Asset Driven potential projects and associated transportation value  
26 to RPC, March 1.
- 27 4. RPC to provide transportation value scoring for three VPSP2 criteria for list of Asset Driven  
28 potential projects, March 1 to May 31.
- 29 5. RPC to identify regionally driven potential projects and works with VTrans to calculate  
30 preliminary values for the projects, March 1 to May 31.
- 31 6. RPC's transmit list of asset and regionally driven potential projects and associated values to  
32 VTrans June 1.
- 33 7. VTrans compiles all RPC input and value and identifies list of potential projects  
34 recommended for inclusion in the Capital Program, June 1 to July 31.
- 35 8. VTrans sends recommended projects to RPC for review, comment and response, August 1 to  
36 September 30.
- 37 9. VTrans finalizes the list of potential projects that will become projects to be included in the  
38 Capital Program.
- 39

40 Jeff asked, in developing the final project rating, how we can ensure the CCRPC staff capabilities are  
41 being fully utilized? Kevin explained VTrans relies on the CCRPC staff and, together, have a very good  
42 working relationship with the RPC. Charlie thanked Kevin for his presentation and reminded  
43 everyone we are in the first year of a pilot. Charlie said this is a new level of transparency and we  
44 want to make sure the board is aware of how the process looks. We will want to review the list of  
45 projects to see how they rank and score. Over the next few months, the Transportation Advisory  
46 Committee (TAC) will work on the regionally driven project list. We expect there will need to be  
47 some modifications in the overall process. The issue of equity has come up in the legislature, and

1 we hope we can work out the details over the next couple of years. This is the first opportunity we  
2 have had to see how to move a project into the Capital Program. Charlie thanked VTrans for  
3 extending this opportunity to us. He explained some of our criteria fall outside of the 8 listed and  
4 many of our projects should rank very well in VPSP2. Christine has a list of eligible, potential  
5 projects that will be going through with the TAC. Sharon asked to have more details on the criteria;  
6 how do the policies we are working with fit into the criteria? Charlie explained, at this stage, we are  
7 prioritizing the problems and needs rather than a project, since things are not fully designed, and we  
8 are usually a step ahead since we have completed scoping studies. Members discussed and agreed  
9 there will be a lot to learn as we move through the pilot.

10  
11 9. Equity Leadership Team, Member appointments

12 Mike said we have several members interested in volunteering for the Equity Leadership Team and  
13 asked Charlie to provide a brief overview to members. Charlie explained one of the goals in working  
14 with our equity consultant, Creative Discourse, is to establish an internal CCRPC Equity Leadership  
15 Team to lead the work. This team will consist of five to seven people, made up of three to four  
16 Board members, two CCRPC staff (Bryan and Emma) and one person from the Creative Discourse  
17 team. We would like to see one Executive Committee member and three more Board members.  
18 Mike said current volunteers are himself, Catherine McMains, Justin Rabidoux Don Meals, Jacki  
19 Murphy, and Elaine Haney. Mike thanked the volunteers and asked if there is anyone else who is  
20 interested, please let him know.

21  
22 10. Charge to Board Development Committee for FY22 Nominations

23 Andy Montroll charged the Board Development Committee with developing a slate of officers for  
24 FY22. Andy asked anyone who is interested in serving on the executive committee, please contact  
25 him or Charlie before our May 2021 board meeting. The nominations will need to be formalized  
26 before the June 2021 board meeting.

27  
28 11. Chair/Executive Director Report

- 29
- 30 a) UPWP Update Charlie feels the FY22 UPWP and Budget is in good shape. We have sorted out  
31 the staff hours and continue working to refine a few projects with towns. Overall, it looks great.  
32 We were able to accommodate almost everything proposed. There is a UPWP Committee  
33 Meeting next week.
- 34
- 35 b) ECOS Annual Report Charlie said there is an updated version that should be ready before the  
36 April Board meeting.
- 37
- 38 c) I-89 Board Workshop Charlie said members suggested having a discussion on the specifics of  
39 metrics and scoring and he is wondering who is interested in participating in an I-89 Workshop?  
40 Various members, including Jeff, Jim, Sharon, Mike, and Chris, expressed interest.
- 41
- 42 d) Legislative Update Charlie stated we are currently in the middle of the legislative session. With  
43 so much going on, it can be hard to follow, and he appreciates the VLCT and VPA summaries. A  
44 couple of interesting items are with the Cannabis Bill; under current law municipalities need to  
45 opt in for a retail establishment to open. The proposed bill (S.25) states if the municipality does  
46 not specifically vote "no" by March of 2023, the town would need to allow a retail establishment  
47 to operate. This is not yet a law, it is still a bill that is being discussed, but this is a significant  
48 change in the approach. Charlie said he is not sure if we need to weigh in on this, but he wants

1 to make sure our towns are aware. Charlie said the RPC's have requested a 20% increase in the  
2 Regional Planning Grant. Since there has not been an increase to program funding since 2002,  
3 there is some support for this, and it is early to know if it will be in the approved budget. Charlie  
4 explained Senator Sirotkin continues to work on the Housing Bill that would help incentivize  
5 towns to update zoning to encourage housing in smart growth locations. Additionally, the  
6 Rental House Registry Bill is moving forward. This would take some responsibilities away from  
7 Town Health Officers and shift the work of a statewide inspection system to the Division of Fire  
8 Safety. Charlie said the Project Based Tax Incremental Funding (TIF) bill may not move forward,  
9 which would likely affect some of our towns, like Westford as they are trying to get community  
10 wastewater to the village. There may be low or no interest loan dollars available, but Charlie is  
11 not sure how this will look. There are federal funds available from the CARES Act and the  
12 American Rescue Plan that just passed in congress, approximately \$197 Million dollars will be  
13 distributed across Municipalities; this works out to around \$300 per resident. This will be  
14 distributed in two separate phases. There will be specific purposes to address, such as a deficit  
15 caused by COVID to cover emergency response efforts. There is a line that allows for necessary  
16 investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. Discussions have been taking place  
17 on how RPC's can help towns follow the compliance rules on how these funds can be spent.  
18 Charlie asked members to let him know if they have additional questions. He said the first  
19 round of funds will need to be distributed within the next 90 days, and then the second round  
20 within 9-12 months. Once distributed, the money must be spent by December 2024. Catherine  
21 asked about Broadband coverage and gaps. Charlie said we currently have a pretty good map  
22 that shows where Broadband works and where it does not, and we have better data about the  
23 speed of internet in different locations. Jeff said VPS did a study with Matt Dunn's group in how  
24 to respond to COVID which include how to establish statewide broadband coverage. Charlie  
25 said he, Regina, and Pam, have information on this, and they are starting to work with public  
26 providers to figure out how the funds can be used to fill in some of these gaps. There will also  
27 be some state rescue plan dollars available. Andy stated he is a good resource for this as well  
28 and is happy to talk more about this. Jim asked if it is possible to share the detailed information  
29 on the broadband coverage with towns, especially where the gaps are. Charlie will follow up on  
30 this.

31  
32 12. Committee/Liaison Activities & Reports. Mike noted that minutes for our committees were included  
33 as links as well as documents within the packet (Executive/Finance Committee, TAC, PAC, MS4 Sub-  
34 Committee and CWAC).

35  
36 13. Future Agenda Topics. Charlie said the Board Development Committee will present a slate of  
37 officers, we will look at the Draft FY22 UPWP and Budget, and Garret had asked for information on  
38 Electric Vehicles and gas tax revenue, so we will work to schedule guest speakers on that topic.  
39 Andy asked Charlie to schedule a meeting for members of the Board Development Committee.  
40 Charlie also stated we will adopt the FY22 UPWP and Budget in May

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42 14. Members' Items, Other business. There were none.

43  
44 15. Adjournment. ANDY MONTROL MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GARRET MOTT, TO ADJOURN THE  
45 CCRPC MARCH BOARD MEETING AT 7:34 PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

46  
47 Respectfully submitted,  
48 Amy Irvin Witham