1 2 3 4	CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES DRAFT							
5 6	DATE: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 TIME: 6:00 PM							
7		PLACE: REMOTE ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM MEETING VIDEO						
		_	_		_	Carrot Mott		
8	PK	ESENT:	Bolton:	Sharon Murray	Buel's Gore:	Garret Mott		
9			Burlington:	Andy Montroll	Charlotte:	Jim Donovan		
10			Colchester:	Jacki Murphy	Essex:	Jeff Carr		
11			Essex Junction:		Hinesburg:	Michael Bissonette		
12			Huntington:	Barbara Elliott	Jericho:	Catherine McMains		
13			Jericho:	Wayne Howe				
14			Milton:	Tony Micklus	Richmond:	Bard Hill		
15			St. George:	Absent	Shelburne:	Absent		
16			So. Burlington:	Chris Shaw	Underhill:	Absent		
17			Westford:	Absent	Williston:	Absent		
18			Winooski:	Michael O'Brien	Cons/Env.:	Absent		
19			VTrans:	Amy Bell	Bus/Ind:	Absent		
20			GMT:	Absent	Agriculture:	Absent		
21			Socio/Econ/Hou	using: Justin Dextradeur				
22								
23	Others:		Kevin Harms, CCTV		Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte			
24			Matthew Langham, VTrans					
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			Christine Forde	, Senior Trans. Planer	Forest Cohen, S	Senior Business Mgr.		
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30	1.	Call to orde	er; Attendance; C	Changes to the Agenda.				
31	The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by the Chair, Michael O'Brien. Jin				Jim Donovan noted that			
32	he has a question regarding the Consent Agenda.							
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34	2.	2. Public Comment Period on Items NOT on the Agenda. There were none.						
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36	3.	. Action on Consent Agenda, MPO Business.						
37		Jim asked to take the TIP amendments off of the consent agenda. He questioned if there was a						
38		recommendation from the TAC to approve the TIP amendments. Christine clarified the TAC did						
39		recommend that the Board approve the TIP amendments. Jim said he understood and thanked her						
40		for the clarification. The consent agenda included the following requested FY21 TIP Amendments:						
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42		• Lak	e Street Sidewal	k and Stormwater Management	, Burlington; Pro	ject BP114, Amendment		
43		FY21-52. Add a new Transportation Alternatives award for a sidewalk on Lake Street in						
44		Burlington. Add \$60,988 for preliminary engineering in FY21.						
45		VT15 Multiuse Path, Colchester-Essex; Project BP069, Amendment FY21-53. Advance						
46		\$493,737 in Federal Funds from FY22 to FY21. The project is progressing faster than was						

programmed in the TIP. Funds are available within the fiscal constraint

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 Alder Brook culvert (VR2) on VT117, Essex; Project BR048, Amendment FY21-54. Advance \$769,600 in Federal Funds from FY22 to FY21. The project is progressing faster than was programmed in the TIP. Funds are available within the fiscal constraint.

JIM DONOVAN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JEFF CARR, TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY MPO MEMBERS.

4. Approve Minutes of the May 19, 2021 Board Meeting.

JIM DONOVAN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GARRET MOTT TO APPROVE THE MAY 19, 2021 BOARD MEETING MINUTES, WITH EDITS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

• Edit: Page 6, change 'we' to 'CCRPC staff'.

• Clarification: Jeff stated he was the representative for Essex and 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate for Essex Jct.

5. <u>Election of Officers and Executive Committee for FY22</u>

Andy Montroll stated the Board Development Committee met on April 7, 2021 and recommended the following slate of officers for FY22.

- Catherine McMains, Chair
- Chris Shaw, Vice-Chair
- John Zicconi, Secretary/Treasurer
- Jacki Murphy, At-large for Towns over 5,000
- Bard Hill, At-large for Towns under 5,000
- Mike O'Brien, Immediate Past Chair

Mike opened the meeting for any additional nominations from the floor. There were none. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY ANDY MONTROLL TO CLOSE THE REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

BARBARA ELLIOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GARRET MOTT, TO ELECT THE SLATE OF OFFICERS AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 6. FY22 Calendar of Meeting dates

Charlie referred members to the Memo with the proposed FY22 schedule of meetings for the Commission and Committees covering July 2021 through June 2022.

BARBARA ELLIOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY GARRET MOTT, TO APPROVE THE FY22 MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Warn Public Hearing for the FY22-25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - MPO Business Christine Forde referred members to the memo and the Transportation Improvement Program, FY2022-2025 draft document included with the agenda packet. She reminded everyone this agenda item is to publicly warn a public hearing in July. She explained the TIP is a prioritized, fiscally constrained, multi-year list of federally funded multimodal transportation projects and operations within the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission region. As a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the CCRPC must prepare a TIP that covers at least a 4-year period.

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**Economic Access** 

Environmental

It is typically updated every year in coordination with the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), and the Green Mountain Transit (GMT). The TIP lists federal funding amounts in the federal fiscal year when they are expected to be needed. Projects must be listed in the TIP to spend federal transportation funds. The TIP represents the intent to construct or implement a specific project and the anticipated flow of federal funds. Funds correspond to the following project development phases:

- Scoping a process that develops safe and effective alternatives based on documented rational that meet the stated purpose and need while minimizing environmental impacts
- Preliminary Engineering detailed design of the preferred alternative
- Right-of-Way process of determining if land rights are needed for construction and negotiation of appropriate compensation
- Construction

Christine said the FY22-25 total TIP Funding Levels are a total of \$254.7 Million dollars, comprised of federal funds each year (and does not include Burlington International Airport projects) as follows:

- FY2022 \$57.8 Million
- FY2023 \$105.2 Million
- FY2024 \$66 Million
- FY2025 \$25.7 Million

She reviewed the TIP projects by use categories as well as the CIRC Alternatives projects. Christine noted the TAC and CCRPC staff recommends the Board warn a public hearing for the July 21, 2021, Board Meeting on the FY2022-2025 TIP.

JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY DAN KERIN, TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD WARN AND HOLD THE PUBLIC HEARING AT THE JULY 21, 2021, BOARD MEETING. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 8. VPSP2 FY23 Transportation Project Priorities

Christine referred members to the VPSP2 documents included with the packet; VPSP2 Memo, VPSP2 Transportation Values Scores for Chittenden County Projects, and the VPSP2 Project Input Data Workbook Chart. She began with a PowerPoint presentation and stated the vision of the VSPS2:

"Develop a performance-based, data driven project selection and prioritization framework that maximizes the transportation value delivered to Vermont taxpayers."

The documents detail how VTrans and RPC partners have been working collaboratively to revamp the annual project prioritization process to develop a performance-based, data driven project selection and prioritization framework that maximizes the transportation value delivered to Vermont taxpayers as currently measured by eight criteria identified by stakeholders as important:

- Safety
- Asset Condition •
- Mobility & Connectivity

- Resiliency
  - Regional
  - Health Access

VPSP2 scores were developed cooperatively between VTrans and RPCs using an Excel workbook developed for this process. Of the criteria, VTrans scores five (safety, asset condition, economic access, resiliency, environment), and RPCs score three (connectivity, regional, and health access). RPCs can view and provide comments on the VTrans scores.

Christine explained the timeline; year one of this pilot will consider projects in the categories of Roadway, Traffic & Safety, and Paving. Year 2 will consider bridge programs. These will continue to be reviewed in an every other year cycle going forward. The Chittenden County projects are identified through the VTrans asset management systems (Asset Driven Projects) or through our CCRPC planning processes (Regionally Driven Projects). The Regionally Driven Projects were endorsed by the TAC. The Asset Driven and Regionally Driven projects is listed in the VPSP2 Transportation Values table. Asset Driven paving and concrete slab removal projects are listed separately because of their specific and limited scope. All Asset Driven and Regionally Driven projects identified statewide will be sorted by VPSP2 Transportation Values and prioritized by VTrans for input into the FY23-26 Capital Program, most likely in the last couple of years of the program. CCRPC will have an opportunity to review and comment on that list in September or October.

In addition to submitting transportation value scores, CCRPC may also submit comments on the scoring methodology or results. The TAC provided one comment to be submitted to VTrans on the Connectivity criterion which scores 2 points for enhancing or improving connectivity for bicyclists/pedestrians and an additional 2 points for being on a high priority bike corridor. High priority bike corridor is defined as a corridor identified in the VTrans Bicycle Corridor Priority Map. The TAC requested that VTrans expand the definition of High Priority Bike Corridor to include Regionally Significant Corridors as identified in a Regional Plan. The 2021 VTrans VPSP2 Preliminary Transportation Values for CCRPC Projects Workbook, for reference, the workbook inputs for all projects can be found <a href="here">here</a>.

The CCRPC staff also examined ways to add equity into this process. Eleni explained equity is not currently part of the VPSP2 criteria; however, it is necessary to ensure public funds are being allocated to projects that minimize burdens and maximize benefits, particularly to traditionally underserved populations. In the last few weeks, the staff created a pilot equity screening process to better understand how equity can be applied to and affect the VPSP2 project ranking process. A more complete description of the pilot equity screening process, available <a href="here">here</a> in the May 4, agenda item 7, TAC Memo. In addition, staff asked for assistance in this pilot equity screen from Mark Hughes of Vermont Racial Equity Association, his report is available <a href="here">here</a>.

Eleni reminded everyone we are only at the very beginning stages of developing a process to address equity within the VPSP2, and there is much room for improvement. VTrans and the Legislature also included a provision in the T-bill to develop recommendations for a transportation equity framework and report back to the Legislature by December 15, 2021. CCRPC is partnering with VTrans and contributing funding to this study. We believe that our preliminary research and

work into this issue will serve as a starting point for VTrans and the RPCs in developing recommendations in the future.

Charlie stated not all the highest scoring projects in our urban areas were selected by the TAC and there was a decision to apply a geographic equity distribution in addition to the other criteria for projects in our smaller towns/rural areas. Chris asked for an example of Resiliency. Christine explained the resiliency comes from a statewide map detailing flood-prone and vulnerable areas. Every transportation segment in the state has a score. She explained it depends on the characteristics of the surrounding area, for example if there is a small culvert in an area that has flooding, it is a score of the area where it is located.

Jeff requested we hold a Board development workshop session on scoring and how to best include diversity. He feels it is important for the Board to have a deeper understanding of the scoring process. He suggested we invite our consultant, Creative Discourse to participate in this. Members agreed. Christine said she also has slides that show how the scores are developed. She and Eleni will set up a workshop to provide information on how scores were developed. Catherine suggested holding two workshops; one that provides an overview on the development of scores and a second that on how equity is woven into the process. Charlie agreed. He explained the Vermont Legislature and VTrans have committed to developing and adding an equity component and VTrans is working with the CCRPC for input. He said holding the workshops in October or November will work well. Dan Kerin said, in terms of scoring and equity, it is easy to draw up metrics to gauge traffic and pedestrians, but as far as the racial equity impact, he feels it is difficult to define with scores. Charlie acknowledged that is important that the equity criteria be quantifiable with data.

Christine stated the recommendation to the Board from the TAC and CCRPC Staff as follows:

 Accept the VPSP2 Transportation Values as presented in the attached table and submit them to VTrans for their use.

• Submit the following TAC comment to VTrans – Expand the definition of High Priority Bike Corridor to include Regionally Significant Corridors as identified in a Regional Plan.

• Submit our preliminary work on equity (research on best practices, our preliminary equity screening process, and Vermont Racial Equity Association report) to VTrans.

Submit any additional Board comments on the VPSP2 methodology or scores.

THE VPSP2 ITEMS AS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Jim asked if the paving is a separate category? Christine explained the grouping consists of Paving, Roadway, and Traffic and Safety. She explained paving is on its own and slab removal is combined with roadway projects. She said this is a bit of a gray area as far as what defines one or the other, but the list we submit to VTrans will be divided into three separate categories. Jim thanked her for the explanation.

JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JIM DONOVAN, TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD ACCEPT

# 9. Draft VELCO Plan Comments

Regina reminded members of the presentation they saw on the VELCO Long Range Transmission draft plan at the May Board meeting. She referred members to the memo and comment letter included with the packet. She said after the VELCO presentation, the Board asked CCRPC staff to follow up on the following items:

How will the outcomes influence our energy plan update?

Regarding the impact on our plan, CCRPC staff anticipate several state-wide planning efforts influencing the energy plan component of the 2023 ECOS Plan update. Factors include the transmission system challenges identified in VELCO's plan, the update to the State Comprehensive Energy Plan (currently underway), updates to the regional and local energy planning criteria (currently underway), and potential Climate Council impacts. It is too soon to say how each of these will influence our Plan update, but as it currently stands, we hope to not change the overall policy direction of the existing plan which supports the state's renewable generation goal (which is now in statute).

- How might the outcomes change our Section 248 review process?
   We do not anticipate any impact on our current Section 248 review process. We already factor in a suitability policy as written in the current ECOS Plan: "Locate energy generation proximate to existing distribution and transmission infrastructure with adequate capacity and near areas with high electric load." We will not change our Section 248 review process until after we update our Plan, if needed.
- Whether the CCRPC should submit comments to VELCO?

  Regarding providing comments to VELCO, it seems prudent to document CCRPC's concerns on the Long-Range Transmission Plan. While many of CCRPC's specific concerns are out of VELCO's jurisdiction, there needs to be a more complete and comprehensive approach to planning so that the energy goals can be met, and particularly the renewable generation goal. Staff prepared the attached draft comments for Board consideration. The Executive Committee reviewed the letter at the June meeting and their edits have been incorporated.

Regina noted the Executive Committee and CCRPC staff recommends the Board submit the comment letter with the following points:

- 1. CCRPC supports the plan's recommendation to focus on increased electric efficiency and non-transmission alternatives to avoid negative impacts on electric transmission reliability in the short-term.
- 2. CCRPC believes that existing law (30 V.S.A. 218c and PUC Docket 7081) does not sufficiently enable VELCO with the authority needed to effectively plan for grid modernization that meets State, regional, and local energy goals. The following two limitations are especially problematic from our perspective:
  - a. CCRPC understands the requirement that VELCO conduct least-cost integrated planning and seek non-transmission alternatives to reliability issues. However, CCRPC observes that the findings of the 2021 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan clearly indicate that it will be extremely difficult for the State of Vermont to achieve the goals of the State Comprehensive Energy Plan, and for municipalities and regional planning commissions to achieve the goals of our enhanced energy plans (24 V.S.A. 4352) through only non-transmission alternatives. Additional transmission infrastructure will be needed, particularly in northern Vermont, to ensure that each geographic region of the State is able to contribute to our future renewable energy goals.
  - b. CCRPC understands that VELCO operates within a federally regulated open wholesale market which prohibits VELCO, and/or the State of Vermont, from levying specific fees for transmission upgrades. This limitation will constrain possible locations for new

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distributed generation facilities because it creates a system of reacting to grid congestion instead of planning for sufficient transmission capacity. It puts financial burden on the "last facility in," and/or the ratepayers, in circumstances when transmission upgrades are needed to accommodate additional distributed generation. This is inequitable and will stifle long-term renewable energy goals due to inadequate financial planning for transmission system upgrades. CCRPC recommends that VELCO establish a "next steps" section of the Long-range Transmission Plan to include work with all necessary partners to identify and plan for transmission upgrades to ensure the state meets the future energy goals, and identification of best locations for storage near distributed generation. Further, CCRPC supports any future effort by VELCO, and other transmission utilities in New England, to work with Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC), ISO-NE and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on the issue of levying fees, or other equitable and proactive methods, to pay for planned transmission system upgrades.

3. CCRPC also recommends a summary of the findings, and an action agenda with specific next steps and identification of responsible entities, for a clearer and more concise message to all stakeholders. This could be useful if transmission upgrade funding opportunities become available from any available or future State or federal funding.

Garret said he appreciates all the work that was put into crafting the letter. Although the points raised were brought up, he worries the message is not strong enough. He feels there is not enough future planning and still many goals that need to be met. Regina agreed, but explained VELCO is not necessarily the responsible party. Garret and members asked who is responsible, if VELCO is not? Regina explained there are various entities; that some of the responsibility falls within the Public Utilities Commission and rulemaking, and there may be some statues that need to be revised or changed. Jeff said VELCO (and other entities like GMP and VEC) follow the State of Vermont's 5-year energy plan, which is currently being updated. He feels this is a very important consideration since the timing of the State Energy Plan update allows an opportunity for integration between these parties. Sharon said this is tied to ISO New England as well, so it goes beyond VT.

Bard asked about the letter content. He thinks we could frame the letter in a way that does not necessarily place blame, but still makes a strong case that energy planning is not being adequately addressed by VELCO and others. Charlie said the comprehensive energy plan is in process currently. Regina advised members we are hosting the Central Vermont Energy Planning Forum on June 28, 2021, from 6PM to 9PM to provide feedback on the State Comprehensive Energy Plan process.

Garret asked if the letter will be modified or sent in as it is? Regina explained we can make the point a bit stronger, but she is not sure how to work Jeff's concerns in. Jeff said maybe we can add an additional comment to remind VELCO there needs to be a broader view and to be willing to consider acting as a conduit.

Bard said the hydropower generation to our north that we rely on has impacts on the first native people.

GARRET MOTT MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JIM DONOVAN, THAT THE BOARD SUBMIT THE COMMENT LETTER TO VELCO WITH MODIFICATIONS AS DISCUSSED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

## 10. Chair/Executive Director Report

Mike and Charlie reminded members this was Jim Donovan's last Board meeting. Mike thanked Jim for his years of service and commitment to our communities. Jim explained he decided not to seek reappointment and wanted to thank all Commission members for making our communities the best they can be. He also added that the CCRPC staff is a group of the most talented individuals around. He thanked the Town of Charlotte and mentioned the importance of the late Marty Illick' work. Jim said Dana Haney will be the new Charlotte commissioner and Deirdre Holmes (who was present at the meeting) was the new Alternate. Mike welcomed Deidre and asked her to introduce herself. Deirdre said she has lived in Charlotte for the past 15 years and has served on the town's energy committee. She is very excited to be involved at the regional level. Charlie thanked Mike, welcomed Deirdre, and thanked Jim for all of his contributions.

## a) <u>I-89 Study Up</u>date.

Charlie said we have entered a contract with RSG to provide a strategic modeling analysis. This will help dive down deeper and explore various ways to reduce traffic demand. More information to come this fall.

## b) Equity Leadership Team.

Charlie told members they will soon receive an e-mail with a request to sign up and participate in one of two racial equity interview sessions. The sessions will be led by Dr. Nadia Mitchell from Creative Discourse.

## c) CEDS Update

Charlie said the CCRPC is working with three other RPC's (Addison, Rutland, and Central VT) on a combined Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) called the West Central Vermont CEDS. This will help update the 2023 ECOS Plan and open up the possibility of becoming an Economic Development District which could potentially provide more consistent EDA funding to the region.

### d) Comprehensive Energy Plan Update

Charlie referred members to the flyer announcement included in the packet. As Regina previously mentioned, the Central Vermont Energy Planning Forum will be held on June 28, from 6-9pm.

e) <u>Legislative Update</u>. Charlie explained the impacts of the Legislative session were mostly financial and there are expectations for additional work to help comply with all of the demands. \$75,000 was approved in additional regional planning grant funds for each RPC, to be spent over a period of the next three years. There is \$12,000 to \$13,000 in funding to be used to assist municipalities with the ARPA Funding. There was \$1 million in the budget for RPCs to support towns in implementing their energy plans. One year is firmly committed, with intent to extend after that as well. CCRPC's share of this energy plan implementation funding is about \$120,000 for FY22. This will equate to a full-time staff person supporting energy committees around Chittenden County. A job posting will come out soon. There was also \$1 million in Brownfield assessment funding passed for RPCs of which we should receive about \$100,000.

Charlie said there are also statewide investments in broadband and energy. Regina explained we are reaching out to the State to look at our broadband options in Chittenden County. There are approximately 2,000 households that are underserved. We will likely call a meeting together

to talk through the options for serving these pockets of underserved households. From these conversations CCRPC hopes to have a better handle on what specifically we can do to help. Charlie mentioned that the state has decided to issue their broadband funds to small internet providers and Communications Union Districts. We do not have a Communications Union District, but our surrounding regions do. We may need to develop one here if partnering with others won't work.

Charlie said, from an overall staff management standpoint, it places additional stress on staff. However, we will keep in good spirits and humor. The next two years will be very busy as there is a lot going on. Charlie said this is not a complaint, simply an awareness that we are very busy. He reminded everyone that CCRPC staff work on year to year contracts, and everyone is aware that funding can change. Jeff recommended we make sure we are fair and not hire someone for only a short term. Charlie agreed. He said this is a challenge and we may look to hiring someone on as a consultant.

11. <u>Committee/Liaison Activities & Reports</u>. Mike noted that minutes for our committees were included as links as well as documents within the packet (Executive/Finance Committee, TAC, PAC, MS4 Sub-Committee and CWAC).

12. Future Agenda Topics. Charlie reminded members in July we will have a vote on the TIP. Also, we typically look at the committee assignments to see who wants to join various committees. These assignments are typically finalized in September. We may look more into CEDS and teleworking trends. He reminded everyone there is no meeting scheduled in August. We will hold an annual, inperson celebratory meeting in September at Hula. Garret said he is concerned about people attending whether they are vaccinated or not. He asked if the commission would consider requiring masks for those who are not vaccinated. Charlie said our current in-office policy does require unvaccinated individuals to wear masks, but we can certainly talk more about this as the date approaches. Barbara asked if there will be an opportunity to hold this as a hybrid of remote and inperson? Charlie said yes, the remote option will be available for the business portion of the meeting.

13. <u>Members' Items, Other business</u>. Mike thanked the CCRPC staff and members of the commission. He said he has greatly appreciated his time as Chair, and he knows Catherine will do a great job as the new Chair.

14. <u>Adjournment</u>. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CATHERINE MCMAINS, TO ADJOURN THE BOARD MEETING AT 7:19 PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Irvin Witham