

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
2 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3 MINUTES
4

5 DATE: Tuesday, February 1, 2022
6 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
7 PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom
8

9 **Members Present**

10 Amanda Clayton, Colchester
11 Amy Bell, VTrans
12 Ashley Atkins, VTrans
13 Matthew Langham, VTrans
14 Bob Henneberger, Seniors
15 Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte
16 Sam Andersen, GBIC
17 Barbara Elliott, Huntington
18 Andrea Morgante, Hinesburg
19 Sandy Thibault, CATMA
20 Josh Arneson, Richmond
21 Ravi Venkataraman, Richmond
22 Nicole Losch, Burlington
23 Kurt Johnson, Underhill
24 Kirsten Jensen, Milton
25 Bruce Hoar, Williston
26 Mary Anne Michaels, Rail

Tom Dipietro, South Burlington
Joss Besse, Bolton
Chris Damiani, GMT

Staff

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

Guests

Stephen Falbel, Steadman Hill
Costa Pappis, VTrans
Jon Olin

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29 1. Barbara Elliott called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.
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31 **2. Consent Agenda**

32 Item 2a TIP Amendments: BRUCE HOAR MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TIP
33 AMENDMENTS, SECONDED BY SAM ANDERSEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
34 Item 2b Safety Performance Targets: SAM ANDERSEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE
35 SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGETS, SECONDED BY AMY BELL. THE MOTION PASSED
36 UNANIMOUSLY.
37

38 **3. Approval of December 7, 2021 Minutes**

39 Barbara asked for any changes, which there were none. BOB HENNEBERGER MADE A MOTION TO
40 APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2021, SECONDED BY SANDY THIBAUT. THE
41 MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
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43 **4. Public Comments**

44 No comments from the public.
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46 **5. Transit Finance Study**

47 Marshall Distell introduced the Transit Finance Study which analyzed innovative approaches to financing
48 public transportation in Vermont. Consultant Stephen Falbel of Steadman Hill gave a presentation of the
49 study process, alternatives evaluation and recommendations from the study. He noted the presentation has
50 been given to the Senate and House Transportation Committees, as well as the GMT Board of
51 Commissioners, and will be delivered to Central Vermont RPC. The project goal was to find sustainable
52 source of revenue to maintain current service levels and leverage new federal funds to increase transit
53 access for all Vermonters. Currently only a third of Vermont towns are served by a bus route. All
54 Vermont towns have access to demand response service, but there are eligibility requirements. We all pay

1 a little (WAPAL) principle implies an expansion of rural service so that all Vermonters have access to
2 transit service. This differs from the Someone else pays (SEP) principle. Non-riders already pay for
3 transit service through property taxes and transportation fund (T-fund) sources including gas/diesel taxes,
4 purchase and use tax on vehicles, registration and license fees. The total transit funding target amount is
5 \$21 million annually. A new funding source would mostly replace existing transit funding streams and
6 therefore reduce pressure on property taxes and the T-fund. Increasing cost of driving would have
7 marginal impact on transit funding. Conversion to mileage-based fee is anticipated due to fleet conversion
8 to electric vehicles. Taking transit out of T-fund frees up those dollars for other uses. Existing funding
9 sources likely aren't sufficient to maintain even current level of service indefinitely or service expansion.
10 Alternatives considered include sales tax, payroll tax, business revenue, county property tax, income tax,
11 utility fee, property transfer tax, mortgage recording tax. Stephen reviewed the alternative evaluation
12 matrix and scoring, showing the utility fee scoring highest followed by the county property tax.

13
14 Discussion ensued. Sam asked how was the utility fee rate decided, using the \$21 million budget need?
15 Stephen said yes but note that rate would be less for industrial users, this was based on residential and
16 commercial users. Sam could see this being an issue for high electric users so thanks for clarifying.
17 Andrea asked why there wasn't analysis of the cost of transportation that goes everywhere, namely school
18 busses, has anyone looked at what people pay for this through property tax for education, could we bring
19 all public transportation under one umbrella? Stephen said this has been looked at in other reports but not
20 in this particular study. Andrea noted understanding all the problems with this concept but why can't we
21 recognize the possibilities and when will someone look at it in depth. Sandy said that GMT will be
22 reinstating fares in July, the legislature is discussing transit, are any options being considered so fares
23 remain free? Stephen said it's in the hands of legislature to decide. In spite of what the legislature does,
24 GMT may decide it's worthwhile to raise fare revenue so if the legislature provides funding and GMT
25 receives income from fares, then they could expand services. Charlie made two comments: 1. There's a
26 lot of cash flowing right now so I don't expect the legislature to take action this session, but I think it's
27 likely they will take it seriously starting next year because statewide we're going to have an issue drawing
28 down federal funds without more local ability to provide match. 2. With regard to fare free, I wouldn't be
29 surprised if, based on the numbers Stephen shared to make the rest of the state fare free, they could do
30 that but not support Chittenden County to be fare free. Chris Damiani from GMT says their Board
31 approved reinstating fares for the urban system and leaving rural system fare free in Central Vermont, and
32 Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Kurt asked if any other states besides Oregon have tried the utility tax.
33 Stephen said it's only in the City of Corvallis rather than the state, and he's not aware of any statewide
34 utility fees. Jason asked what offering fare free did to ridership, and what reinstating it might do. Stephen
35 said the pandemic had a greater effect on ridership. Section 20 report from last year looked at research on
36 what happens when you drop fares, historically you see an increase of about 30%. People who used to
37 walk or bike take transit, or current riders take transit more. Most people riding transit were not
38 necessarily getting out of cars. He's not sure how reinstating fares will affect ridership. When fares are
39 reinstated in July, ridership will potentially more likely be impacted by a new COVID variant or
40 something else. Jason asked if the Section 20 report looked into the types of riders who took transit more
41 often when fares were free. Stephen said it was talked about in the report but there's another report from
42 the Transit Cooperative Research Program cited in the Section 20 report which reviewed fare free
43 experiments and talks about those experiences and where new riders came from. [Section 20 of Act 59
44 (2019) of the Vermont Legislature directed the Agency of Transportation to develop a report on methods
45 to increase the use of public transit in Vermont. Section 20 report:
46 <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Section-20-Report-01-07-20-FINAL.pdf>] Joss
47 asked what changes might be required for government structures for transit authorities. Charlie's sense is
48 these different revenue sources wouldn't require different governance structures. Stephen added it partly
49 depends on whether fees are imposed on a statewide or regional basis, and how fee decisions are made in
50 those regions, and who has the authority to decide those amounts. Joss asked who is making questions
51 about routes in different areas with those changes, would there be way for broader participation. Stephen
52 said currently the service providers and state make those decisions as part of two-year grant and service
53 agreements, and they might look at transit development plan, outreach efforts to communities, or other
54 ways. Charlie said *IF* the legislature enacted one of the new revenue sources, and it replaced a current

1 model like GMT's membership model, and in the new model all towns had an equal say, then there may
2 be need for conversation about Board membership, etc.

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4 Kurt asked what kinds of things would be considered with \$5 million for rural expansion? Stephen said it
5 relates to things such as in the Tri Town Study, concept is volunteer based microtransit service, using
6 smartphones and other traditional ways to request a ride. If this is to be part of a climate solution, then we
7 don't want internal combustion engine vehicle driving all over the rural areas to provide rides. Using
8 electric vehicles supported by solar recharging would have a better environmental impact. Since Vermont
9 is so rural, traditional transit service isn't possible or effective.

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11 The presentation is posted on the [TAC webpage](#) and the full transit financing report is here:
12 <https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Final-Funding-Report-11-23-21.pdf>.

13 14 **6. Vermont and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**

15 Costa Pappis, VTrans, presented the highways component of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
16 (IIJA) and what it means for Vermont. Key transportation provisions are that it provides five years of
17 authorization and funding levels for the next five years, it replaces the previous federal transportation
18 authorization called the FAST Act, and Vermont is anticipated to receive \$1.645B in highway funding
19 over next five years. It increases overall funding by \$570.5 million (53%) over the FAST Act and adds
20 carbon reduction program and resilience formula program but there isn't a lot of information yet since
21 they are new. IIJA includes 26 competitive grant programs (including 20 new ones) worth approximately
22 \$100 billion with a focus on highway and bridge, downtown revitalization, healthy streets, active
23 transportation, carbon reduction, resilience, etc. Since these are new programs, we're waiting for guidance
24 from FHWA. Note that there will likely continue to be a matching fund requirement. Provisions specific
25 for municipal governments include surface transportation block grant program off-system bridge set-
26 aside; general fund bridge program off-system bridge set-aside; and competitive grant programs.
27 Next steps: 1. Congress needs to make appropriations for certain highway programs funded from the
28 Highway Trust Fund. 2. Need US DOT to issue guidance on new programs. Risks in implementation IIJA
29 provisions: still need full Congressional Appropriations since we're still operating under a Continuing
30 Resolution. Also concerns about inflation since transportation is sensitive to labor and commodity prices.

31
32 Matthew Langham clarified that "off-system" means off the federal aid system. Some local bridges may
33 not be on the state system but could be on the federal aid system. Christine said the state is starting year 2
34 of the VPSP2 program which will focus on bridges. We'll likely talk more about this at the next TAC
35 meeting.

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37 The presentation is posted on the [TAC webpage](#).

38 39 **7. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports**

40 See bulleted list at the end of the agenda for current CCRPC projects. TAC members are encouraged to
41 ask staff for more information on the status of any of these on-going or recently completed projects.

42 43 **8. CCRPC Board Meeting Report**

44 The Board did not meet in December. In January the Board reviewed the Equity Assessment Report from
45 consultant Creative Discourse, approved the FY22 UPWP Mid-Year Adjustment and Budget, heard a
46 presentation on Vermont's Climate Action Plan and the draft 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan, and
47 reviewed the legislative priorities.

48 49 **9. Chairman's/Members' Items**

- 50
- 51 • **2021 Complete Streets reporting due by Feb 9**, please send this form for each project to
52 bdavis@ccrpevt.org.
 - 53 • **VT Walk Bike Summit** scheduled for May 6, 2022 in Middlebury. Call for proposals and award
nominations due Feb 4. More information at <https://vtwalkbikesummit.com/>.

- 1 • Reminder that **VT Clean Cities Coalition** can perform a free fleet analysis as described by Peggy
2 O’Neill-Vivanco at the December TAC meeting (Peggy.ONeill-Vivanco@uvm.edu). Her
3 presentation is posted [here](#).
4 • **Town Highway Structure and Roadway Grant** Program announced, further guidance can be
5 found in the Grant Season Cover Letter. Deadline for grant applications will be **April 15th, 2022**.
6 • Marshall announced that the **Park & Ride Plan Update** is getting underway, CCRPC has
7 contracted with RSG to update the plan. During the previous plan CCRPC asked for a TAC
8 representative on the project committee but this time we’re proposing that we’ll bring plan
9 updates and various approvals to the TAC on a regular basis.

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11 The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2, 2022 due to Town Meeting.

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13 BRUCE HOAR MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY BOB HENNEGERGER,
14 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:17 AM.

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16 Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis