

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
2 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES  
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4 DATE: Wednesday, January 11, 2023  
5 TIME: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
6 PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom with link as published on the agenda  
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**Members Present:**

Joss Besse, Bolton  
Alex Weinhagen, Hinesburg  
John Alden, Essex Junction  
Katherine Sonnicks, Essex Town  
Eric Vorwald, Winooski  
Larry Lewack, Charlotte  
Cathyann LaRose, Colchester  
Virginia Clarke, Richmond  
Paul Conner, South Burlington  
Cymone Bedford, Milton  
Melinda Scott, Williston

**Staff:**

Taylor Newton, Planning Program Manager  
Dan Albrecht, Senior Planner  
Melanie Needle, Senior Planner  
Darren Schibler, Senior Planner  
Ann Janda, Senior Energy Project Manager  
Charlie Baker, Executive Director  
Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager  
Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner  
Jason Charest, Senior Transportation Planner

**Guests:**

None

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10 **1. Welcome and Introductions**

11 T. Newton called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.  
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13 **2. Approval of November 9, 2022 Minutes**

14 Approval of minutes was postponed until after the MTP presentation due to lack of quorum.  
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16 **3. Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

17 E. Churchill, C. Forde, and J. Charest presented the draft MTP to the PAC, noting that it is still in draft form and that  
18 comments are welcome until February 24.  
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20 P. Conner noted that the stormwater funding amount seems low given the amount of work in this realm. C. Forde  
21 responded that the table shows prior (not future) funding, and that some of the stormwater work is funded under  
22 comprehensive work through other categories – this stormwater line is just the grant projects. T. Newton noted that  
23 the numbers also account only for federal and not state funds.  
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25 A. Weinhagen asked, and E. Churchill confirmed, that the mileage-based fee (5 cents / mile) included in the MTP  
26 Scenarios is purely aspirational at this point. However, VTrans is looking at this seriously in light of the proliferation  
27 of electric vehicles.  
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29 A. Weinhagen made the following comments:

- 30 • Under the Goals & Objectives – Safety: what is a “safe system” approach to planning?” E. Churchill stated  
31 that this will be explained in a forthcoming draft, but it involves looking at all modes of transportation and  
32 how they interact with each other.
- 33 • In the second bullet under Goals & Objectives – Livable and Healthy Communities: the term “commuter  
34 stops” is too vague. Weinhagen suggested “Villages and Downtowns served by transit.”
- 35 • In the third bullet under the same goal relating to improving public health: Complete Streets should be  
36 mentioned since many roads don’t have off-road infrastructure and users need to share the road.
- 37 • Under Goals & Objectives – Equity: what does VTrans’ Transportation Equity Framework include?  
38 Churchill clarified that it is currently a broad approach to equity, but specifically includes incorporating  
39 equity into decision-making on the capital program and hiring decisions.  
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41 P. Conner commented that the vision and goals (at least in staff’s presentation) don’t directly connect to the land use  
42 goals (though it’s indirectly referenced through sustainability). The importance of this should be elevated.

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**Approval of November 9, 2022 Minutes**

Eric Vorwald made a motion, seconded by Alex Weinhagen to approve the November 9, 2022 minutes. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED.

**4. West Central Vermont – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

T. Newton noted that this was reviewed at the previous meeting, and that public comments on the current draft are due this week. Partners will review these comments to incorporate into a final draft at the end of January / beginning of February for formal adoption by all 8 partner boards by March.

A. Weinhagen asked for more details about the Regional Priority Project Matrix. T. Newton stated that this is requested annually by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. CCRPC and the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) collaborate to solicit projects and rank them before approval by the GBIC Board.

**5. Vermont Buildings and General Services (BGS) Municipal Energy Resiliency Program (MERP) Grants**

A. Janda provided an update on this program. It will be administered through BGS, which has taken some time to organize their first-ever grant program (which is modeled after their work on upgrading the state’s buildings). The program has three pieces:

1. All municipalities can get free energy efficiency audits / walkthroughs. These are likely to be done in the spring in coordination with several municipalities.
2. All municipalities are \$4,000 for outreach and education on energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reductions.
3. There is up to \$500,000 available to municipalities for implementation of the energy audit’s recommendations. Most recommendations will be related to weatherization and heating systems, but the funding may also be used for rooftop solar.
  - a. However, BGS will prioritize implementation grants for municipalities with high energy burden as identified by Efficiency Vermont, none of which are in Chittenden County. Funds would only be available if the program isn’t fully subscribed elsewhere. However, it is still worth going through the application process, especially for smaller communities with high need and minimal resources.

At Weinhagen’s question, A. Janda clarified that funds are not available for construction of new buildings.

**6. Legislative Items**

T. Newton noted few bills have been introduced yet, though a housing and zoning reform bill created by Representative Seth Bongartz with collaboration from a range of housing partners is forthcoming.

T. Newton also noted that Rep. Bongartz has also introduced H.5. The bill would strengthen the effectiveness and coordination of regional plans and land use maps.

D. Schibler provided an update on H.42. The bill would extend the pandemic-era measures set to expire on January 15, 2023 and allow fully-remote meetings for public bodies (including for Town Meeting, which could also be postponed). If approved in the coming days, this would extend flexibility until July 1, 2024.

J. Besse asked about a rumor of Sen. Ram-Hinsdale’s proposed housing bill that would restrict municipal zoning / permitting processes, but possibly restricted to designated areas. A. Weinhagen stated that the senate bill is likely to incorporate language proposed by Rep. Bongartz, with other (unrelated) pieces to be added. T. Newton will circulate the current draft of the Bongartz bill.

J. Alden noted that AIA VT is also interested in looking at improvements to municipal permitting. At T. Newton’s question about potential legislation related to energy codes, Alden responded that AIA will continue to advance legislation that will improve compliance with energy codes. T. Newton noted that the state is collaborating with the nonprofit Energy Futures Group on an application for a Department of Energy grant (the Building Codes

1 Implementation for Efficiency and Resilience Program). This would fund a 5-year study identifying who should have  
 2 jurisdiction over energy codes and structural / administrative changes needed to support this.

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 4 **7. Members Items Open Forum**

5 L. Lewack is researching municipal regulations for cannabis and can share his work with the PAC. He and D.  
 6 Schibler also noted that Charlotte and Shelburne were awarded Bylaw Modernization Grants in the latest round.

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 8 **8. Regional Act 250/Section 248 Projects on the Horizon**

9 PAC members should email Taylor and Darren any Act 250/Section 248 updates.

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 11 **9. Other Business**

12 **i. Essentials of Land Use Training.** CCRPC is seeking interest from municipalities that would like to host an  
 13 “Essentials of Land Use” training for municipal board members. The training provides a basic introduction to  
 14 land use planning and regulation and is particularly aimed at new municipal board members. If interested,  
 15 please email Taylor and Darren.

- 16 • T. Newton also noted that CCRPC is interested in hosting a training for the numerous new municipal  
 17 planning and zoning staff members, tentatively on Friday Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. There was general interest.

18 **ii. Development Activity Reports.** Melanie will be sending out the request development activity reports for  
 19 2022 (due date TBD). This request asks municipalities to provide information about residential and  
 20 commercial development that received an approved CO and for Bike/Ped infrastructure built in calendar year  
 21 2022.

22 **iii. Updated Regional and Municipal Energy Data and Maps.** Statewide energy planning data has been  
 23 delayed again. CCRPC staff revised the list of proposed local known and possible environmental constraints  
 24 used for enhanced energy plan mapping based on PAC comments in September and November. Please  
 25 contact Melanie ASAP if your municipality has any additional local constraints to add to the list.

26 **iv. Right to Charge.** For those interested in EV charging infrastructure for multi-family housing: Right to  
 27 charge legislation could be a helpful tool for existing condo owners/renters who are seeking to install EV  
 28 charging but may encounter resistance from HOAs / landlords. [This Drive Electric Vermont presentation](#)  
 29 covers the basics of this this type of legislation that has been approved in several other states. A more  
 30 detailed resource is available at the [NESCAUM](#).

31 **v. FEMA Flood Map and Bylaw Updates.** RPCs have entered into a contract with VT DEC to support NFIP  
 32 map and bylaw updates in municipalities. RPC staff has begun this work by auditing each municipality’s  
 33 NFIP regulations and will contact any municipalities that are out of conformance with NFIP minimum  
 34 standards.

35 **vi. BHT Dashboard and the CCRPC Housing Dashboard** have been updated. Also, the next Chittenden  
 36 Housing Convening is scheduled for Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and will focus on creating municipal  
 37 rental inspection programs.

38 **vii. VT UCF Funding Webinar.** The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program expects to have a large  
 39 amount of grant funding available through 2031. [Learn more here](#) or at their [Feb 14 webinar](#) which will focus  
 40 on how grant funds can be best allocated to serve municipal, regional, and state projects.

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 42 **10. 9. Adjourn**

43 The meeting adjourned at 4:03pm.

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 45 Respectfully submitted, Darren Schibler