CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, April 4, 2023
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members Present
Bryan Osborne, Colchester
Amy Bell, VTrans
Chris Jolly, FHWA
Bob Henneberger, Seniors
Dayton Crites, Burlington
Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte
Adam Wechsler, People with Disability
Bruce Hoar, Williston
Jonathon Weber, Local Motion
Sam Andersen, GBIC
Chris Damiani, GMT
Adam Lawrence, SSTA
Aaron Martin, Essex
Joss Besse, Bolton
Josh Arneson, Richmond
Chris Yuen, Essex Junction
Lisa Schaeffler, Milton
Tom Dipietro, South Burlington
Jon Rauscher, Winooski

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

Guests
Matthew Arancio, VTrans
Katharine Otto, VTrans

1. Bryan Osborne called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

2. Consent Agenda
This update makes the TIP current for the construction season. BRUCE HOAR MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, SECONDED BY TOM DIPIETRO. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Approval of March 8, 2023 Minutes
SAM ANDERSEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2023, SECONDED BY BOB HENNEBERGER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Public Comments
No comments from the public.

5. Review Draft 2023 Metropolitan Transportation Plan
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC, reviewed the latest draft of the 2023 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is available on the TAC webpage. We're accepting comments until May so please share any feedback. The MTP is one of the four key documents we're required to produce as a federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The TAC helped create the MTP vision and goals. The MTP is fiscally constrained, meaning there must be funds identified for the projects listed in the MTP. Note that 70% of estimated funds ($1,028.1 million) are allocated for system maintenance, with the remaining 30% ($440.6 million) are for new modernization and enhancement projects. Sam clarified that the estimated 70% funding amount could be stated as $1.028 billion. The future land use goal is similar to previous MTPs with a development focus in areas planned for growth, but with a Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TOD) added to the land use map in this MTP to reinforce the need for more dense development around primary transit routes. The regional transportation model was used to evaluate four scenarios, with the preferred scenario being the I-89 2050 Study Scenario which includes a new

interchange at Exit 14, safety improvements at high crash locations, significant transportation demand management (TDM) elements, and more. In FY24 the CCRPC will conduct a scoping study to determine a preferred alternative for the Exit 14 interchange and a Regional TDM study to evaluate the feasibility of the proposed investments. Eleni reviewed some of the modeling results including estimated changes to vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. There are 121 modernization and enhancement projects, including walk/bike improvements, projects in areas planned for growth and at high crash locations, and in areas with underserved populations.

Bryan Osborne asked how the CCRPC will encourage development along the priority transit routes. Eleni said this conversation will start with CCRPC's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and will continue with our municipalities. She encouraged TAC members to contribute to the conversation. Bryan asked if we are projecting to have a 90% electric fleet by 2050? Eleni said yes, the non-commercial vehicle fleet is projected to be 90% by 2050 to accomplish the state's and the region's climate goals. Bryan noted that 90% seems aggressive by 2050, there are lots of barriers to address. Bryan asked about the growth analysis for housing, is the current shortage affecting those projections? Eleni said that we used the figures from the 2018 ECOS Plan for the population, employment, and housing projections, which still seemed relevant after a current review, and the Board approved using those figures for the ECOS and MTP update. Charlie said we brought those projections down which seem to align with the current situation. Bryan said that cities/towns, CCRPC and VTrans all have current efforts to monitor traffic volumes, and asked if it is too soon to extract any effects of COVID on traffic volumes? Has there been any data gathered that could be used for future projections? Eleni said yes, the state gathers traffic volumes using permanent stations, so we have those trends and using CATMA's annual survey we can gauge teleworking trends. Eleni says traffic volumes rebounded in some locations after a drastic decrease at the start of pandemic, but not in all locations. We need to do more work to determine the telework trends. When we have more to share about those trends, we'll bring them to the TAC. Bryan asked where the cost estimates for future projects come from, and if they consider the current rate of inflation. Christine said that most projects have cost estimates from previous planning/scoping studies. We accounted for inflation but used the assumption that inflation will level off at some point.

Dierdre asked about the population growth assumptions and whether they included climate migration. Eleni said she is not sure. Charlie said there was no assumption about climate migration, but noted the lack of housing supply is also an issue. The demand for housing might be there, but the supply isn't so it's a somewhat constrained population growth. Bryan asked if most population growth is happening in Chittenden County, meaning that areas outside of Chittenden County are decreasing. Charlie said there was a little bit of statewide population growth in the last census period but most of that growth was in Chittenden County and some other counties in the northwest.

Jonathon asked if there is a time attached to the MTP investments? Eleni said no, there are no times attached to them. We are hoping the upcoming TDM study will help determine which investments should be pursued in the short, medium, and long term. Charlie said the TDM scenario isn't a prediction but is the most aggressive scenario/policy change to reduce VMT and address climate change. Eleni said the TDM study will help identify which elements are feasible and to what degree.

SAM ANDERSEN MADE A MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD WARN A PUBLIC HEARING AT THEIR APRIL 19 MEETING FOR THE 2023 MTP ON MAY 17, SECONDED BY JONATHON WEBER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. <u>Federal Adjusted Urban Area Boundary</u>

Jason Charest, CCRPC, presented the draft Federal Urban Area Boundary Adjustments for Chittenden County. Every 10 years, following the decennial census, Census Urban Area boundaries are established based on census population and household criteria. FHWA then has an adjustment process that considers expansions of the Census Urban Areas to include roadways that exhibit more urban than rural characteristics. The result of this process creates what are known as Federal Urban Area Boundaries.

Census-defined urban area is at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 people. FHWA-defined urbanized area is at least 50,000 people (threshold to create an MPO) and small urban area is 5,000-49,999 people. The 2020 Census shows two urban areas: Milton Urban Area and Burlington Urban Area. Jason showed a table with population and housing figures from other populated areas in Vermont as reference. This Urban Area Boundary Adjustment process is important for highway/traffic statistics used in planning, functional classification (urban vs rural), and funding. The Federal Aid System does not include rural minor collectors or local roads. CCRPC staff developed an Adjusted Urban Area Boundary to smooth boundaries based on geographical features. The adjustments do not affect funding tied to population, and the Federal Aid System remains the same. Jason showed a map displaying the proposed Adjusted Urban Area Boundary. Note that if a road forms a border, it is considered urban.

Amy Bell asked about the Milton Urban Area boundary and clarified that the map shows a proposed connection of the Milton and Burlington Urban Areas. Jason said yes, CCRPC staff decided to connect them and keep that characteristic.

Chris Yuen asked if there are implications for roadway funding with these changes, and if there are other expected implications. Jason said no. He can't think of an instance over the last 10 years where this kind of adjustment had an impact on a municipality, but in this current review there were a couple of roads in Essex that are on the boundary line as proposed and would likely meet the characteristics of a minor collector, and making that change would make them eligible for federal funds. Chris Jolly concurred with this statement.

Bruce asked if North Williston Road if emergency funds would come from FHWA since it's on the Federal Aid System rather than FEMA? Chris Jolly said yes, emergency relief funds would come from FWHA. FEMA takes care of roads that are not on the federal aid system. North Williston Road is a major collector so it is on the Federal Aid System regardless of whether or not it is considered urban or rural.

Adam asked about the roadway colors on the map. Jason said that red lines are freeways, white lines are principle arterials, black lines are minor arterials, gray lines are major collectors, dotted gray lines are minor collectors, and very thin gray lines are local roads which are not on the Federal Aid System.

Bryan Osborne asked that if local roads aren't on Federal Aid System, and the CCRPC gets federal funding to do projects, how can the organization do projects for roadways not on the Federal Aid System? Chris Jolly said the difference between planning funds and capital construction funds are described in the federal regulations, and there is more flexibility with the planning funds.

Jason said this is presented as an informational item but if the TAC feels comfortable making a recommendation on the proposed changes, we could take action. Bryan Osborne asked the group for their thoughts and noted that he's fine with the changes as proposed.

BRUCE HOAR MADE A MOTION THAT THE TAC APPROVE THE FEDERAL URBAN AREA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS AND SEND TO THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL AND SUBMISSION TO VTRANS, SECONDED BY JON RAUSCHER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. <u>FY24 UPWP Update</u>

Marshall Distel, CCRPC, provided an update on the development of the draft FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which is included in the TAC meeting packet. The UPWP is the CCRPC's work plan and budget for the next fiscal year, and is a required document for CCRPC as a federally designated MPO. The UPWP Committee met three times to review the proposed projects, in addition to an eligibility review with FHWA and VTrans. Marshall shared UPWP funding allocations in previous years for reference and described different project types for each of the categories (i.e., roadway, bike/ped, water quality, TDM, energy, other). He also shared graphs showing allocations by municipality and partner organizations. Sam asked about the request from UVM, and Marshall noted it is a project to develop a new data dashboard for tracking household level changes in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), greenhouse

gas emissions (GHGs) and vehicle fleet characteristics (e.g., fuel economy, fuel type, EVs, etc.) across Chittenden County.

Jonathon asked if we are taking advantage of all the available funding, and if we have predictions for future funding. Marshall said we had a backlog of available funding and have worked our way through them. Charlie noted the federal infrastructure bill increased our funding and we're in the middle of spending those dollars, as well as other accumulated funds, so this is a unique time for us. Chris Jolly said the additional federal funding will carry through FY26 so planning funding jumps for the next couple of years. There was also an increase in FTA (Federal Transit Administration) funding. Amy asked if CCRPC is able to match all of those dollars. Charlie said we have been raising municipal dues which allows us to match federal dollars. In addition, we are also using some state and regional funds to help match federal funds, so we're using more than just municipal dues as match to draw down federal planning funds. Marshall notes that we also have to be mindful of staff capacity to manage projects in addition to available funding.

The FY24 UPWP is an information item for today but we'll be back next month to ask the TAC for a recommendation to the Board.

8. Status of Projects and Subcommittee Reports

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

9. CCRPC Board Meeting Report

In March the Board voted to adopt the West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, voted to appoint members to the Energy Subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee, and heard updates on CCRPC equity work, annual meeting planning, financial reports, FY24 work plan development, and legislative updates. Chair McMains charged the Board Development Committee with developing a slate of officers for FY24.

10. Chair/Members' Items

- **VT Bond Bank's Capital Planning Forum:** An in-person event for governmental units of all sizes and associated professionals to explore Vermont specific best practices in capital planning. April 13, 9 am-4 pm, Barre, VT. Free but space is limited. Details and registration here.

Sam said she's noticed yield signs on I-89 ramps are gone, is that a federal decision or local decision? Chris Jolly said VTrans is responsible for the signage which must conform to the MUTCD (manual on uniform traffic control devices), and he will look into it. Exit 17 southbound seems to be an area with a lot of issues.

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

BRUCE HOAR MOVED TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY AMY BELL, THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:22.

Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis