CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, December 5, 2023
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members Present
Bryan Osborne, Colchester
Aaron Martin, Essex
Amy Bell, VTrans
Bob Henneberger, Seniors
Jonathon Weber, Local Motion
Sam Andersen, GBIC
Adam Lawrence, SSTA
Tom Dipietro, South Burlington
Chris Yuen, Essex Junction
Connor Smith, GMT
Julia Ursaki, Burlington
Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte
Mary Anne Michaels, Vermont Rail System
Sandy Thibault, CATMA
Bruce Hoar, Williston

Staff
Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager
Anne Nelson Stoner, Equity and Engagement Manager
Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner
Jason Charest, Senior Transportation Planning Engineer
Sai Sarepalli, Senior Transportation Planning Engineer
Bryan Davis, Senior Transportation Planner
Marshall Distel, Senior Transportation Planner
Chris Dubin, Senior Transportation Planner

Guests
Katharine Otto, VTrans
Jim Cota, VTrans

1. Bryan Osborne called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. Consent Agenda
No consent agenda this month.

3. Approval of November 7, 2023 Minutes
JONATHON WEBER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 7, 2023, SECONDED BY SAM ANDERSEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Public Comments
No comments from the public.

5. Update on CCRPC Equity Work
Anne Nelson Stoner, CCRPC, provided an update on equity work undertaken by CCRPC over the past couple of years. She started by sharing some background information and perspective, including the economic impact of slavery in the US ($70 trillion made off of Black labor). Racism is reflected in the history of the planning profession as evidenced by redlining, racial covenants, urban renewal, highway construction and more – even in Vermont. Racism in Vermont is different than in other places as reflected in a blog post shared in her presentation.

She described how Chittenden County is changing, including the population increase of nearly 12,000 people in the past 10 years, with nearly all being people of color. Rural America is also growing more racially diverse. The homeownership gap between Black and white households has only become worse. Income inequality has risen steadily since the 1970s, and 16% of Chittenden County residents are "severely cost burdened." Vermont's rates of homelessness are almost the worst in the country. Climate impacts such as flooding disproportionately impact certain populations.

How can we better plan for everyone? Targeted universalism is an approach to set and achieve universal goals that benefit everyone. This is a race-conscious rather than race-first approach. Anne Nelson

highlighted recent work undertaken by CCRPC including: stated commitment to address systemic racism in 2020, and increased equity work with staff and Board. In 2021 the CCRPC hired an equity consultant to help with this organizational work and hosted a Planning for Equity Summit to learn from community members, partners and municipalities. We completed an organizational equity assessment and held a series of equity workshops. In 2022 the CCRPC hired Anne Nelson as the Equity and Engagement Manager and established the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC). There are 18 members of the EAC whose work is guided by four priorities:

- Support the Equity and Engagement Manager
- Provide organizational accountability
- Identify opportunities for direct action
- Engage with Chittenden County residents

Policy development process within CCRPC includes feedback and support from the EAC, Executive Committee, staff and Board. This included adopting an Equity Statement and Commitment:

> **Acknowledgement of the Problem:** CCRPC acknowledges that structural oppression contributes to persistent disparities and condemns racism and discrimination in all its forms.
> **Recognition of Our Role & Responsibility:** As a governmental planning organization with decision-making influence, the work of CCRPC significantly impacts people throughout Chittenden County. We hold ourselves responsible for identifying and addressing historic and current inequities in our own practices as well as those of the planning field as a whole.
> **Our Commitment:** We commit to constantly evaluating our work to transform our actions, policies, and procedures through continuous education, leveraging assets to improve access, and meaningful collaboration with those most impacted by the problems we seek to address.
> **Our Goal:** In doing so, we hope to co-create a community where identity and socio-economic status no longer influence life outcomes and where all – not the select few—are heard, seen, belong, and treated as experts in their own experience.

The CCRPC is currently working on an Organizational Code of Conduct based on four organizational values (Integrity, Accountability, Inclusion, Respect) with behavioral expectations to uphold those values. The next major policy effort will be to create an Equity Action Plan built on four pillars (Build, Transform, Collaborate, Lead) with related goals and actions to result in specific outcomes.

Other recent projects include creating an Equity Map Viewer that uses Census layers to visualize certain populations in the County, and creating a calendar of religious and cultural days of significance so we can be more thoughtful and aware in our public engagement and meeting scheduling.

Jonathon asked about an updated CCRPC Public Participation Plan. Anne Nelson said it will be prepared in the next year, likely in collaboration with Burlington's similar plan and potentially other cities/towns if possible.

Julia Ursaki reported that the Burlington Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (REIB) office received a federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant to develop an Equity Index for the City. This effort will focus on understanding who is actually living in Burlington, their status across social determinants of health, and what their transportation needs and challenges are. Anne Nelson said she has been in touch with the REIB office to see how their work could be expanded countywide.

The presentation is available here: https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/TAC-Equity-Presentation.pdf.

6. Health Equity Grant Update

Bryan Davis, CCRPC, provided information about the CCRPC's participation with RPCs statewide to create a Health Equity Toolkit and provide support to municipalities to incorporate health equity into their plans and policies. Grant funding from the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) supported development

of the Toolkit and Resource guide and is also supporting technical assistance in communities across the state.

The Centers for Disease Control states that health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to attain their full health potential, and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances. The RPCs worked together to create the Health Equity Toolkit and Resource Guide to describe the relationship between planning and health equity and to provide examples of actions communities can take to ensure health equity is achieved.

Changing the built environment to work for people of all ages, incomes, abilities, and backgrounds is critical to supporting our public health, as well as for building social capital. People with strong perceptions of strong social connections are 2.5 times more likely to report good or excellent health compared to people who report having lower perception of social belonging. Social isolation is equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes a day, reflecting the significant impact of isolation and loneliness on public health. The work planners do in communities for the built and social environment is important to creating a healthy and equitable future for everyone.

Most projects planners work on can—and should—include an equity lens. Health equity is specifically focused on inclusion around broader health concepts. These concepts can be incorporated into municipal plans and bylaws related to transportation, recreation opportunities, medical care and emergency response, food access, safe and affordable housing, access to employment, energy use, and environmental quality.

The VDH grant provided technical assistance to specific projects across the state, including these in Chittenden County:

- Milton on the Move is working on an inclusive community center to support numerous community group meetings and events
- Winooski Parents and Students is working on Co-Operative-Training and Economic Development (i.e., equitable wages) for underrepresented communities in the school bus service industry and fundraising for electric school busses
- Burlington-One Day in Vermont is a website where families can find both free and low-cost activities, as well as service and nonprofits serving families in VT

CCRPC staff is available to meet with local leaders such as Planning Commissions, Selectboard and City Councils to discuss health equity and planning in more detail. The Toolkit and Resources are available at: https://www.lcpcvt.org/healthequitytoolkit.

The presentation is available here: https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Municipal-Health-Equity-TAC.pdf.

7. 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.

8. CCRPC Board Meeting Report

In November the Board voted to accept the draft FY23 audit, heard a presentation from Green Mountain Transit on the federal performance transit measures and targets as part of their Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, voted to approve the FTA Title VI Program draft, heard an update on the Place section of the draft ECOS Plan, heard an equity program update, heard an update on studies related to the S.100 Housing Bill and other miscellaneous Director updates.

9. Chair/Members' Items

- The **VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program** (TAP) and **Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Program** (MHSMP) grants program are now open. **Applications are due by e-mail by December 8th, 2023**. Approximately 50% of TAP grant program funds are reserved for pollution mitigation projects relating to stormwater and highways, including eligible salt and sand shed projects. Approximately $1.5 million of MHSMP grant funding is available for eligible stormwater pollution mitigation projects as described in the MHSMP guide:
  - TAP: Transportation Alternatives Program | Agency of Transportation (vermont.gov)
  - MHSMP: Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Program | Agency of Transportation (vermont.gov)
- **VTrans 2025 Better Roads Grant Program:** VTrans is accepting applications to support projects on municipal roads that improve water quality and result in maintenance cost savings. The grant funds are provided by AOT in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The Vermont Better Roads Program promotes the use of erosion control and maintenance techniques that save money while protecting and enhancing water quality throughout the state. **Applications accepted until December 20, 2023.** For the most up-to-date information or to download a copy of the application, please go to http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/better-roads.
- **FY25 UPWP Solicitation:** The CCRPC is soliciting project requests for the upcoming FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). **Requests are due by January 19** to mdistel@ccrpcvt.org. Information and materials are available on the UPWP webpage: https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/commission/annual-work-plan-budget-finances/.
- **Update to Buy America Guidance:** On August 16, 2023, USDOT announced a public interest Waiver of Buy America Requirements for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants. The waiver applies to a single financial assistance award for which:
  - The total value of the non-compliant products is no more than the lesser of $1 million or 5 percent of total applicable costs for the project; or
  - The total amount of federal financial assistance applied to the project, through awards or subawards, is below $500,000.

  The waiver is applicable to awards that are obligated on or after August 16, 2023. More details available in the Federal Register posting.
- **Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG):** The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) has published new guidelines under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) that address access to sidewalks and streets, crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, on-street parking, and other components of public rights-of-way. These guidelines also review shared use paths, which are designed primarily for use by bicyclists and pedestrians for transportation and recreation purposes. The final rule is effective October 7, 2023. Learn more at: https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/.

Bryan Davis, CCRPC, pointed out that Transportation Alternatives grant applications are due this Friday so please be in touch for support letters or grant reviews as needed. He also reminded the TAC of the UPWP process with requests due in January.

Chris Dubin, CCRPC, noted that he is hosting a road manager's meeting next week and asked the TAC for topic ideas and suggested dates. He's getting a good response from across the County in terms of attendance and asks that TAC members share information as needed with their staff.

Chris also noted that Better Roads grants are due in a couple of weeks so please reach out to him as needed.

Bryan Davis asked if the TAC is interested in continuing with virtual meetings, or if members would like to go back to in-person meetings with a hybrid option. Sam notes that Zoom is nice in winter. If there are

in-person meetings she would like a hybrid option. Bryan welcomed additional feedback outside of this meeting.

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

BRUCE HOAR MOVED TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY CHRIS YUEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis