CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, February 6, 2024
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members Present

Bryan Osborne, Colchester
Aaron Martin, Essex
Adam Wechsler, People with Disability
Bob Henneberger, Seniors
Bruce Hoar, Williston
Chris Yuen, Essex Junction
Connor Smith, GMT
Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte
Jacqui DeMent, FHWA
Joe Segale, Huntington
Jon Rauscher, Winooski
Jonathon Weber, Local Motion
Josh Arneson, Richmond
Julia Ursaki, Burlington
Katharine Otto, VTrans
Kit Luster, Shelburne
Kurt Johnson, Underhill
Lisa Schaeffler, Milton
Mary Anne Michaels, Vermont Rail System
Matthew Arancio, VTrans
Sandy Thibault, CATMA
Tom Dipietro, South Burlington

Staff

Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager
Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner
Eliana Fox, 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

Deb Sachs, Walk to Shop
Peggy O'Neill-Vivanco, Walk to Shop
Eliza Gebb, Walk to Shop
Christina Mendoza, Walk to Shop
Jim Cota, VTrans

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

Bryan Davis introduced Eliana Fox, CCRPC's new transportation planner. He also recognized Joe Segale, a new representative for Huntington as of a few months ago.

2. Consent Agenda

JOE SEGALE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, SECONDED BY JONATHON WEBER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Approval of December 5, 2023 Minutes

KURT JOHNSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 5, 2023, SECONDED BY BOB HENNEBERGER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Public Comments

No comments from the public.

5. Walk to Shop Program Update

Deb Sachs and Peggy O'Neill-Vivanco from Walk to Shop shared information about the program, the goal of which is for more residents to be engaged in and benefit from using an affordable, convenient, safe and equitable shopping trolley to access daily goods and services. This is a CCRPC-supported TDM project. Through this project they have been working for equity in transportation and to elevate walking and walkable communities since 2021. The trolley is an elegant solution to carrying groceries and other items. They use both direct and indirect community engagement, and the program's impact is amplified with partners, reflected in the 1,059 trolleys distributed to date statewide.

Peggy recognized the work of Eliza Gebb, UVM student, who has been integral in mapping, outreach and engagement. As part of its 30th anniversary, the Vermont Clean Cities Coalition national program recognized "Shopping Trolleys Improve Access to Vital Communities for Underserved Communities" due to its role in helping to meet the federal Justice40 equity goal.

The team recognized that a trolley can't take the place of a car, but for people with limited or no access to a vehicle the trolleys increase access to food and transit. Their partnership with AALV helps make it more equitable and dignified to walk and use transit since the family wage earner typically uses the family's only vehicle.

Peggy discussed her work with fleets and municipalities to provide sustainable transportation options and a project in collaboration with the Department of Energy to improve access to vital services for underserved communities. She emphasized the importance of equity and justice in their initiatives, particularly in rural areas. Peggy also mentioned a grant application for community-driven transportation plans for the Northeast. The team also discussed ongoing and future projects, including working with towns to encourage walking and providing educational resources about the trolley's capabilities.

Deb and Peggy discussed the cost and ownership of their program's trolleys, which are purchased and distributed to external partners who apply for grants to bring money to the table. They can then sell to clients for a nominal fee (e.g., $10) or provide at no charge in some circumstances. Individuals then own the trolleys. They clarified that the trolleys are distributed at a certain cost and the cost is recovered through grants or direct sales. They also mentioned testing different approaches, inspired by Local Motion's e-bike lending library and CarShare VT, including trolley sharing and a trolley loan program at the Winooski School's community store. The team also discussed the displacement of car trips, possible locations for their project, and potential collaboration with a local food pantry. The team emphasized the importance of connecting with the food pantry to understand their needs and ensure effective collaboration.

Deb and Peggy encouraged TAC members and others to contact them to coordinate with food pantries and other potential partners: deb@netzerovt.org or poneillv@uvm.edu. Here is their presentation: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1vP4P1c8HYeVFsw0USfyK7jMpVQGDOCkg/edit#slide=id.p1

6. Annual Safety Targets

Past Federal Transportation Acts (MAP-21 and FAST Act) placed considerable emphasis on system performance and directed State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), MPOs and Transit Providers to evaluate how well the transportation system is doing. Sai Sarepalli, CCRPC, provided an update on statewide safety targets for five performance measures: total number of fatalities, fatality rate, total number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries, and total number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. Sai noted that the statewide safety targets for this year (2024) are recommended to remain the same as in the previous year. He also presented a review of the past five years of crash data, highlighting an increase in total and serious injuries.

Chris Yuen raised a concern about underreporting of hospitalization data in cases without police involvement and suggested a system to collect this data. He shared an example from the Netherlands. Jonathon agreed with Chris's idea and proposed setting future targets based on these data and suggested that the CCRPC's Regional Safety Action Plan could inform the process and targets. Joe Segale asked about the implications of rejecting the proposed targets and developing our own, with Sai and Eleni Churchill explaining the effort and process required to establish alternative targets for the region with no actual benefits because the CCRPC is not controlling the funding. Kurt asked about crash data comparisons with other Northern New England states, which Sai agreed to look into.

There was a discussion about the increase in road fatalities in 2021 and 2022. The team also discussed whether the pandemic had contributed to the rise in fatalities. Jason inquired about the inclusion of bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities in the total number, which Eleni confirmed. Jonathon Weber noted that

the 2019 numbers were lower than usual and wondered if 2019 was an anomaly. There was a national trend of higher injuries and fatalities due to the pandemic, and our data reflects that trend. The discussion ended with a suggestion to invite VTrans to a future meeting to discuss their Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Julia asked about the accessibility of serious injury data from the State's crash query tool. She has to request it directly from VTrans and asked if there are plans to make this data more easily accessible. Sai isn't aware of any other way than requesting directly from VTrans.

Bryan Osborne said it's interesting to see the Chittenden County data relative to the rest of the state, and questioned how the difference between the statewide average and county average could be explained, possibly by lower speeds in urban areas. Eleni noted that rural roads account for most of the serious injuries and fatalities and offered that the CCRPC will have another presentation to the TAC about the safety issues, approach and policies.

Comment from the chat:
Katharine Otto: VTrans crash data usually isn't complete for a calendar year until about 5 months later. So around May/June you can be reasonably confident most crashes are recorded for the previous year. As Eleni and Sai mentioned, it takes time to collate all the records.

Jacqui DeMent: There was a question about safety in other New England states - if you scroll to the bottom of this page, there is a map where you can see the safety performance targets, annual fatalities, and 5 year average of fatalities for each state from calendar year 2020:
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/spm/state_safety_targets/

BRUCE HOAR MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2024 VTRANS STATEWIDE SAFETY TARGETS AND RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD AGREE TO THE STATEWIDE SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA. BOB HENNEBERGER SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Annual Listing of Projects Receiving Federal Funds and SFY25 Transportation Capital Program Review

CCRPC is required to report annually on the federal funds that have been spent in the County. Christine Forde, CCRPC, provided an overview of FY23 annual federal spending in Chittenden County (Item 7a) and the projects funded in the upcoming VTrans SFY25 Capital Program (Item 7b).

Christine discussed the process of obligating funds, emphasizing its necessity under federal law and the potential for the obligated amount to differ from the initially approved amount. Funds must be obligated for a project to be listed. She highlighted the allocation of $82.5 million in County funds for various projects, with the majority going to construction, and noted the significant projects such as the Champlain Parkway, the Crescent Connector, and the Route 2 bridge over I-89 in Richmond. Christine Forde also pointed out that $11.5 million was dedicated to transit projects and $1 million for Amtrak services.

She compared the funding allocation over the last decade, noting that the County continues to receive a fair share of state money. On average Chittenden County gets about 17% of statewide funding. FY22 and FY23 were large obligation amounts due to the federal IIJA funds coming to the state and county.

Finally, she discussed the capital program for the state FY25, which includes several new paving projects. This information is included in the budget presented to the state legislature as recommended by the governor. Similar to the TIP, Chittenden County used about 17% of statewide funding.

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

The Board did not meet in December, but the CCRPC hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast on December 5. Topics discussed included housing, climate resilience, open meeting law, transit revenue options, municipal local options tax, and other miscellaneous Director updates. You can view the presentation slides at https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-Municipal-Legislative-Breakfast-Presentation_20231205-1.pdf.

In January the Board held a public forum for the FY25 UPWP, voted to approve the FY24 mid-year adjustment budget and UPWP, accept the draft FY23 audit, heard an update on Health Equity grant work, received a staff presentation on the CCRPC draft Code of Conduct, heard an equity program update, charged the Board Development Committee to consider potential bylaw updates, and heard other miscellaneous Director updates.

10. Chair/Members' Items

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program, NOFO**: https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-11/RAISE%202024%20NOFO%2011.30.23_0.pdf. Mandated minimum award amounts for capital grants: $1 million minimum in rural areas and $5 million minimum in urban areas. There is no minimum for planning grants. The maximum for both capital and planning grants is $25 million. Application deadline is February 28, 2024.
- **AARP Vermont 2024 Community Challenge Grant**: AARP Vermont invites local eligible non-profit organizations and governments across the country to apply for the 2024 AARP Community Challenge grant program, now through March 6th**.** Grants fund quick-action projects that help communities become more livable in the long-term by improving public spaces, transportation, housing, digital connections, and more. More information at http://www.aarp.org/CommunityChallenge.
- **USDOT Discretionary Grants Dashboard** (https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard) provides communities with an overview of discretionary grant opportunities that can help meet their transportation infrastructure needs. Designed with all communities in mind, the Dashboard identifies grant programs with rural and Tribal set-asides or match waivers available. The Dashboard also includes Federal grant programs outside of DOT that may be of particular interest to rural communities. The Dashboard is updated weekly.
- 2024 Tier 2 & Tier 3 River & Roads Training Dates, to view more details visit https://dec.vermont.gov/event/vermont-rivers-roads-tier-2-and-tier-3-training:
    - **Tier 1 Online Slide Show**: Online training (30-60 min) that provides a general awareness and understanding of river processes, aquatic habitat and how transportation infrastructure affects and is affected by river stability. Works best with Internet Explorer: https://anrweb.vt.gov/PubDocs/DEC/WSMD/Rivers/RiversAndRoadsTier1Training/story_html5.html
    - **Tier 2 workshops:** Two-day training with both indoor and outdoor exercises. Receive 4 hours of continuing education credits. Open to all municipal staff, state staff, construction contractors, engineers, consultants, regional planning commission staff, conservation districts, and others working with communities on river and road related issues.
        - May 15 & 16 at VTrans Dill Building at 2178 Airport Rd, Berlin.
        - October 2 & 3 at VTrans Dill Building at 2178 Airport Rd, Berlin.
        - October 16 & 17 at VTrans District Office at 870 US Route 5, Dummerston.
- **Tier 3 Advanced Flood Recovery & River Management Training Modules**: Tier 1 and Tier 2 River and Roads trainings are a prerequisite. One day class, in-person and virtual options, participants receive 6 hours of continuing education credits. Dates/locations available at https://dec.vermont.gov/event/vermont-rivers-roads-tier-2-and-tier-3-training.

Bryan Davis noted another funding source: The Northern Border Regional Commission has announced availability of $50M in 2024 Catalyst Program funding. Infrastructure (awards up to 1M) and non-infrastructure (awards up to 500,000). Infrastructure broad categories of transportation, basic public infrastructure, telecommunications, and energy. https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst and program overview. Bryan Osborne said NBRC had a good overview of the program so it's worth checking out.

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 6, 2024 due to Town Meeting Day on Tuesday.

LISA SCHAEFFLER MOVED TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY SANDY THIBAULT. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis