CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, September 3, 2024
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members Present
Phillip Peterson, Burlington
Aaron Martin, Essex
Adam Wechsler, People with Disability
Bob Henneberger, Older Adults
Chris Damiani, GMT
Chris Yuen, Essex Junction
Connor Smith, GMT
Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte
Holly Francis, Environment
Jacqui LeBlanc, FHWA
Jon Rauscher, Winooski
Jonathon Weber, Local Motion
Josh Arneson, Richmond
Kurt Johnson, Underhill
Lisa Schaeffler, Milton
Matthew Arancio, VTrans
Sam Andersen, GBIC
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

Guests
Faith Dall, VTrans

1. Welcome and Introductions
Phillip Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. Consent Agenda
No consent agenda this month.

3. Approval of August 6, 2024 Minutes
SAM ANDERSEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 6, 2024, SECONDED BY BOB HENNEBERGER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Public Comments
No comments from the public.

5. Stipend Reminder for TAC Volunteers
Bryan Davis, CCRPC staff, reminded TAC members that they are eligible to receive a stipend if they are serving in a voluntary capacity. Please contact Bryan for more details, bdavis@ccrpcvt.org.

6. Green Mountain Transit Draft Service Reduction Plan
Chris Damiani of Green Mountain Transit (GMT) presented the agency's Draft Service Reduction Plan developed in response to budgetary constraints and aimed to balance costs and revenues by reducing service levels. The plan identified $3 million in savings but this target could change and could change based on feedback during the upcoming public hearings and discussions with municipalities, VTrans, and partners.

Chris noted that the GMT Board approved the NextGen Service Improvement Recommendations in June 2018 which offered a system wide look at cost neutral service improvement recommendations. This was followed by COVID pandemic impacts, and GMT used relief funds to support existing service, but those funds will expire this fall.

GMT used two main factors when considering changes to service in the draft plan:

1. 2023 VTrans Performance Report – number of rides taken per route to provide a cost-per-ride amount.
2. Surveys of four major groups: transit riders, GMT Staff, GMT Board, and municipal staff of communities served by transit to better understand the tradeoffs that people are interested in seeing. Feedback heard was that service should focus on transit dependent riders, focus on local service, focus on weekday service, and have fewer routes with more frequent service.

Chris noted that fuel cost is volatile and could impact the draft proposal. He also said that over the past couple of weeks the budget gap has decreased from $3 million to $2 million but the proposal reflects a strategy to achieve $3 million in savings. The draft service changes are proposed to take effect in different timeframes, with the earliest happening before November 2024, others in November/December 2024 and February/March, and the most impactful changes to take effect beginning in June 2025.

For details about GMT's draft proposal, visit https://ridegmt.com/service-reductions/.
The public meetings are posted at https://ridegmt.com/public-hearings/.

Further discussion:

- Will there be another plan based on a more accurate assessment of the financial impacts of reducing services? Likely. Some service changes were already set for early winter and further adjustments were still under consideration
- Did GMT look at the impact of cuts to lower income and others who may be more transit dependent? As part of their analysis GMT looked at which routes have more riders paying full fare compared to those routes with people paying reduced fares.
- Are there additional opportunities to collaborate with the school districts? Yes, GMT had conversations with South Burlington School District, for example, and they're open to other discussions but at this moment GMT is focused on their own potential service reductions.
- There are some ADA paratransit impacts with proposed service cuts.
- Is this fiscal cliff happening in other areas or just GMT service area? This is not a unique situation, other transit agencies are going through a similar process.

7. Future TAC Agenda Topics

Bryan Davis, CCRPC staff, invited TAC members to share topic ideas for future meetings. Bryan prompted the discussion with ideas such as the recent update to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), and CCRPC planning studies or inventory projects.

A grants management roundtable was suggested since each grant has different requirements, data collection, etc. and it would be helpful to better understand the requirements. An example is that ADA Transition Plans can be incorporated into the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) demonstration grant. Perhaps FHWA and VTrans can participate or lead the discussion. CCRPC can collect questions from TAC members about specific grant opportunities in advance to share with appropriate agency staff in preparation for a discussion.

With the recent Act 250 revisions by the legislature there is reliance on regional planning commissions to determine and map the designated areas, it would be helpful to know more as this process unfolds. CCRPC will plan to provide an update at a future TAC meeting.

It was asked if there have been any studies of having a landfill closer to Chittenden County than the current site in Coventry. We could invite Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) to give a presentation.

It would be helpful to have a presentation of VAPDA and/or CCRPC priorities heading into the next legislative session. CCRPC develops a list of topics that we'll be monitoring, which we can share with the TAC.

VTrans released their VMT and Smart Growth Study which could be presented to the TAC.

There is interest in traffic calming in Charlotte and to know more about what's happening in Shelburne and other communities. Other local examples include City of Winooski traffic calming manual, City of Burlington traffic calming, and Local Motion's webinar: https://www.localmotion.org/complete_streets_winter_webinar_series

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.

There was some discussion about whether to continue providing this project list. It was suggested that we consider reorganizing in a different way (by topic, region, etc.).

Christine Forde, CCRPC staff, noted the updated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) has not been approved but this is a four-year document that doesn't expire. CCRPC is currently working with VTrans and FHWA on the updated TIP and we will have a presentation in October. Federal funds need to be obligated at the end of every year. There is an August redistribution through which VTrans can receive additional funds but this needs approval. This is a quick process, and we may ask the TAC for a vote in the coming weeks so please be aware.

9. CCRPC Board Meeting Report

The Board did not meet in August.

10. Chair/Members' Items

- **CATMA Transportation Summit, October 15, 2024, UVM Davis Center**: registration is open for the third annual CATMA Transportation Summit with the theme of "Adapting to Change." Burlington Mayor Emma Mulvaney-Stanak is the keynote speaker and the day features a variety of speakers, presentations, and opportunity for networking and socializing. Learn more and register at https://catmavt.org/transportation-summit/.
- **Building Communities Grants program**, administered by the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS), is now accepting applications. Grants up to $25,000 support construction and capital improvements to strengthen Vermont towns and regions. All grants require matching funds and community-supported fundraising efforts are encouraged. **Application deadline is September 10**. Details and applications are available at bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants.
- **VTrans Mobility and Transportation Innovation Grant Program** supports innovative strategies and projects that improve mobility and access to services for transit-dependent Vermonters, reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to funds from the Transportation Bill, this year's program includes additional funding from the federal Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) to specifically support the expansion of travel demand management projects that encourage less carbon-intensive means of travel. **Applications due September 16** at 4:30 pm, more information available at https://vtrans.vermont.gov/public-transit/mti.
- **FHWA Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program** to help make surface transportation more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters through support of planning activities, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk costal infrastructure. $1.4 billion in contract authority over five years (FY22 – FY26). https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/protect/.
- The **Northern Border Regional Commission** has announced availability of $50M in **2024 Catalyst Program** funding for infrastructure (awards up to 1M) and non-infrastructure (awards up to $500,000). Infrastructure broad categories of transportation, basic public infrastructure, telecommunications, and energy. **Pre-application due September 6**. https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst and program overview
- **Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program** from US EPA Office of Community Revitalization provides planning assistance to small towns and rural communities to help them boost their outdoor recreation economy, revitalize their main streets, and promote equitable access to the

outdoors for residents and visitors alike. EPA will hold an informational webinar on **September 5 from 3:30-5:00 PM. Applications are due October 16.** More info and previous awardees, **including Vermont towns**, at https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities.

- **USDOT Funding Resources/Opportunities:**
  - USDOT Discretionary Grants Dashboard (https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard) provides an overview of discretionary grant opportunities The Dashboard also includes Federal grant programs outside of DOT that may be of particular interest to rural communities.
  - DOT Navigator https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator
  - Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) https://www.transportation.gov/rural
  - Reconnecting Communities – USDOT released the 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2026. A total of $607 million will be awarded under this NOFO. This program was created to help reconnect communities previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting
- **Vermont Local Roads** has resources and learning/training opportunities throughout the year: https://localroads.vermont.gov/.

The next TAC meeting is scheduled to be in person/hybrid on October 1.

The meeting adjourned at10:06 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis