CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, October 1, 2024
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: In Person Meeting with Remote Option

Members In Person
Bob Henneberger, Older Adults
Holly Francis, Environment
Jon Rauscher, Winooski
Josh Arneson, Richmond
Mary Anne Michaels, Rail
Norm Baldwin, Colchester
Tom DiPietro, South Burlington

Members Remote
Phillip Peterson, Burlington
Aaron Martin, Essex
Adam Wechsler, People with Disability
Amy Bell, VTrans
Chris Yuen, Essex Junction
Deirdre Holmes, Charlotte
Joe Segale, Huntington
Jonathon Weber, Local Motion
Lisa Schaeffler, Milton
Sam Andersen, GBIC
Sandy Thibault, CATMA

Staff
Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Director
Christine Forde, Senior Transportation Planner
Chris Dubin, Senior Transportation Planner
Eliana Fox, Transportation Planner
Jason Charest, Senior Transportation Planning Engineer
Sai Sarepalli, Senior Transportation Planning Engineer (online)
Bryan Davis, Senior Transportation Planner
Marshall Distel, Senior Transportation Planner
Taylor Newton, Planning Program Director
Ann Janda, Senior Energy Project Manager (online)
Darren Schibler, Senior Planner (online)

Guests
Clare Nelson, UVM TRC (online)
Faith Dall, VTrans (online)
Matthew Langham, VTrans (online)

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Phillip Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. Consent Agenda

No consent agenda this month.

3. Approval of September 3, 2024 Minutes

JONATHON WEBER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2024, SECONDED BY SAM ANDERSEN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Public Comments

No comments from the public.

5. Consultant Selection – planBTV New North End

Taylor Newton, CCRPC staff, described the request for proposal (RFP) process to select a preferred consultant for Burlington's planBTV New North End project. This is a neighborhood plan with a transportation nexus and requires skills that are outside the skillsets of CCRPC's pre-qualified consultants, in particular related to wastewater treatment. Four proposals were received and two firms were interviewed, with Utile identified as the preferred consultant. This firm has experience working in Burlington. The TAC needs to approve selecting the consultant before work can begin.

NORM BALDWIN MADE A MOTION THAT THE TAC APPROVE UTILE AS THE CONSULTANT TO COMPLETE THE PLANBTV NEW NORTH END STUDY, SECONDED BY JON RAUSCHER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Transportation Sustainability Assessment Tool and Data Dashboard

Clare Nelson, University of Vermont Transportation Research Center, presented a dashboard they developed to track and assess household vehicle use, energy consumption, and emissions trends in Chittenden County from 2017 onwards, using state Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) registration and inspection data. Clare demonstrated how to navigate the various tabs and features of the dashboard and how to interpret the different data and graphics displayed, including trends across time.

Sam asked how they determined gasoline consumed per household and miles travelled. The team used DMV registration and inspection records which helped to determine miles travelled through odometer readings. Fuel economy is determined through unique vehicle identification numbers which provide information about type of vehicle.

Ann Janda, CCRPC, said part of this work was included in developing South Burlington's Climate Action Plan, with data that needs to be tracked as part of that Plan. Clare noted this tool can be used to determine change in vehicle miles travelled but noted that the tool doesn't include every single vehicle in Chittenden County (i.e., not all vehicles are inspected, registered, etc.) but it can provide trends and comparisons. Ann asked how electric vehicles (EV) are tracked with vehicle miles travelled (VMT) reductions and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions. The kilograms of tailpipe carbon dioxide emissions data does not include EVs but there is a data set for electricity and other EV-related information.

Mary Anne Michaels asked if the tool includes data from people driving into the County. Clare said this data is for vehicles in Chittenden County and doesn't capture commuting trends into the County. Bob asked if the tool accounts for trips that leave the County. Clare said the tool doesn't specify where vehicle miles and emissions occurred, only that a Chittenden County vehicle was used.

Jonathon asked about correlations between land use and VMT, and Clare confirmed observing lower VMT in denser areas while noting the uncertainty of causality. She said the tool will be updated annually when new DMV data is available but noted it will always be one year behind due to the effort needed to clean data. It may also include some information about the built environment, and the current data sets reflect trends such as fewer VMT and emissions in more developed/denser areas in urban and village centers.

Clare noted that 2023 data should be added in the next couple of months. Explore the dashboard at https://ccrpctranspstats.uvm.edu/.

7. FY2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Christine Forde, CCRPC staff, said that as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Chittenden County, the CCRPC is required to develop and maintain a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which contains funding information for transportation projects proposed to spend federal transportation dollars in Chittenden County. The TIP is a prioritized, fiscally constrained, four-year document that doesn't expire but must be updated every four years. Federal funds need to be obligated at the end of every year. Developing the TIP is a cooperative process and CCRPC worked with VTrans and FHWA on the updated TIP. The TAC packet included the TIP project list but the front matter is still being developed.

Christine reviewed how to read the project list and what the different fields represent and showed slides with information about annual spending amounts, which can be affected by large projects with high budgets as well as congressional earmarks. She also reviewed the Circ Alternatives project list and provided an update on progress. The presentation is available on the TAC webpage: https://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/transportation-advisory-committee/

Sam asked why work didn't continue on Exit 16 in Colchester this year? Jon Rauscher said bids for phase 2 were opened and one bid was received. An award hasn't been made yet. Amy Bell noted that Exit 16 work is also being staggered with Winooski's Main Street Revitalization project.

Chris Yuen asked if the Amtrak Station should be added to the TIP, and Christine said it was added after the TAC packet was distributed.

It was clarified that projects need funding to be in the TIP, and that the TAC approves amendments as needed because things change and evolve.

Tom asked about the Vermont Project Selection and Project Prioritization (VPSP2) process and if those projects end up on the TIP. Christine briefly explained the VPSP2 process and its previous two project rounds, and why VPSP2 is currently on pause. There are several projects on the TIP list that came from the VPSP2 process, most of which are still in the scoping phase.

NORM BALDWIN MADE A MOTION THAT THE TAC RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD WARN A PUBLIC HEARING FOR THEIR NOVEMBER MEETING FOR THE DRAFT FY2025–2028 TIP, AND THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE TIP IN NOVEMBER, SECONDED BY BOB HENNEBERGER. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. <u>Municipal Project Roundtable</u>

Jon Rauscher provided an update on Winooski's Main Street Revitalization project, highlighting its smooth progress despite typical challenges such as change orders and underground conflicts. This is a two-year project that could extend to three years if needed. They are maintaining traffic flow with some detours. Next year will be less disruptive and mostly include above-ground work. This is a $22 million project which is about 10 years in the making. Public outreach is a large, ongoing effort and a consulting firm is providing assistance. The City is trying to address challenges to local businesses and using media to raise public awareness and support to ensure those businesses stay open. He notes the Exit 16 interchange project will start up again next year and the Winooski River bridge replacement will be the next major project in the area.

Phillip reported on the planBTV Walk Bike Action Plan with a public meeting planned in October and online survey. The City's downtown traffic ordinance recently passed. Part of the Champlain Parkway opened this summer and work continues on the Pine Street section with raised intersections. The next phase is in process. As for the Main Street Great Streets project, striping will be completed soon, and other ongoing work includes temporary water lines, the Church Street intersection, and engagement with local businesses to ensure their support.

Joe Segale reported that Huntington received a $1.5 million state bike/ped grant for a project completed in partnership with CCRPC. There is some local disagreement about how best to use funds considering the impacts of recent flooding. It's interesting that support for active transportation projects can vary between urban and rural areas. Phillip says that Burlington often focuses on the safety benefits of projects as a way to garner more public support.

Josh discussed similar issues with two projects in Richmond, and the Selectboard ultimately decided not to complete those projects due to residents being outspoken against those projects.

Jonathon reflected that people are more likely to show up when they are against a project rather than being for it. He said he is available to help send out information in communities about projects if that would be helpful. Sandy said CATMA is also willing to help share project information with their members and contacts.

Tom reported that the $3 million Dorset Street signal project is underway and enables the City to collect data. He also noted a new traffic signal at the end of Market Street and an upcoming assessment of all 55 miles of sidewalk and 25 miles of shared youth path in the city.

Chris Yuen said the Crescent Connector in Essex Junction recently opened to traffic and includes a new rail crossing. It features four foot bike lanes and the project will also allow concurrent traffic through Five Corners which previously wasn't a function of the intersection. Google Maps is still updating traffic directions so it may take a while for that software to accurately reflect current conditions. There are also bike lockers as part of the

project, and more bike parking will be included in the future. Chris also notes that this weekend is a public charette for their Transit Oriented Development project and invites everyone to participate. Visit www.connectthejunction.org for more information.

Sai gave an update on a new sidewalk on Irish Hill Road in Shelburne, which includes a prefabricated pedestrian bridge. He notes there are some challenges including plan documents not accurately reflecting on-the-ground conditions. The bridge will be installed using two cranes on October 19.

9. 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.

Adam asked about coordination with GMT for older adults and people with disabilities. Marshall gave a brief update on the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (O&D) Program and will connect with Adam offline.

10. CCRPC Board Meeting Report

In September (minutes here) the Board voted to approve committee appointments, heard an update on the ECOS Plan process, heard an Equity update and other Director updates, and members discussed various items. A presentation from GMT on potential transit service changes was moved to their October meeting.

11. 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/.
- **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. **Applications are due October 16.** More info and previous awardees, **including Vermont towns**, at https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities.
- **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/.
- **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/.

Chris Dubin reminded municipal reps that CCRPC is looking for updates on newly constructed active transportation facilities to help keep our data set up to date, please see his recent email with more details and be in touch with any questions.

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for November 5.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Bryan Davis