



Communities working together to
Meet Chittenden County's transportation needs

CHITTENDEN COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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**Metropolitan Transportation Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting 3**

DATE: Monday, December 18, 2006
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: CCMPO Offices, 30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206, South Burlington, VT
PRESENT: Daryl Benoit, CCMPO
Meredith Birkett, CCTA
Christine Forde, CCMPO
Dawn Francis, GBIC/Chamber
Christopher Hill, Bike/Ped
Scott Johnstone, CCMPO
Chris Jolly, FHWA
Peter Keating, CCMPO
Matthew Langham, VTrans
Polly McMurtry, VTrans
Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates
Andy Montroll, CCMPO Burlington
Ken Nolan, MPO Board (Chair)
Bryan Osborne, Colchester
Dave Roberts, CCMPO
Susan Smichenko, CCMPO
Dan Senecal-Albrecht, CCRPC
Richard Watts, Environment

All attachments available @ www.ccmpto.org/MTP

1) Review Meeting Notes from September 18,2006

Ken Nolan, Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

2) MTP Goal Revisions

The CCMPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) suggested some revisions to the MTP goal statements at their October meeting. This came after the MTP Advisory Committee's review where no suggested changes were noted. See attached TAC recommendations for your consideration.

The CCMPO TAC recommended wording changes, and this committee is reviewing them again before presenting them to the CCMPO Board. Ken Nolan explained that the CCMPO Board Chair is reluctant to make too many changes to the goals, since this is a Plan update, not a rewrite.

Bryan Osborne sits on the TAC and is concerned that a number of the goals are diluted by the changes, for instance numbers 5 and 9. He feels the dilution wasn't the intent of the TAC.

Scott Johnstone of the CCMPO suggested that unless people feel passionate about the changes, we can tell the TAC that we aren't going to make the changes now, but we will look at them when we undertake a full rewrite.

Susan Smichenko of the CCMPO noted that the changes to number 7 are covered in a different goal. Polly McMurtry of VTrans felt that the original goals are sufficient without the changes.

Christopher Hill, representing bike/ped, asked about the relationship between the TAC and our committee. Peter Keating explained that the TAC is a major subcommittee of the CCMPO Board. They meet monthly and review everything before it goes to the Board. The TAC is made up of town staff, DPW, planners, etc. The TAC has thirty members, with about twenty attending. He felt that most didn't have time to digest the goal changes.

Ken noted that the CCMPO is undertaking a strategic planning process that may change the role of the TAC. Unlike our ad-hoc committee, the TAC is a standing committee. Our committee was formed by the Board, and our recommendations are reviewed by the TAC before going to the Board. When we're done, recommendations should go directly to the Board.

The committee decided to keep the original goals and forward them to the Board.

3) Consultation with Resource Agencies

SAFETEA-LU calls for consultations with state and local agencies involved in environmental protection, wildlife and land management, and historic preservation during MTP development. Staff will present some ideas and seek committee comment on how and when these consultations should occur.

Peter Keating explained the new federal legislation, SAFETEA-LU, which requires Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP) approved after July 1, 2007 to incorporate two new requirements: 1) consultation with resource agencies; and 2) environmental mitigation.

In terms of consultation, we are required to notify natural resources agencies about changes we are proposing. Peter quoted the regulations:

PROPOSED RULES RELATED TO MTP, from Federal Register, June 9, 2006

Sec. 450.322 Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan.

(g) The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate:

(1) Comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or

(2) Comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

Peter's interpretation is that the consultation relates to the process, not the content of the MTP. Chris Jolly of FHWA explained that the intent is to widen coordination to recognize the plans in place. It's more than sending our plan out; rather they are looking for an exchange of information. The coordination recognizes conflicts between the documents and identifies mitigation opportunities.

Peter is concerned that: 1) the list of agencies is very long; and 2) what is the appropriate time to contact them? Should we contact them now, based on the current MTP or wait until we have new analysis available (in case new projects are identified)?

Peter's list includes: ANR, Fish & Wildlife, Forests, Parks & Recreation, DEC. There was discussion of federal agencies and it was decided that isn't included in the Act. Andy Montroll, CCMPO Burlington Representative, asked about local agencies and could they be covered under CCRPC?

Chris Jolly asked if we were considering agencies outside of the County, and Peter responded no. Dan Senecal-Albrecht of CCRPC suggested that they have much of the data available and are face-to-face meetings required? Peter suggested that he consult CCRPC's inventories and notify the state agencies. Polly suggested he start with the CCRPC and then contact the state agencies and confirm the information. Dan suggested asking ANR what the appropriate agencies are to meet with.

David Roberts of the CCMPO suggested that Peter be clear with agencies that this is an early consultation - this isn't the last opportunity to review projects. Chris Jolly noted that the law requires consultation and mitigation. The latter is not project specific mitigation, rather recognizing the available mapping, wildlife habitat, storm water, air quality, etc. We do not want to get into specific project mitigation. Andy suggested that if we don't consult with the appropriate agencies, the agencies could later derail projects - it's better to have broad participation early in the process.

Chris Jolly noted that projects come through the TIP process, so the key at this point is documentation of contacts. With the State agencies we need to make a contact through a letter, letting them know the process.

Peter suggested that we can reach the local agencies through CCRPC, perhaps a Planner's luncheon. Scott wondered if "local agencies" include nonprofits, which do much of our conservation work. Chris Jolly believes it's limited to municipal/public agencies.

Dawn Francis of GBIC/Chamber asked if there was still an interagency Act 250 review agency. Polly responded that it had been disbanded.

Scott asked how consultation "as appropriate" is determined. Chris Jolly responded that the MPO has the responsibility to carry out the consultation process and the law provides guidance. Essentially, the CCMPO makes the call. VTrans is also responsible because federal funds flow through it to the CCMPO. If VTrans has concerns, they could ask for more to be done. Since everyone is around the table, we shouldn't have a problem. Scott sees us designing a process that the overseers feel it is fair and appropriate, and then more stakeholders can participate later.

Chris Jolly quoted the law regarding mapping: "If this coordination finds there are no conflicts with future plans, it should be documented. If part of the area for a corridor study in the LRP is to be maintained for open space, then this should be documented for future discussion." So, conflicts must be documented and noted for future discussions. In addition, Chris Jolly noted that the public participation process needs to be updated to reflect the changes.

Ken Nolan suggested that CCRPC is a good start. He asked whether we should wait until the regulations are final, and Chris Jolly responded that he doesn't expect the final regulations to be significantly different. After discussion, it was decided to contact the agencies soon with the current plan. Additional agencies that were suggested: Dept. of Housing & Community Affairs, Historic Preservation, Winooski Valley Park District, Department of Public Service, Agency of Agriculture.

4) Environmental Mitigation

Another SAFETEA-LU change governing MTPs states that the Plan must now include discussion of environmental mitigation activities. These discussions can take place in the context mentioned in agenda item 2 above. Staff is interested in committee comment on how and where within the MTP, these discussions are described.

PROPOSED RULES RELATED TO MTP, from Federal Register, June 9, 2006

Sec. 450.322 Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan.

(7) A discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this Consultation.

Peter explained that this item is related to item number 3. This item is content-based - we must address mitigation in the Plan. Chris Jolly suggested the MPO list the information available on habitat, plant life, water quality, storm water, etc. which will be used to make decisions on future projects. Chris explained that the mitigation is not specific to projects, rather is a list of potential tools. FHWA is not requiring additional environmental information to be developed and included in the Plan.

Scott suggested that before we consult with agencies, we should have a one-pager that describes what is expected of agencies in this process. This could be the ground rules for the consultation.

Peter noted that there is an environmental group at VTrans that will be added to his list. Peter will include information from the Strategic Highway Safety Plan in the MTP, as required.

5) Population, Housing, and Employment Forecasts

The CCRPC recently approved a methodology for these forecasts which will allow the MPO to assign these data to the Transportation Analysis Zone level in our computer transportation demand model. Staff will provide a status report of this work. The attached CCRPC memo describes in detail the forecast methods and how rural towns and the core communities were treated slightly differently.

In terms of forecasts, the CCRPC completed the projections. In September, the *CCRPC Regional Plan* was adopted. They have refined the forecasts and these were approved in November. The methodology is in the meeting packet. David Roberts distributed a handout (will be available on the CCMPO website).

Scott Johnstone explained that the population forecasts are substantially lower than the projections from the current MTP. A downward adjustment will probably translate into less congestion. Dave explained that the projections are 20 percent lower than the previous ones, but there will still be congestion.

Ken asked if the analysis of local population is available, and David responded he had not looked at it, although the CCRPC has some local forecasts.

Richard Watts of the environmental community asked for clarification of the table. David explained that the number households come from Census data and employment refers to workers in that particular community.

Bryan asked why future average rate of growth for population and households fluctuates. David explained the cycles are based on the feedback loops of the more systematic models of migration throughout the US, Northeast, State of Vermont, Chittenden County. These forecasts are constantly updated.

Bryan asked if the projections take into consideration factors other than zoning and land use constraints. He's wondering about infrastructure constraints. Dawn was on the CCRPC committee and explained that the original numbers presented were higher than the committee believed were real, due to infrastructure issues. The numbers were reduced.

Scott explained that the UVM Transportation Center is looking to add components to Urban SIM (a sophisticated land use model) for our region. One of the additions will be wastewater.

Scott noted that the forecasts feeding into the Circ process are consistent with our numbers. They aren't exact, but they are consistent.

6) Status of MTP Update

Staff will provide an update on drafting new text for the MTP's first four chapters including the financial element.

Peter will be working on Chapter 2, explaining the public process for the MTP update. Chapter 3, Population/Economy/Current Conditions/Trends will be started now that CCRPC has approved the projections. We are getting data from VTrans and will run the model for future congestion. Peter will have a draft of Chapter 3 before next meeting.

Chapter 4 is the financial plan that is in flux because we hoped to have a consultant help us, but no one bid on the work. We have precise guidance from the Feds on how to do this chapter. Before next meeting, he'll have a draft complete.

After these two chapters, we get into the meat of the plan – the scenarios and recommendations. Expect this piece in March.

Richard Watts is helping VTrans with focus groups and interviews about alternative scenarios for Vermont's Transportation Plan. The work should be done by April-May, leading up to statewide conference.

7) **Next Steps/Next Meeting**

- Chapter 3 Revised
- Chapter 4 Draft

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25AM.

**The Steering Committee will meet on Monday, March 19, 2007 at 9AM
at the CCMPO Office.**

Questions: Contact Peter Keating at 660-4071, x14 or pkeating@ccmpo.org

Attachments (available on the website):

1. September 18th meeting notes
2. TAC proposed revisions to the MTP goals
3. Housing and Employment Forecast memo.