



**Vermont Route 15 Corridor Study**  
*Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Winooski  
Champlain Valley Exposition, Fanny Allen, St. Michaels College,  
University of Vermont, Vermont National Guard,  
Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization*

**Route 15 Corridor Study - Public Workshop #1**  
**Elley-Long Music Center @ St. Michael's College**  
**February 7, 2007 - 6:00 PM**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Susan Smichenko of the CCMPO welcomed the group and explained that purpose of the Route 15 Corridor Study is to develop a multi-modal transportation plan which incorporates and builds on work done previously in the corridor. There is an active Stakeholders' group and members were recognized. Bob Penniman of CATMA was unable to attend, but has been a key player.

**2. Overview of the Route 15 Corridor Study**

Susan introduced the consultant team and Georges Jacquemart of BFJ Planning offered a presentation of existing conditions in the corridor. Mark Smith of RSG discussed the highway and traffic conditions along Route 15 (the presentation is available at [www.ccmpto.org/VT15](http://www.ccmpto.org/VT15)).

**3. Dinner and Review of Route 15 Maps**

Participants enjoyed a light dinner while discussing the corridor with one another, the consultant team, municipal staff, and CCMPO staff.

**4. Roundtable Discussions & Report Back**

Four groups worked for about an hour to answer the following questions. The groups' contributions are listed below.

1. What should be the overall goal of the VT 15 Corridor Study?
2. What are the most positive characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?
3. What are the most negative characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?
4. What types of improvements would you like to see in the corridor in terms of the following:
  - Roadway and intersection improvements
  - Transit improvements (bus and/or other)
  - Bicycle improvements (on-road and/or off-road)
  - Pedestrian improvements
  - Streetscape improvements
  - Land use changes (concentrate new development, shift densities?)
5. What should be the priorities?

**TEAM WHITE**

**a. Goal: Deal with now and think to the future.**

- Balance access and mobility.
- Facilitate all modes - convenient and pleasant
- Improve bike and pedestrian options
- Improve public transit - bring on riders of choice
- Enable economic growth - responsible, transit-oriented
- More park & ride opportunities
- Coordinate municipal planning in the 4 communities

**b. What are the most positive characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?**

- Sunrise at St. Mike's
- Amtrak and railway
- Passes through 2 traditional downtown areas
- Fairgrounds
- College
- Winooski traffic circulator
- Hospital
- IBM
- Parade grounds and central median
- Only NE corridor in Chittenden County

**c. What are the most negative characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?**

- 5 Corners
- Balance of mobility and access
- Physical roadway does not meet needs of traffic
- High traffic volumes
- Limited bike ability
- Lack of traffic signal coordination
- Severe impact on village pedestrians
- Minimal pedestrian connectivity between communities.

**d. What types of improvements would you like to see in the corridor in terms of:**

**Roadway and intersection improvements**

- Signal sequencing, pre-emption
- Bus reentering traffic right-of-way
- Spring Street intersection!
- Shared drive potential?
- I-89 area intersections

**Transit improvements**

- Shorter headways
- Rail, Rail, Rail
- Fort bus route loops (traffic signal)
- Express bus service to Burlington
- Summit Street loop?

- Acquire railroads/share right-of-way

**Bicycle improvements**

- Acquire railroads/share right-of-way

- Safety improvement - widen 15 all the way to Winooski
- Let 'em on 289
- Let 'em through National Guard Road

**Pedestrian improvements**

- Linkages
- Sidewalks - grade separated
- Safe crossings
- Keep markings visible

**Streetscape improvements**

- Trees along the green strip
- Plant medians where safe

**Land use changes**

- High density mixed use in Junction and | Winooski

## **TEAM RED**

### ***a. Overall Goal:***

- Broader look at land use to encourage accessibility (transit, walk, bike)
- Bike lanes on Route 15
- Specify that transit can help reduce congestion, carbon emissions
- Make proposals that can be done
- Coordination between municipalities, institutions, transit entities

### ***b. What are the most positive characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?***

- “This should not take long!”
- Links many destinations
- Serves diverse population
- Room for innovative development
- Opportunities for TOD
- We’re in love (with its potential)
- Scenic potential, recreation potential
- Shortest distance between two points
- 45% - live and work, serves both origins and destinations
- Serves rail, links to others

### ***c. What are the most negative characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?***

- UGLY commercial strip
- Not hospitable to walking/biking (dangerous, unpleasant)
- Congestion
- No sense of place (New Jersey)
- Pedestrian crossings insufficient, poorly designed
- Insufficient public transportation
- No connected bike infrastructure
- Always one place with bad pavement
- No continuity about anything (want consistent feel)

### ***d. What types of improvements would you like to see in the corridor in terms of: Roadway and intersection improvements***

- Access management (fewer curb cuts at redeveloped sites)
- Better maintenance
- Most places - no more pavement for cars - improve efficiency
- If roundabout at 5 Corners, must be single-lane, pedestrian-friendly

### ***Transit improvements***

- More buses
- Rail (St. Albans to IBM, Burl. to Essex)
- Evening hours for buses
- Light rail
- Bus rapid transit along 15
- Consider extending peak hour service to Jericho
- Sunday service through Fort
- Better neighborhood service to feed Rte. 15 B.R.T.
- Reverse-commute service Burlington to IBM

- Expand service at 2A/Industrial to S. Burlington

***Bicycle improvements***

- Shared path vs. on-road? (we want both if possible)
- Need to see what off-road looks like

***Pedestrian improvements***

- More and better crossings
- Buffer between sidewalk & Rte. 15 in Essex Jct. (greenbelt)
- Pedestrian network in commercial areas
- Better pedestrian signals - countdown and sight-impaired signals
- Better pedestrian-oriented lighting, especially at crosswalks, etc.

***Streetscape improvements***

- Buildings oriented to street-graduated heights
- Revitalize old strips
- More trees
- Bury wires (we think big)
- Gateways into Winooski & Essex Jct.
- Placemaking
- Beautify and uniform signage

***Land use changes***

- Increased density pending alt. transportation investments
- Coordinate new development with alt. trans.
- Mixed use including affordable housing

***e. What should be the priorities?***

- #1: Public Transportation
- Connected bike/pedestrian access
- Municipal policies that support density, alt. trans., mixed-use

**TEAM THREE\***

**a. Goal: Reduce Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV)**

- Reduce carbon-based fuels
- Improve flow
- Multiple modes - bus, bike, pedestrian
- Increase functionality
- Attractive alternatives

**b. What are the most positive characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?**

- Some good views
- Incomplete Circ
- High density institutions and housing
- Rail - preserve long-term
- Best bus route
- Arterial function - direct to BTV
- Free land @ Susie

**c. What are the most negative characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?**

- Choke point west of Susie
- UGLY
- No bus in Essex Junction / Schools close (lot of in and out)
- Rail schedule
- Unsafe pedestrian/bike esp. Susie and Dunkin/Cumberland Farms
- Lack of greenbelts
- Seasonal strategy

**d. What types of improvements would you like to see in the corridor in terms of:**

***Roadway and intersection improvements***

- Increase flow - more roundabouts
- Separate cars to Circ and bikes to Village EJ
- Comprehensive strategy - make it progressively more limited access

***Transit improvements***

- Express bus to BTV and local
- Increase frequency and Sundays and nights
- Neighborhood feeder small buses
- Light rail

***Bicycle improvements***

- Bikeways in Fort
- Analyze choices - \$, safety, access
- (3 votes for off road, 2 for on road)

***Pedestrian improvements***

- Increase mixed use planning TOD
- Sidewalks on both sides with lighting and benches

***Streetscape improvements***

- Increase trees in median
- More street trees and flowers
- Increase medians like at Chuck's Mobil
- Boulevard look

***Land use changes***

- Senior housing

***Other***

- More park & rides
- County gas tax to fund alt.

\*(Underlined items represent priorities)

## TEAM FOUR

### *a. Goal: Deal with now and think to the future.*

Generally accept 7 goals of study

### *b. What are the most positive characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?*

- Traffic flow is reasonable, placement of lights
- Streetscape in Winooski and Essex Junction

### *c. What are the most negative characteristics of the VT 15 corridor?*

- Flow at 5 Corners, Lime Kiln, Exit 15, Circulator
- AM VT 15 from Circulator and Eastbound off of Spring St. to VT 15
- Aesthetics at St. Mike's - Lack of boulevard feel
- Pedestrians at St. Mike's East Entrance
- Spring St. and VT 15, especially westbound
- Lack of bike lane after Winooski and pedestrian crossings
- Lack of sidewalk from Fort to Susie Wilson
- Southbound Susie Wilson Road - two right lanes, not left
- Exit 15 northbound ramp
- Susie Wilson Road - northbound left-turn lane
- Susie Wilson Bypass & 2A - addition of lanes left, through-right
- Lack of crossing access at VT15 and shared use path near Essex Way

### *d. What types of improvements would you like to see in the corridor?*

- Bike lane on each lane of VT 15
- Streetscape by St. Mike's and Fairgrounds
- Long-term public transit - rail from Essex Junction to Burlington
- Buses for Colchester?
- Extend bus hours evenings and Sundays on Route 15

## 5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

Georges explained that we would be compiling the notes from tonight's meeting and incorporating them into a discussion of future conditions for the corridor. We will come back in May to discuss these with the public. In the meanwhile, the Existing Conditions report is available at: [www.ccmppo.org/VT15](http://www.ccmppo.org/VT15).

A question was asked about the availability of funding for projects, and Susan noted that one of the best outcomes of corridor studies is a list of short-term projects that are relatively inexpensive. Unfortunately, there is no funding for big projects in the near future and we do not expect to recommend them in this study.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

**Participants**

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Town</b>
Arango	Dale	Essex Junction
Berman	Corey	Burlington
Braner	Moshe	Essex
Bresee	Lou	S. Burlington
Brophy	Jim	Essex Junction
Buckley	Tom	Winooski
Churchill	Eleni	Montpelier
Cormier	Marilyn	Colchester
Dunn Watson	Annie	Essex
Engel	MJ	Essex Jct.
Flanagan	Jerry	Colchester
Frank	Aaron	Burlington
Kemerer	Tim	Essex Jct.
Kimberly	Cilla	Essex Junction
Lutz	Dennis	Essex
Mangione	Zach	Colchester
Matthew	Pam	Hinesburg
Maxon	Don	Essex
Meyer	Nick	Essex Junction
Newton	Taylor	Colchester
O'Brien	Mike	Winooski
O'Neill	Meredith	Colchester
Pedrini	Holly	Burlington
Picard	Katherine	Winooski
Pitterson-Ogaldez	Sharon	Colchester
Putzel	Roger	Jericho
Spencer	Chapin	Burlington
Tilton	Samantha	S. Burlington
<b>CCMPO Staff:</b> Janet Botula, Christine Forde, Peter Keating, Michelle Mraz, Susan Smichenko		
<b>Consultants:</b> Georges Jacquemart Diane Meyerhoff , Elena Patarini, Jon Slason, Mark Smith		

## Written Comments received at the Route 15 Corridor Study Public Workshop #1

Long term, over-all vision most important; must include reduced CO2 emissions agenda, and awareness of oil depletion. Rather than assuming increase in vehicular use, imagine reduced SOV by necessity - far sighted planning will affect:

- Public transportation

- Mixed use (TOD) planning/smart growth

- Push for telecommuting/broadband access

- Make walkable communities desirable and functional

- Increase attractiveness and practicalities of alternatives to SOV

- Consider carpool and express bus lane!

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I would like to see bicycle lanes from Fort Ethan Allen (SMC North campus) to Winooski; to connect with Burlington Bike Path. This provides students who do not own cars or who choose to bike instead of drive/bus to Burlington and be safe.

The connector between North Campus and SMC main campus addresses my issues with lack of lighting on Route 15 between campuses and also bike lanes between campuses.

Corridor is unsightly.

Zach Mangione

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### Ideas

More incentives to shut off engines while stopped. No idling +10 seconds!

Express bike lane to BTV