

Vee Gordan and Judy Bond met with Peter Keating, Senior Transportation Planner, and Bryan Davis, Transportation Planner of CCMPO in October, 2009. The following report includes both material from CCMPO Mission Statement and notes from the meeting.

Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO)

Mission and Overview

The Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the 18 municipalities of the Chittenden County region. Each year, the CCMPO oversees about \$30 million in transportation investments. It evaluates and approves proposed transportation improvement projects and provides a forum for interagency cooperation and public input into funding decisions. It also sponsors and conducts studies, assists local municipalities with planning activities, and develops and updates the County's long range transportation plan (known as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan). Serving about 145,000 people, the CCMPO is Vermont's only MPO.

Key Products

The CCMPO is required to prepare and update a number of planning documents that detail the investments and planning activities that will help improve regional transportation. They include:

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) ~

Updated every five years, the MTP sets out a vision for the development of the region's transportation infrastructure over the next twenty years. It includes goals and objectives, analysis of regional trends and planned improvement projects throughout the county in all modes of transportation.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) ~

Updated annually, the TIP is a three-year agenda of improvement projects. To be eligible for federal funding, proposed projects must be approved by the CCMPO Board for inclusion in the TIP.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) ~

Updated annually, the UPWP summarizes the transportation planning activities of the CCMPO staff, its member agencies and other transportation and planning agencies conducting work in the region.

Constituency and Jurisdiction

The CCMPO region encompasses about 145,000 people in the 18 municipalities of Chittenden County: Bolton, Burlington, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, Milton, Richmond, St. George, Shelburne, South Burlington, Underhill, Westford, Williston, and Winooski. The region is home to about 25 percent of the state's population.

Are you able to fulfill your mission satisfactorily? Why/why not?

The focus of the CCMPO is more on active than other transportation. Bicycle and pedestrian issues are not their highest priority - 95% of the TIP funding is for roads and bridges. The community enhancement projects in the 2002 TIP include sidewalks, historic building reconstruction, street lighting, scenic easements, and a museum. "Intermodal" projects include "park and ride" lots.

In an ideal world, what would you do to fulfill your mission, state's needs.

The CCMPO task is more of planning and allocating funds than actual implementation of projects. As a result, it is difficult for them to resolve gaps (such as in regional bus service) that they see.

Do you work collaboratively with other groups/agencies

Organizational Structure - One standing committee -- the **Transportation Advisory Committee**, or TAC -- makes recommendations on action items to be considered by the full Board of Directors. The TAC is composed of planners and engineers from member agencies, as well as appointed representatives of various regional interest groups. As warranted, the TAC will appoint special subcommittees to focus on specific topics or projects. The Board and TAC are supported by a 9-person staff, located in South Burlington, VT.

Meetings

All scheduled Board of Directors and TAC meetings are open to the public, and the CCMPO welcomes and encourages public participation in and input to the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Board of Directors meets in public session on the third Wednesday of each month, at the offices of the CCMPO unless otherwise indicated. The TAC also meets monthly, usually on the first Tuesday. All regular CCMPO meetings include an opportunity for public comments on pertinent issues. In addition, public hearings on specific items, such as amendments to the TIP or UPWP, are held as needed throughout the year.

How can advocacy organizations assist your mission?

Several Chittenden County organizations, especially Local Motion, are currently quite active in the planning sessions, but they tend to be more regional bike/ped related. As a result, there is a good and growing network of bike paths in Chittenden County. A missing piece at the regional and local level is the advocacy for the interconnection among the village centers for folk who are not able to use the paths – for example public transportation that links the communities. Another gap is the sidewalk access within the community centers themselves.

Participation by citizen advocates at the town level would be also useful.

Advocacy groups could approach a town board and ask that they be included in discussions of specific project proposals, Development Review Boards or planning efforts, such as development of a Town Plan. There are many projects that do not accommodate the concept of “livable communities” that could benefit from participation of like-minded folk. CCMPO is not a party to these actions and have no input, even when they are counter to the regional goals. Other important places to participate are in Act 250 actions and regional plans (CCRPC).

CCMPO is looking for input on their long term 2050 plan. LWV should provide a list of folk interested in participating.

Is the status of the following being addressed?

Passenger rail

Passenger rail is included in the CCMPO 2025 plan. Currently, there is a north/south rail line along the edge of Lake Champlain and an east/west spur through Essex Junction. The plan includes linkages of the rail service with local bus service.

inter- and intra-urban bus service

The status of public bus service is very spotty in Chittenden County. Each community chooses to participate and pay for CCTA bus service. As a result, some village centers (and employers) do not have service and others are reasonably well served. The LINK bus between Burlington and Montpelier is quite popular. Buses have room for two bicycles on a rack in front. State wide bus service is quite poor.

energy efficient transportation

The current status of efficient transportation is declining, per Peter Keating. (There are several plugs for plug in electric cars in Burlington – at Burlington Electric and at City Market.)

facilitation of carpools

Campus Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA) is a collaboration among Fletcher Allen, UVM, Champlain College and Red Cross. They host a number of activities and incentives for people to carpool or use public transportation. As a result, many commuters are not driving to work in Burlington.