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## COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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Date: October 14, 2011

To: Burlington Parks, Arts and Culture Committee

Cc: Larry Kupferman, CEDO Director  
Mari Steinbach, Parks Director  
Jennifer Francis, Parks Planner

From: Kirsten Merriman Shapiro, Special Projects Manager, CEDO

Re: Waterfront Access North (phase 1) Update – Funding and Schedule

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This communication is intended to provide an update on the Waterfront North (phase 1) project funding and schedule. The project area suffers from inadequate to non-existent transportation infrastructure, which restricts public access, creates significant safety concerns, and limits economic development potential. Waterfront Access North (phase 1: Lake Street) Project (also known as Waterfront North or WFN) is a transportation infrastructure project located in Burlington's downtown district primarily on the farthest northern end of Lake Street on the waterfront.

This project consists of improvements to the streetscape, parking, pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities plus road alterations and undergrounding of overhead utility lines. In addition to the physical infrastructure improvements this project will create jobs as well as provide long-term benefits by addressing the remediation of this urban Brownfield. It is part of an ongoing effort to put in place public infrastructure to reclaim Burlington's formerly industrial downtown waterfront in a manner that both drives the regional economy and enriches quality of life by enhancing public access to and enjoyment of the Lake Champlain shoreline.

Parking will be consolidated and expanded in an existing landscaped surface lot between the roadway and the Water Department pump station, with additional on-street parking created along Lake Street. The new parking will be managed with an intelligent parking management system. Amenities such as benches, sidewalks, street lighting, signage, under-grounding of utilities, and landscaping will be included to make the area more inviting to non-motorized users. The Bike Path will be realigned and widened. Stormwater will be addressed with innovative on-site enhancements to avoid run-off and flooding, and to protect Lake Champlain water quality.

The proposed stormwater treatment with constructed gravel wetlands is an area of innovative technology in response to the inconsistent nature of the fill, high water table, and proximity to Lake Champlain. The City has given added attention to the impacts of stormwater runoff, and has designed improvements to exceed normal mitigation in the area of stormwater management.

These include using low-impact development (LID) stormwater systems such as natural filtration and attenuation systems and reducing impervious surfaces to treat as much stormwater on-site as possible.

The majority of the funding for the WFN project comes from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including the \$100,000 Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant for upgrading this section of bike path, which until the tragic flooding this spring was probably the section in the worst condition. The realignment and improvements to this section of the bike path alone are estimated at \$300,000, so the other funding will be used complete these improvements. The TE grant requires a 20% local match and the \$150,000 of Penny for Parks money will provide this match in addition to supporting the construction of the new skate park. As you know, the approved FY12 Budget included this \$150,000 appropriation from Penny for Parks.

Initially the need to renovate or rebuild the Skatepark came about through the Moran public process (June 2005-March 2008) due to its heavy use and state of deterioration, the Parks Department was an active participant throughout that process. The guide to the redevelopment of Moran always contemplated the Parks Departments participation in the project, which included the Skatepark. Although Penny for Parks did not exist at that time the Moran ballot question passed in March 2008. Penny for Parks (ballot passed in November 2008) is an appropriate source of funding for Parks capital facility projects such as the Bike Path, Moran and Skatepark. CEDO has been engaged with the Parks Department throughout the planning and design process for both Moran and the WFN projects along with periodically presenting information about the projects to the Commission.

In early 2010, FHWA identified the Skatepark as a Section 4(f) resource - a recreation facility impacted by a transportation project. FHWA coordinated their review and final determination with the Parks Department incorporating certain enhancement measures, so as not to adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f). This caused the reconstruction of the Skatepark to be moved from the Moran project to the WFN project to ensure that the resource would be replaced concurrent with the WFN project.

There are limited FHWA funds available for the project and the grant agreement with the FHWA requires that the City be responsible for any other dollars beyond these funds to complete the project. The city has already successfully aggregated multiple sources of funding to complete this project including SAFETEALU, ARRA TIGER, Transportation Enhancement, CDBG, EPA, TIF, Fisheries, Penny for Parks, miscellaneous small grants totaling just over \$4 million. CEDO has exhausted all other potential funding resources.

The funding raised for the WFN project does not include the \$99,995 CEDO raised for the design, geotechnical investigation and engineering for the new Skatepark. Every dollar of Penny for Parks funds invested in this project leverages \$27 in non-city funding.

Additionally, a significant portion of the FHWA funds are also American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds, which require the City to keep the project on schedule or risk losing that funding. The overall project nor any single components of the project (such as the bike path) are not possible to achieve if this funding is lost and the city would not get any of the benefits that would come from the overall project.

The WFN project has completed the construction documents and will be going out to bid in the next six to eight weeks. Once the bids are received the actual project costs will be known. City Council will have the final say on approving the construction contract.

Unfortunately, I will be out of town for your October 19 meeting on a work related matter. If you have any questions about this memo and the project, I would be happy to come to your November meeting to discuss the matter further.

Below is an image of the planned improvements for WFN project and the Moran Center site. It shows the location of the new Skatepark that will replace the current derelict Skatepark.

