



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

c/o Department of Public Works
645 Pine Street, Suite A
Post Office Box 849
Burlington, VT 05402-0849

802.863.9094 VOX
802.863.0466 FAX
802.863.0450 TTY
www.burlingtonvt.gov

Councilor Jack Hanson, Chair, *East District*
Councilor Mark Barlow, *North District*
Councilor Gene Bergman, *Ward 2*

Inquiries:
Madeline Suender
802.735.5324
msuender@burlingtonvt.gov

Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council

Tuesday April 26, 2022

Directly following the 5PM Vehicle For Hire meeting

–DRAFT MINUTES–

Call to order 5:35PM PM by Chair Hanson at the close of the VFH meeting.

1. Agenda

Councilor Bergman moved to approve agenda. Seconded by **Councilor Barlow**. All in favor passed unanimously.

2. Minutes of 3/14/22

Councilor Barlow moved to approve 3/14/22 minutes. Seconded by **Chair Hanson** All in favor passed unanimously.

3. Minutes of 3/22/22

Councilor Barlow moved to approve 3/22/22 minutes. Seconded by **Councilor Bergman**. All in favor passed unanimously.

4. Public Forum

No comment. Closes at 5:38 PM.

5. FY'23 Fare Policy and Proposed Service Reductions

- Chapin Spencer
- Action

See presentation given by Jon Moore.

Meg Polyte, GMT – Supportive of collaborative thinking to increase ridership and look for opportunities to keep zero fare. We likely need to increase ridership to find a way to offset this cost.

Tom Derenthal, GMT– Important that GMT be consistent and offer a dependable, usable service.

Councilor Barlow – 30 min peak hr frequencies on Rt 6 and 7 are being rolled back?

Jon Moore, GMT – Starting in June, yes.

Councilor Barlow – Why is operating budget less than in FY19?

Jon Moore – Covid 19 relief funds then. We are confident we will get more funds.

Councilor Barlow – Fuel price spike. Over the last 5 years, what should the projected average be?

Jon Moore– Prices are volatile. Last summer we had payed ~\$1. Assume 5 year average ~\$2.50/gal. Fuel suppliers say likely to be ~\$4 for foreseeable future.

Councilor Barlow – Is a majority of ridership benefiting from zero fare lower income?

Jon Moore – Yes, we have data to show low income ridership.

Councilor Barlow – Bus is attractive due to convenience, and when frequent and short waits between legs.

Jon Moore – We agree. Analyzing if we need to continue fare free or have more frequent and expanded services and means tested program.

Councilor Bergman – Need as much information about the sustainable revenue study as possible.

Jon Moore - Will provide the study.

Councilor Bergman – Revenues and relationship to fare free – do not want to pit fare free against service enhancements. It is good to focus on low income folks but think universal programs have more success than means driven. Means testing leads to social incohesion. Explore employers and new developments and how these services and supply funds to GMT.

Jon Moore – Have been looking into how we can get funds from these revenue sources. Current funding is not sustainable from property taxes.

Councilor Bergman – Transit is important in urban cores of Burlington. Electrification for bus system is needed.

Jon Moore – Two electric buses in service now and are in federal program for 80% of funding for 7 more. Financial sponsors are potential to make additional costs. Electric buses are about 2x as much.

Councilor Bergman – GMP should be a partner in this electrification.

Jon Moore – We are in conversations with them. And about how we can solve charging issues.

Councilor Bergman – ADA costs. How is this rising? Aging population here.

Jon Moore – Looking at administrative ways to reduce costs currently and have a more sustainable program. Micro transit could be an opportunity and we are looking into this.

Chapin Spencer – The board is looking at ADA and how to spread this cost. It is wildly changing each year and within communities.

Jon Moore – ADA costs are paid ½ by fed government and ½ by local municipality.

Chair Hanson – City Council wants to maintain fare free service and maintain and expand service going forward.

Will have many conversations about how to do this. Have an immediate need this FY to solve budget needs.

Why did senate go for smaller amount?

Senator Chittenden – Some members wanted to reduce the entire amount, compromise of 1.2 million with flexibility was ideal. Fare Free is valuable. To keep it after this year we will need local communities to increase contributions

Chair Hanson – Still talking about cutting transit so it is a mistake to further shrink this money. Should be expanding network. We should be pushing State but also other partners like Burlington/UVM who save money due to fare free shuttles. City Council recently approved resolution to advocate for 50k to make the City Loop fare free which would be more saving for the City that should be reinvested into transit system. How are we leaning on various partners to get more money? Utilities could be partners to share costs. Ridership needs more than fare free to increase. A lot of this comes down to non-federal money. When we look at these budgets we should consider what they would look like if we get money from partners. Is fare free currently in place? What is Electric bus timeline?

Jon Moore - 50k saved for two Montpelier link trips. 400k over last two years saved by UVM. No fairs until at least July 1 currently. Conversations with GMT happening about Tier three funding. Electric bus funding will be known in August. With supply chain could be two years until we see those taking deliveries.

Senator Chittenden - I'd be happy to answer follow up questions after this. Please don't hesitate to follow up with me: Thomas.chittenden@gmail.com. Fully support funding a sustainable revenue stream. Could be through registration fees for single use vehicles.

Councilor Bergman – At a moment where we can use collaboration. Need sustainable funding and improved ridership. Community support and input needed to improve.

Jon Moore – There are some changes happening now with Senate and House representation, good momentum.

Chapin Spencer – We have at various times tried to set up separate board committees for regional service. We have grown the system but need to build sustainable funding.

Jon Moore – Covid relief funds hid the problem over the past few years.

Chair Hanson – Even this year we are failing with reduced routes.

Marcie Gallagher – Fare free needed for the link express. There is a strong value to having this. At a \$4 cost each way, it does not outweigh convenience of driving or carpooling.

Jon Moore – We need to do more research and see where it is cost effective.

Chair Hanson – Agrees charging for link is a disincentive for potential riders.

Meg Polyte, GMT – In regards to potential action items – Could this committee work as a convener of a bigger picture of similar committees to provide an opportunity for people to come together between communities. Would be helpful at least in Chittenden County to dig into multiple goals and problems.

Chair Hanson – A transit summit could be powerful.

Councilor Bergman – Would like to hear a GMT board request of next steps and players involved.

Item closes at 6:42PM. No action taken.

6. Main Street Concept

- Laura Wheelock, Olivia Darisse
- Action

See presentation.

Laura Wheelock – Will look for action tonight to seek support to bring this concept presentation to council at the end of May.

Councilor Bergman – Was this presentation given to NPAs?

Laura Wheelock – Different presentation given to reintroduce Great Streets goals and take in feedback.

Councilor Bergman - Would like to see this go to NPAs and sent via FPF to allow people to see the input they made has been listened to, considered, and incorporated, and allow for questions and an iterative process. Hoping that FPF can be put out ahead of Council. City Wide outreach is needed.

Laura Wheelock – The plan was not to go back to every NPA before Council in May. We have collected a large distribution list, done FPF, signs, and other outreach for the Thursday Meeting to take input. The NPAs were challenging because we are given limited time. Thursday meeting allows break out groups and time for engaged conversations and feedback. The vote from the Council in May is to help provide positive direction for line and grade of the road, changing the curb line is the monumental step. We will still have time for feedback and will use it.

Olivia Darisse – We were clear at NPAs about next engagement opportunities and how to allow people to stay involved and shared our plan for public meetings.

Councilor Bergman – Maybe a more focused conversation, not full presentation, could go to NPAs ahead of council.

Chapin Spencer – We could try to have this as part of the construction overview NPA tour.

Laura Wheelock – NPAs have distribution lists so we could look to just provide information out that way.

Councilor Bergman – Outreach needed to focus on what council will be asked to do.

Councilor Barlow – Exciting. Will Council ask be to choose between two concepts or just to provide roadway narrowing to eventually implement these? Is there opportunity for other concepts?

Laura Wheelock – Asking for support to change the curb line of the road to allow for either of these concepts.

Steve Woods, Agency Landscaping – The intent moving forward is to take these two options which are summaries of many options we have developed after getting feedback. We have some fixed items that are needed for travel ways but a lot of flexibility to make the open space successful. That is what we are looking on feedback for. The hope is to have a hybrid of all feedback to present for a final design.

Councilor Barlow – I like both concepts. Could see everyone liking both so glad to hear it could be a combination.

Rob Goulding – Don't think there is time to get on May's NPAs but we have gone for public forum which could be a compromise to share information to allow people to have contact info and links to resources. Would allow us to get to half the NPAs by the middle of May.

Councilor Barlow – I can make an update or give my update time to DPW at my Wards NPA tomorrow.

Will you poll people on these concepts tomorrow?

Laura Wheelock– Hoping to not use polls but to be a zoom meeting and a bit more personable. Have breakout rooms to allow people to vocalize feedback. Not the idea to vote on one or the other. We want to hear what elements they like from each.

Chair Hanson – For informed feedback, it would be helpful to see the differences in a chart of some key criteria like bikability, stormwater.

Susannah Ross, Agency Landscaping – That is our plan for the Thursday Night meeting to have the community evaluate how they feel about each.

Councilor Barlow – Winter Maintenance, parking specifics?

Laura Wheelock – We are retaining 90 of 157 current spaces. The tradeoffs, the bike facility one is something we can highlight. The hills that come in and out of this core area are fairly steep and has our design team thinking about how to provide traffic calming for both bikes and vehicles.

Steve Woods – Good point to clearly rank and score. We want both of these to be successful and winners. We are at a point in the design that we aren't letting that be a limiting factor and we will respond to make these spaces work. We are not at the point yet where one is offering a better solution.

Chapin Spencer – Both options have continuous bike facilities, stormwater retention, etc. Not a tradeoff needing to be made here.

Laura Wheelock – Seeking your support to bring the concepts to Main St forward to Council and that you feel we have done our due diligence and are prepared to bring to Council.

Councilor Bergman – Would make motion assuming you will take extra efforts discussed.

Councilor Barlow –Seconded.

Chair Hanson – Quick pitch and FPF is good. Do not feel staff needs to give presentations on this at NPAs.

Councilor Barlow – Meeting on Thursday Night is not on City Calendar.

Laura Wheelock - Not a warned meeting so it is on DPWs Calendar only. We will republish on all social media. Hybrid meeting. It will be in Bushor Conference Room but we are encouraging remote.

Motion passed unanimously.

Item closes at 7:44PM.

7. **Director's Report**

Defer.

8. **Councilors' Update**

Councilor Barlow – Thanks for the sidewalk presentation.

Laura Wheelock– Please provide input.

Councilor Bergman - Would be helpful to have a ranked list to share. And understanding how it is that it is ranked and turned into a work plan

Laura Wheelock – List is subjective and ever changing so difficult to share publically, but listing by condition category could be an option.

Chapin Spencer - We are balancing transparency and putting out highly technical data that may generate more questions from residents and time consuming responses from staff. We will work with the TEUC next month to find the right balance.

Councilor Bergman – Would like N Winooski Ave progress with TDM and Parking on next meeting.

9. **Next Meeting 5/24/22**

10. **Adjourn**

Councilor Bergman motion to adjourn. **Councilor Barlow** seconds. All in favor. Meeting ends **7:52 PM**.