



# Complete Streets Workshop City of Burlington, Vermont

Next Steps Memorandum  
July 2012



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the City of Burlington for Sustainable Communities Building Blocks technical assistance focused on facilitating the implementation of complete streets improvements with a focus on five complete streets corridors identified in the 2011 Burlington Transportation Plan.

This memorandum describes the Complete Streets Workshop held on June 5, 2012 at the Fletcher Free Library, and focuses on the next steps that the community may undertake as a result of this technical assistance. EPA Contractor Dan Hardy, P.E., PTP, of Renaissance Planning Group led the Complete Streets Workshop in partnership with City staff and representatives of EPA Region 1, and facilitated the workshop with a focus on preliminary activities the city can undertake to improve complete streets implementation activities.

## 2. WORKSHOP EVENTS

The technical assistance entailed a day-long workshop involving a review of national complete streets policy guidance, current local transportation implementation processes, and brainstorming sessions on tools to assist the development of complete streets implementation strategies. About 25 staff from city and regional agencies in the Burlington region participated in the workshop, including elected and appointed officials; community representatives; staff from city and regional planning, public works, schools, parks, and health agencies.



Figure 1. Workshop breakout groups

The day's activities included a walking tour of South Winooski Avenue, the closest of the complete streets corridors in the Burlington Transportation Plan. On the day after the workshop and public meeting, the contractor met with Burlington Department of Public Works and EPA Region 1 staff to review the events and potential next steps, as summarized in this memo.

## 3. KEY ISSUES + STRATEGIES

The 2011 Burlington Transportation Plan identifies five complete streets corridors. During the past two years, a pilot project was implemented on a portion of Colchester Avenue. The project included restriping and signal timing to convert a four-lane undivided roadway to a three-lane section with bike lanes. The implementation raised questions about both the measures necessary to define project success and the delineation of responsibilities among elected officials to set transportation policy and city agencies to implement that policy. Also during 2011 the Vermont legislature passed the Complete Streets bill (Act 34), and the Vermont Agency of Transportation published implementation guidance in April 2012. In downtown Burlington, the City has been able to implement many innovative complete streets elements on an ad hoc basis, including contraflow bicycle

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lanes and blank-out no-right turn signals to enhance pedestrian crossing safety. Yet considerable resistance to change remains a barrier to implementation, particularly outside the downtown area.

The workshop participants discussed the value of a unifying vision statement to guide each of the subsequent complete streets implementation studies in Burlington. The following draft vision statement provides a unifying approach to guide planning studies on each of the avenues designated as Complete Streets in the Burlington Transportation Plan. The statement synthesizes ideas from the Colchester Avenue study, the Burlington Transportation Plan vision statement, the Act 34 purpose statement, and the ideas of the June 5, 2012 Complete Streets workshop participants:

*Burlington streets will evolve into complete streets corridors that provide safe, inviting, and convenient travel for all users of all ages and abilities—including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders.*

*Within each neighborhood, the need to move people through the corridor will be balanced with the need to provide access to homes, businesses, and local institutions within the corridor. The most effective use of finite public space will be determined through interdisciplinary collaboration with a wide range of community members considering economic, environmental, and equity concerns.*

*The corridor will develop into an attractive public space through creative streetscape, signage, and other site design features. The corridor will become more livable and desirable by promoting social interaction and public health.*



Figure 2. Contra-flow bike lane on South Winooski Avenue.



Figure 3. North Avenue signing suggests opportunity to reduce pavement width.

#### 4. ACTIONS/ TIMEFRAMES/ RESPONSIBILITIES

The following matrix identifies actions that the Burlington city officials and staff may consider to facilitate complete streets implementation through renewed engagement, education, and engineering actions developed to improve clarity and predictability in the study process. These actions reflect ideas generated from the workshop process. The pursuit of these actions is fully at the discretion of the local participants and the communities they represent and serve.

Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
<b>A. Engagement Actions</b>			
Adopt Council Resolution directing complete streets implementation through the Public Works Commission oversight	Provide decisionmakers with support for complete streets activities, direct city agency staff actions as suggested in or amended from this draft summary of next steps, and enable broad agency involvement through project-specific committees	City Council Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee (TEUC), after consultation with Public Works Commission	2-3 months
Identify city agency and committee/commission roles/responsibilities	For maximum transparency, itemize and clearly define which agencies, committees, and commissions are responsible for planning and approving which elements of complete street projects. Identify existing policies standards, and guidelines and whether revisions are needed to facilitate complete streets implementation	Department of Public Works (DPW), with Public Works Commission and City Council review and adoption of revisions as needed	3-6 months
Develop widely-accessible documentation of complete streets progress citywide	Define methods to broaden inclusivity of study/project process, increase interagency and public awareness of study/project status and next steps	DPW and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission(CCRPC)	Ongoing throughout project planning, design and implementation

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Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Develop complete streets project report card for each project	Measure project progress by identifying existing multimodal performance measures, documenting anticipated performance of alternatives, and conducting follow-up to measure actual performance of selected alternatives	DPW	Ongoing during and after project implementation
<b>B. Education Actions</b>			
Develop a complete streets educational campaign	Share performance measures and lessons learned during the implementation process with Burlington neighborhoods and also nearby communities, utilize an outreach package suitable for both project and policy implementation, include flexible formats to tailor messages for audiences with and without access to the internet and English-language experience, and address broad effects of complete streets into the fields of health/physical activity, economic success, etc.	Burlington Partnership for Health, DPW, advocates	12-18 months
<b>C. Engineering Actions</b>			

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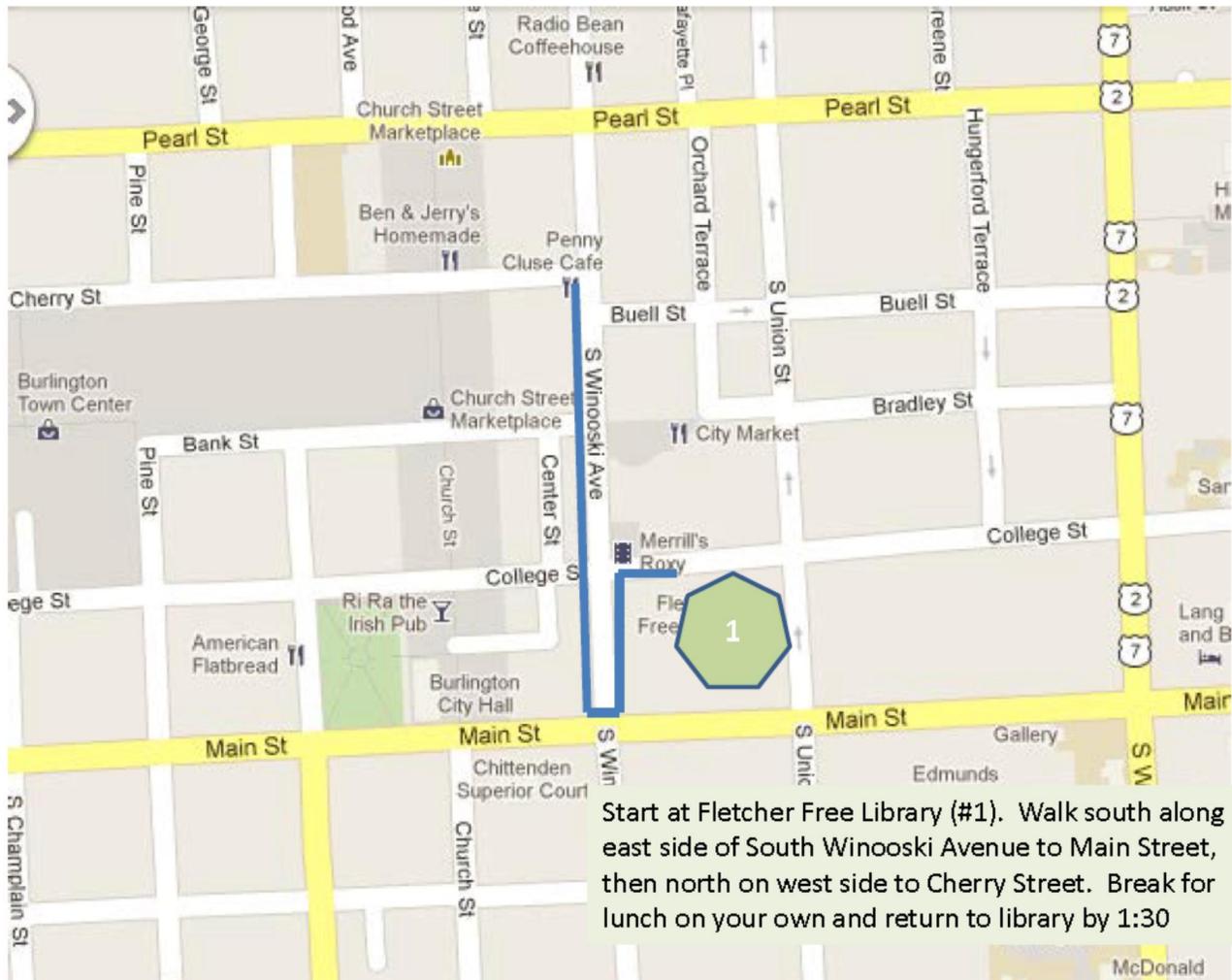
Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Develop internal Complete Streets Implementation Toolbox	Define internal processes for identifying processes/procedures to integrate complete streets within DPW activities, including outreach to potential advocacy groups and partner agencies (health, schools, economic development, etc.)	DPW staff, with Public Works Commission	6-12 months (to follow completion of City Agency roles/responsibilities)
Develop effective process for planning and implementing Complete Streets	Provide predictable and consistent process for benefit of all participants, developed in coordination with funding agency. Process guidance to include flowchart demonstrating early involvement of elected officials and local constituents in establishing project purpose and need, followed by study alternatives definition, evaluation, selection, and monitoring.	DPW with funding agency (City, VTrans, CCRPC, etc.)	3-6 months (in conjunction with completion of City Agency roles/responsibilities)
Consider adopting current NACTO Bikeway Design Guide and pending NACTO Urban Streets Design Guide for Complete Streets Toolbox	Provide guidance for field-tested design solutions that demonstrate innovative and flexible variations from established design standards.	DPW staff with Public Works Commission and Burlington Walk/Bike Council	3-6 months for bikeways, 12-18 months for urban streets

In summary, the Burlington Complete Streets Workshop provided staff and elected officials with tools and techniques for improving delivery of complete streets in a more predictable and deliberative fashion. The workshop outlined methods to standardize complete streets study processes and improve complete streets awareness and communication among agency staff and with community members. Participation in the workshop was robust; participants included key city staff and elected and appointed officials who can serve as champions for the next steps suggested in the matrix.

## 5. APPENDIX

Walking tour map and additional photographs

### Burlington Complete Streets Walking Tour – June 5, 2012



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Figure 4. Downtown on-street parking space devoted to bicycles



Figure 5. Workshop field review along South Winooski Avenue.



Figure 6. Multimodal policies and practices along Shelburne Road



Figure 7. Ethan Allen Shopping Center redevelopment