

Appendix 4

Task 1: Public Involvement - Summary of Activities – Final – 11-6-07

The Public Participation Process for the *Burlington Transportation Plan* was designed to provide clear, concise communication to the public through a series of feedback opportunities. These included: 1) project steering committee; 2) series of informational meetings; 3) participation in the Legacy Town Meeting; 4) meetings with specific constituencies; and 5) final City-wide public meeting.

1) Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee was a critical element of the planning process and a central component of the public involvement task. We sought to include groups working to improve the City and/or region, as these groups each carry part of the City's vision. The final membership list was reviewed and approved by the Mayor. In September 2006, invitations were mailed to prospective participants. The final committee was made up of twenty members with the following representation:

- Ward Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPA) (5 members)
- Burlington Bicycle Council (1)
- Campus Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA) (1)
- City Council (1)
- Burlington Planning Commission (1)
- Burlington Department of Public Works Commission (2)
- Waterfront/Marketplace/Downtown Committee (2)
- VTrans
- Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) (1)
- Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) (1)
- Youth (1)
- City Departments: DPW, CEDO, Planning & Zoning (1 each)

In addition to City department representation on the Steering Committee, the departments also submitted detailed comments to the Department of Public Works.

The Committee approved a set of procedures for its operation. Committee meetings focused on a particular transportation topic, with each meeting building on the one before. A summary of each meeting is below:

September 27, 2006: The committee's first meeting featured an overview of the approved plans currently in place, including the *Municipal Plan* and the *Legacy Project Action Plan*. Current planning studies underway were also outlined. The committee reviewed its procedures. There was a discussion of the *Market Study* being undertaken by the consultant team. The bulk of the meeting was a presentation and discussion on walking, entitled "Walking as a basic urban transportation form."

November 8, 2006: This meeting featured a discussion of the life cycle analysis of infrastructure, Burlington travel data by mode, a transit presentation, and a CATMA presentation. The committee reviewed topics for future meetings.

December 13, 2006: The agenda included an update on public involvement activities, *Municipal Plan* action items, and the *North-South Bike & Pedestrian Study*. The focus of the meeting was Street Design Guidelines, since these will have a large impact on how the *Transportation Plan* is implemented.

January 16, 2007: This meeting featured a summary of transportation-related planning efforts and transportation projects already in the pipeline. The bulk of the meeting was dedicated to parking. There was a presentation of Donald Shoup's *The High Cost of Parking* and a lively discussion about parking policies.

February 21, 2007: At this meeting, the committee grappled with a series of scenarios for the future of Burlington. The committee agreed that it supported the "Multimodal Scenario" that emphasizes walking, biking, and transit, including:

- Priority high frequency direct bus routes with increased service hours;
- Improved pedestrian crossings and network;
- Complete on-road bicycle network; and
- Lowered traffic speeds to promote walking and bicycle safety and level of service, especially downtown.

March 20, 2007: The committee reviewed a series of street design guideline ideas, including complete streets, transit streets, neighborhood streets, and bicycle streets. Also discussed were circulator shuttles and parking.

April 24, 2007: The consultants presented the results of the *Market Study* which showed downtown Burlington in a strong economic position. The committee reviewed a case study of a "road diet" for Colchester Avenue and the draft outline for the *Transportation Plan*. They also discussed how best to reach citizens with the draft plan.

June 12, 2007: The consultants presented the draft plan and received feedback from the committee. A parking subcommittee was formed to more intensively review that section of the draft plan. The committee was invited by the City (CEDO) to be the focus of September's Neighborhood Improvement Nights in each Ward of the City.

July 17, 2007: This work session featured more in-depth discussion of the draft plan and provided the consultant with specific comments and concerns.

August 21, 2007: The final committee meeting reviewed the agenda for Neighborhood Improvement Nights and provided an opportunity for the committee to submit last comments before the draft document became public.

2) Neighborhood Meetings

Two rounds of neighborhood meetings were conducted – one in the fall of 2006 and one in the fall of 2007. Each meeting focused on one of four neighborhoods: Old North End, New North End, Downtown, and South End/Hill. In some cases, participation at stand-alone neighborhood meetings was poor; the consultant team consequently attended Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA) meetings.

In the first round of neighborhood meetings, the existing vision and plans were presented as they affect the neighborhood. A special focus was on the key corridors identified by the City as well as any neighborhood growth center issues. Feedback was solicited about problems and issues in the neighborhood – ranging from the very specific, e.g. maintenance on a particular street to the larger vision.

The result of the meetings was relatively consistent throughout the City. People were concerned with vehicle speeds, pedestrian mobility, lack of evening bus service, and poor winter maintenance of crosswalks.

The first round meeting schedule:

Old North End, November 2, 2006 and December 14, 2006

New North End, November 9, 2006 and January 17, 2007

Downtown, November 14, 2006

South End/Hill, November 29, 2006

In the second round of neighborhood meetings, the consultant team presented the draft plan, including strategies and solutions intended to address the neighborhood concerns. The focus of this work varied from neighborhood to neighborhood, e.g. parking might be a primary theme in one neighborhood, and traffic calming might be a primary theme in another. This set of meetings was held at the annual Neighborhood Improvement Nights in each Ward. Citizens expressed concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety and encouraged alternative transportation modes. Congestion pricing was also mentioned as a way to limit traffic in downtown.

The second round meeting schedule:

September 6, 2007 Ward 6

September 13, 2007 Wards 2/3

September 19, 2007 Wards 4/7

September 25, 2007 Ward 5

September 26, 2007 Ward 1

3) Legacy Town Meeting

On December 6, 2007, the consultant team joined with the Legacy Project to hold a special session about transportation issues in the City. Approximately 80 people participated. The consultant team had three stations: pedestrian/biking, land use, and transit.

The pedestrian/biking group focused on general issues of concern including maintenance (snow and ice removal, bumpy sidewalks and potholes), air pollution from idling cars, angry or distracted drivers, drivers not yielding to pedestrians, and inconsistent crossing signals.

The land use group discussed the need to keep retail services within the City of Burlington, and suggested downtown, the Old North End and Pine Street as locations for more services. The group supported keeping green space downtown and would like more parks in the Old North End. Greater overall density was acceptable to this group as long as there is also sufficient green space.

The transit group was made up mostly of “choice riders” - those who have a car available, but would ride transit if it met their needs. They are looking for more frequent and faster service, better information, and simple, straight routes.

4) Specific Constituencies

Interest in the planning process led us to meet with specific groups that were natural partners in the process or those who requested additional information.

Colchester Avenue Task Force

The consultant team met twice with the Colchester Avenue Task Force. The initial meeting gathered input from the Task Force. At the second meeting, the consultant team presented preliminary proposals for Colchester Avenue, including the conversion of the four-lane section to a Complete Street with bike lanes and improved pedestrian crossings.

Burlington Business Association/Church Street Marketplace Commission

The consultants met with the Burlington Business Association Downtown Action Group on August 8, 2006, and also attended subsequent meetings to discuss areas of concern with the business community including parking, congestion, transit, and wayfinding.

“Burlington's Energy Future: Moving Beyond the Oil Crisis”

A representative of the consultant team attended the Mayor’s meeting on energy, climate and transportation on December 13, 2006.

5) Final City-wide Public Meeting

On September 11, 2007, a final City-wide public meeting was held to celebrate the completion of the draft *Transportation Plan*, co-hosted by the Public Works Commission and the Planning Commission. Over fifty residents attended to learn about the Draft Transportation Plan and discuss their issues and concerns. Overall, citizens were pleased with the process and felt their concerns had been incorporated into the document. This meeting set the stage for a second round of neighborhood-level meetings.

Written comments were received from the Burlington Walking Work Group and the AARP. These comments expressed support for the creation of a Pedestrian Plan for the City, to include a facility improvement policy, prioritization of capital projects, clear benchmarks for goals, and a comprehensive funding and maintenance plan for pedestrian facilities.

*Detailed meeting notes and comments are available at www.dpw.ci.burlington.vt.us/
See additional comments in October 25, 2007 memo from Dan Bradley to City Departments
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