

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – December 14, 2021

Committee members: Cathleen Gent (chair), Jon Kart, Allen Knowles

Others present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner), Eleni Churchill (CCRPC), Jason Charest (CCRPC), Virginia Clarke (Planning Commission), Connie Van Eeghen

Ravi Venkataraman was present at the meeting physical location and all other participants participated remotely.

A quorum was reached and the chair convened the meeting at 4:02 PM.

A. Revisions to Agenda: There were no revisions to the agenda.

B. Meeting Minutes: November 30, 2021 minutes were moved by Knowles, seconded by Cole. There were no changes. *The minutes were approved unanimously.*

Gent reported that the Selectboard approved our request to reduce our committee's membership to "five or more." This will help the Transportation Committee meet quorums to conduct business.

C. UPWP FY23 Grants:

1. Update on Committee Recommendations – Gent provided an overview of the three projects recommended as applications for FY23 UPWP grants – the recommended priorities were approved by motion during the November 30th meeting: 1) Scoping engineering study for sidewalks and curbing for the East Main Street re-paving; 2) Update 2014 Route 2 pedestrian and bicycle shared use scoping study, with the addition of certain elements; 3) Create an Official Map for the walk, bike, trails master plans (for the entire town).

The Richmond Transportation Committee recommendations did not get forwarded to the Selectboard because the Planning Commission, during its meeting the following evening, had a discussion about doing a combined update of the Route 2 pedestrian and bike scoping study with a master plan for the Gateway zoning district. The Planning Commission discussion led to brainstorming sessions with CCRPC staff about the combined study/plan. Gent noted that such a combined project may be a great opportunity, but may not work if both projects are compromised by combining them.

2. Discussion: Combined Gateway Master Plan and Revised 2014 Bike/Ped Shared Path Scoping Study and Other Potential Options – Gent said it is her understanding that CCRPC staff have concluded that the combined project is not viable as brainstormed. She also thanked Venkataraman, all the CCRPC staff, as well as Clarke and Cole for their efforts on this potential combined grant application during the past two weeks. Knowles said he has reviewed the Bike/Ped Master Plan Phase 1 details and it is not entirely clear what the report is conveying. Venkataraman said that is a major reason for looking at the Phase 1 report as part of the revised 2014 Bike/Ped scoping study, i.e., the details can be assessed further. Venkataraman showed a table for the water and sewer system expansion, which shows the Act 250 permitting is slated to be completed sometime between November 2022 and April 2023. Clarke said the Planning Commission will need to have revised Gateway zoning in place, along with addressing criterion 9L (anti-sprawl criteria). She emphasized this will be a very fast timeline to complete the zoning before the Act 250 application. Clarke asked if CCRPC staff assistance is available via a UPWP grant application. Eleni Churchill said the UPWP grant program can be used for that purpose. There is a tie-in for transportation with the Act 250 application, which will involve transportation safety impacts of expanding sewer and water services. Eleni Churchill suggested that, for the 2023 UPWP program, Richmond could take the 2014 study as a base, look at alternatives again, analyze the details in the Phase 1 Bike/Ped master plan, and do a supplemental scoping project to the 2014 study. Charest and Churchill both said the CCRPC/Town/consultants for a UPWP project will need to work with VTrans on Route 2 near exit 11 – under the bridge, Route 117, and entrances to and from I89 as well as into the park and ride area.

3. Final Recommendations for FY23 UPWP Grant Applications - With respect to the East Main Street sidewalks and curbing, Venkataraman referenced the FY23 highway budget that references doing sidewalks and curbing within the original parameters (no extension further east). He said highway foreman Pete Gosselin is using the 2017 revised engineering plans, but the engineering plan will be assessed after getting the final VTrans engineering plans for the state's repaving portion of the project. Because the East Main Street sidewalks and curbing are moving forward on a course within the Highway budget and work program, we are no longer considering that project for a FY23 UPWP grant application. Charest noted that, with engineering plans in place, Richmond is too far along for UPWP funding. Gent added that Charest wrote a very helpful email to Venkataraman with ideas about making sure Richmond has all pieces in place for sidewalks and curbing.

Motion offered by Knowles, seconded by Cole, to recommend to the Selectboard that Richmond apply for a FY23 UPWP Grant to update the 2014 Vermont Route 2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Scoping Report combined with the Phase 1 Bike/Ped Master Plan completed earlier this year, including: (1) a connection to the Exit 11 park and ride and Route 117 to the mobile home park, (2) from the schools to the Willis Farm area, and (3) a planning study for the Exit 11 area alternatives to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles as presented in the 2014 Vermont Route 2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Scoping Report. Voting: unanimous in favor of the motion.

The Transportation Committee then discussed the potential FY23 UPWP grant application to develop an Official Map and incorporate the Bike/Ped Master Plan when it is completed. In response to a question from Knowles, Venkataraman said having a regulatory tool is key to ensuring that bike and ped projects are actually constructed and is very important for planning and zoning staff to have when working with property owners. *Motion by Knowles, seconded by Kart, to seek a FY23 UPWP grant to create an official map for the walk, bike, trails map, which would convert the master bike/ped master plan into a regulatory map.* Knowles said he offered the motion because staff have indicated this is an important project.

Clarke said the Planning Commission is much too busy to take this project on within the time frame of the FY23 grant period and asked who would shepherd the project. Cole added that there will be significant need to engage the public because an official map is a major regulatory addition, and there will likely be resistance to the idea. Cole added that there are numerous larger municipalities in Chittenden County that do have Official Maps, which have taken much time and resources over the years to complete. He agreed that the Planning Commission is not ready to take this on. There was general agreement that the Planning Commission should be a lead on developing the Official Map. Kart asked if some portions of the official map project could be taken on now. Eleni Churchill also said that CCRPC staff do not have time to take on a project of this size in the near future. She suggested that Richmond would be better off submitting an application for a Phase 1 for the official map, focusing on gathering GIS and other data to be used in developing an Official Map. She said CCRPC staff would be available in early 2023 to start the project, after the ECOS plan and other CCRPC priorities are completed. Clarke added that there will need to be public outreach and the planning commission members are going to be burned out from the current work load. (Cole left the meeting at this time.) Churchill stated that there may be access to federal dollars in the future for the next phase(s) of the official map project. *Knowles requested to amend his original motion [made earlier in this meeting] to recommend to the Selectboard that Richmond apply for Phase 1 for an Official Map project, with Phase 1 focused on gathering information and data in preparation for making the finalized pedestrian/bicycle master plan part of a new Official Map, with Phase 1 to begin the second half of FY23 (January 2023). As the member who seconded the original motion, Kart agreed to the amendment. Voting: unanimous in favor of the motion.*

4. Other – The Transportation Committee reviewed Jon Kart's email regarding his suggestion to explore the possibility of re-routing the lower portion of Huntington Road to make the s-turns safer and make it easier to place a bike/ped path to the Johnny Brook trail. Gent asked if this is covered under the current scoping project under the FY22 UPWP grant. Charest said the consultants are looking at alternatives, though perhaps not

looking as far as re-routing the road. He added that the cost of rerouting Huntington Road is a factor and he will talk with Stantec (consultant) about the alternative to re-route the road. Charest suggested that, rather than apply for FY23 UPWP funding at this time, Richmond could await the results of the current scoping study and make a decision after that time. Gent suggested that Kart and all Transportation Committee members stay involved throughout the process of the scoping study.

D. Route 2 – East Main Street Sidewalks and Curbing:

Given that this topic was discussed at length during the FY23 UPWP topic, and a decision made to not move forward with a FY23 UPWP application for East Main Street sidewalks and curbing, Gent said the topic will be taken up at the next committee meeting. She suggested that the committee discuss Jason Charest’s email to Venkataraman about considerations in advance planning for the project as a guide to developing some specific action steps.

E. UPWP FY22 Grant Updates

1. Sidewalks Scoping – Gent reminded committee members that Venkataraman has asked for comments on the draft purpose and need statements for the sidewalks scoping study by Tuesday.

2. Phase 2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan South End – Venkataraman said the steering committee meeting is scheduled for December 21st. The agenda and materials will be distributed.

Green Mountain Transit: [Postponed to next meeting, due to time constraints]

Old and New Business:

- a. Report on 12/7 Vote: Water/Sewer Expansion in Gateway** – This was discussed earlier in the meeting.
- b. General Communications with Public RE: Sidewalks** – will be taken up at next meeting
- c. December 28 Meeting Start Time** – The committee agreed to the regular start time of 5:30 PM for the December 28 meeting. Gent will send out an email.
- d. Transportation Committee Work Plan** – This will be taken up at the next meeting.

Adjourn – At 5:59 PM, motion to adjourn by Knowles, seconded by Kart. Approved unanimously.

-Minutes taken by Cathleen Gent