

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – October 11, 2022

All participants attended the meeting remotely.

Committee members present: Chris Cole (Chair), Cathleen Gent (Vice Chair), Jon Kart (joined late), Allen Knowles, Cameron Wong

Others present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner), Keith Jennings (applying for committee membership)

A quorum was reached and the Chair convened the meeting at 5:32 PM

Abbreviations used in these minutes: RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; PPL = Project Pipeline Document; ARPA = American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; CCRPC = Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; D&K = Dubois and King; SB = Selectboard; GMT=Green Mountain Transit

1. Revisions to the Agenda: None

2. Approval of Minutes from September 27, 2022: There were no corrections or additions to the minutes. **Motion by Gent, seconded by Wong, to approve minutes. Approved unanimously.**

3. Discuss Capital Plan and FY24 Budget Recommendations

a. Capital Plan: Venkataraman provided an explanation of the Capital Plan and the Sidewalk Reserve Fund as they pertain to the Town budgeting process. In brief, the Capital Plan is a planning method for large expenditures, such as vehicles and infrastructure, which can be modified over time as circumstances change. It runs on a 5 year cycle, currently FY23 to FY27. Gent questioned whether it is FY23 or FY24 that we are engaged with, and Venkataraman will clarify that with Town Management. (Further Action, Venkataraman) In contrast, the Sidewalk Reserve Fund is actual money that has been set aside for appropriate projects, including use as matching funds for grants for such projects. After discussion, the consensus was that the RTC will request that the SB include the Bridge Street improvements described in the Bridge Street Corridor Study (2021) and the Bridge St. section of the Sidewalk Scoping Study (2022) in the Capital Plan. The RTC also will request the SB add \$80,000.00 to the Sidewalk Reserve Fund in the FY24 budget. **(See below for the pertinent motion.)** As per discussions at the September 27, 2022 RTC meeting, Venkataraman removed Huntington Road from the draft Capital Plan. It and the Jericho Road section of the Sidewalk Scoping Study are being deferred. Our capacity is for one capital project at a time. Obtaining grant funding to supplement Town resources will be needed to move projects ahead faster.

b. FY24 Transportation Planning/UPWP projects: Venkataraman suggested requesting \$20,000.00 for this in the FY24 budget. RTC is currently discussing a UPWP project request for Cochran Road, which will likely require a minimum \$10,000 Town match. Consideration of a second UPWP project is ongoing. Discussion resulted in consensus to proceed with this request. **(See below for the pertinent motion.)**

c. Contract Services: Venkataraman suggested requesting \$5,000 for this in the FY24 budget. Contract services are used to cover contingencies, temporary services during staffing gaps, land-use planning projects, and unanticipated planning projects. This line could be used for small planning projects that cannot be covered by grants, such as pop up projects, or engineering. Discussion resulted in consensus to proceed with this request. **(See below for the pertinent motion.)**

4. Update on Walkability Study Report: Venkataraman reports the draft is about 75% done. Gent and Knowles have provided comments and suggested edits. Venkataraman suggested holding an open forum on this report with the volunteers later this month or during the November 8th meeting. Cole stated that we should have a finished report in hand before setting a date for a public forum. Wong volunteered to help complete the report, which needs photos added and formatting for readability. Venkataraman and Wong plan to have a completed draft ready for review at our next meeting October 25, 2022. (Further Action, Venkataraman and Wong)

5. Discussion on Micro transit options: Cole outlined two options for a van providing services in the Richmond area and Venkataraman reported that GMT has a study in progress with CCRPC on the possibility of a bus line from Williston to Waterbury.

a. Micro transit managed by GMT: This would be a lift equipped van type vehicle envisioned as covering an area including Richmond and adjacent towns, such as Hinesburg, Jericho and/or Huntington. Cole stated this would involve obtaining a grant and would require financial support from the towns involved. GMT wants a letter of interest if such interest exists.

b. Van provided by GMT but managed and driver provided by the Town: The Town would likely need to pay 10% of the cost of the van. The Town would provide a driver (non-CDL) and manage service provided. This could include transportation to the Park and Ride and for other public services.

c. New bus line: GMT is studying the feasibility of a new bus line between Williston and Waterbury along US2.

Wong: Prefers option 'a' and notes that managing the operation of the van and providing a driver could be a significant barrier to option 'b'.

Cole: Option 'a' would be much more expensive.

Gent: Option 'b' is more short term and narrow in scope, and if implemented, would it impede going on to option 'a' or other wider service?

Cole: First step would be a study by GMT funded through CCRPC to see if population density and so forth supports demand for the service.

Cole: Is the GMT/CCRPC study for a Williston-Waterbury US2 route a FY23 study? Venkataraman will check this and report back. (Further Action: Venkataraman)

Gent: Is this separate from SSTA? (Special Services Transportation Agency)

Cole: Yes.

Gent: How to proceed?

Cole: Ask the SB and Town Manager if the Town wants to pursue this.

Motion by Gent, seconded by Cole: Cole will communicate by memorandum to the SelectBoard the following recommendations from the RTC:

- 1. That the SB include the Bridge Street improvements described in the Bridge Street Corridor Study (2021) and the Bridge St. section of the Sidewalk Scoping Study (2022) in the Capital Plan.**
- 2. That the SB include adding \$80,000 to the Sidewalk Reserve Fund in the FY24 budget.**
- 3. That \$20,000 for Transportation Planning and UPWP projects be included in the FY24 budget.**
- 4. That \$5,000 for Contract Services be included in the FY24 budget.**
- 5. That the SB indicate its level of interest in pursuing public transit options:**
 - a. Micro transit managed by GMT, covering an area including adjacent towns, modeled after the pilot project GMT runs in Montpelier and is expanding to other sites.**
 - b. A small, lift equipped van provided by GMT but managed by the Town of Richmond, including the Town providing drivers and determining service destinations.**
 - c. A new GMT bus line along the US2 corridor between Williston and Waterbury.**

Passed unanimously.

(Further Action, Cole)

6. Old and New Business:

- a. Cole welcomed Keith Jennings to his second meeting. Jennings reported that he has submitted his application for joining the RTC to the Town. This news was met with approval by all current members.**
- b. Gent asked for an update on the FY23 US2 Targeted Scoping Study of shoulder pinch points. Venkataraman will provide this at the next meeting. (Further Action, Venkataraman)**

7. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Knowles, seconded by Gent; approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM.

Minutes by Allen Knowles

Future agenda items:

1. Walkability audit report update and review
2. Update on the FY23 US2 Targeted Scoping Study of shoulder pinch points
3. Discuss applying for a UPWP grant for a Cochran Rd. scoping study, and what would be the scope of the scope?
4. Grant opportunities to get projects past the planning phase.

Further Action Needed:

1. Venkataraman will clarify what the FY cycle of the current Capital Plan is (see 3a above).

2. Venkataraman and Wong will have a completed draft of the Walk Audit report ready for review at our next meeting October 25, 2022. (see 4 above)
3. Venkataraman will check on the GMT/CCRPC study for a Williston-Waterbury US2 route: Is it a FY23 study? (see 5c above)
4. Cole will convey to the SB by memorandum the recommendations of the RTC encompassed in the motion in item 5 above.